

ISAIAH

(The Miniature Bible)



Book 2

Matthew To Revelation

By Gene Hawkins

ISAIAH 40 ~ MATTHEW

This chapter of Isaiah corresponds with Matthew, and the transition recorded here, between The Old Testament and The New, is both simple and profound. According to dates published by Schofield, the prophecy of Malachi ended around 397 B.C. Matthew's record begins about 4 B.C. Most scholars agree that God was silent for a period of 400 years between Malachi and Matthew. We have seen that the previous chapter of Isaiah corresponded with Malachi, wherein is found the promise; "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; ...and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts,... But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked;... in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts." Mal 4:1-3

This is a glorious promise of blessing given to Israel, as a nation, whereby their enemies shall be destroyed in the fire of tribulation, "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings;..." All these provisions will be fully realized in the millennium, but a most glorious local fulfillment is found in Matthew, which announces the ministry of John The Baptist. "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist:... And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Matt. 11:11-15 3

Isaiah 40 is indeed a sequel to Isaiah 39 just as Matthew provides the sequel to Malachi. Isaiah 39 proclaims severe devastation for Israel, even as does Malachi, but both also announce blessing on the horizon, as noted above. Isaiah 40 begins with "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God." V. 1 This comfort begins with the ministry of John The Baptist who is the forerunner of the "...Sun of righteousness..." Who shall "arise with healing in his wings;..." John the Baptist is also said to be "...Elias which was for to come." Malachi 4:5-6 clearly promises "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet

before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” That great and dreadful day of the LORD will not be fulfilled in its entirety until the great tribulation unfolds, but this is most assuredly a description of the chaos and turmoil which prevailed both prior to, and during, the arrival of John the Baptist.

4 Our present chapter in Isaiah actually prophesies the message and ministry of this man, as we read, “Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.” V. 2 John likewise proclaimed the “sin problem,” and its accompanying judgment, with these words. “But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” Matt. 3:7 However, the Baptist also announced that deliverance would be forthcoming for all who would receive it, “...saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matt. 3:2 He then launched into the reason for such forgiveness as he declared “And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:” Matt. 3:10-11 This is the fulfillment of the present text from Isaiah. “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” V. 3 It was John who came both preaching and crying in the wilderness, as he prepared the way for Jesus to enter into His earthly ministry. It was to be easily accessible as “Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.” V. 4-5 The completion of this prophecy reaches far beyond the ministry of John The Baptist, but it speaks loudly of the fact that Jesus would lay the foundation for such all-inclusive victory with His work of redemption at Calvary. Every valley, of those who

are oppressed, namely Israel, will be exalted right along with their Messiah. Every mountain or large imposing kingdom shall be reduced to nothingness and the hills or any lesser kingdom shall be made low. The crooked ways of sin and unrighteousness shall be made straight, even through the blood of Jesus, and the rough ways, that is, the ways of bondage to flesh, to sin, and Satan, would be made plain or free, all because God's glorious plan of redemption would be implemented. It is then, that His glory shall be shown forth, and "all flesh shall see it," meaning that men must acknowledge God's glorious work of redemption. Why? Because "the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."

John's message is further outlined, for "The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. V. 6-7 Did not John announce this same depravity of the flesh when he cried out, "...O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Paul likewise proclaimed this same message as he denounced all efforts of the flesh, proclaiming that "the spirit" must blow upon such manifestations, even in our own lives. "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Rom. 8:11-13

The summation of John's assertion is found in these words. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever." V. 8 Both he, and the apostle Paul, agree that the flesh will not prevail, but God's Word will stand forever. It is this premise which announces, and guarantees, the future of Israel. "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!" V. 9

Events at this present time would seem to contradict even the possibility of Israel ever enjoying the benefits of this verse. The current unrest in the Middle East, wherein so many of Israel's enemies are gathering strength against her, seems to completely

ignore this direct prophecy of God's Chosen People. The good news is that God's Word will prevail and Jerusalem will one day, after the devastation of the tribulation is past, enjoy the "high mountain" of superiority over all the rest of these nations round about them. "Behold your God!" will be the message to the entire nation, as they will finally realize that God Alone has performed the mighty fulfillment of this prophecy. This verse is simply an extended record of the blessings outlined in verse 1-5.

6 However, the remaining portion of this chapter reflect a mixture of both judgment and blessing. Judgment is most assuredly one of the most prominent characteristics put forth in the book of Matthew. The message of John the Baptist is much harsher in this gospel than the other Gospel Records. The term "weeping and gnashing of teeth," a reference to the most severe judgment in scripture, is found five times in the Word of God, and four of them occur in Matthew. "Outer darkness" is another term used to portray the severest of judgments for rebellion. It is found three times, in the book of Matthew, and all three are coupled with "weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matthew likewise is the only gospel record to announce the death of the traitor: Judas. Thus the entire book of Matthew portrays the message of judgment found in Isaiah 40, even as we read, "Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him." V. 10 Even the term "reward," is mentioned in the context of judgment. Judgment is also meant by "his work," even as Isaiah says in Ch. 28:21, calling it "...his strange work;..."

These verses also seem to indicate the over-all pattern that will be displayed in the final days of the Church Age which transition into the Millennium. Severe judgment is poured forth in verse 10 but we immediately read that "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." V. 11 These are glorious blessings, which we experience now, but they are primarily a reference to the glorious "kingdom blessings," which Israel, as a nation, will enjoy when they finally surrender completely unto Him. The tenderness, expressed in these words, is beautiful as He shall not only "feed his flock," but "...he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."

“Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?” V. 11 Note that here again, we are confronted with a rather poetic declaration of judgment. The “waters in the hollow of his hand,” are waters of judgment which are “measured,” meaning that God has absolute control over them. He knows exactly how much devastation to pour out both on Israel and the Nations. The “span,” literally means a “spreading of the fingers,” and these are the fingers of God, illustrating just how effortless, and Majestic, it is for Him to accomplish His task. He also “weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance,” once again so very poetically describing His evaluation of both great and small nations. We then hear the question “Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?” V. 13,14 The question is undoubtedly directed toward the nations, who seem to have all the answers for this world, but it is God 7 Who will determine the consequences for their rebellion. He is the one who will “weigh,” them and then mete out retribution accordingly. The answer to the questions above are apparently answered with; “Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles (a habitable spot; dry land, a coast, an island: -- country) as a very little thing.” V. 15 The nations are as nothing to Him and yet they would be the ones who would instruct Him? They will eventually, and most assuredly, learn that “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.” Psa. 2:4-5

Lebanon is next “singled out,” because she represents the idolatry which prevails, in the nations. Israel also seems to be included in this indictment as suggested later in this chapter by V. 27, and “all nations” in the following text. “And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity. To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him? The

workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains.” V. 16-19 Scripture is very clear that Israel has been guilty of these things but here it is quite evident that God includes all nations in such idolatry, and the next few statements indicate that they are without excuse. “He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, that shall not be moved.” V. 20 Can it be that one is so “impoverished,” that he can, in no wise afford an oblation unto God, but he can search out an “enduring tree,” that will not rot, and then hire a cunning workman to create an idol for him? God made provision for “poverty,” by declaring that if a man could not bring even two birds, then “...the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour...” would be sufficient. Lev. 5:11

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The next portion of our text seems to indicate that ignorance could have been the problem for such idolatry. “Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?” V. 21 The question is “have you not known God?” There is, in fact, no excuse for such a thing because God has not left Himself without witness. The problem is that men do not WANT to know Him. Paul is very clear that creation is the witness of God for all men. Isaiah declares here, “Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?” Paul likewise asserts: “Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:” Rom. 1:19-20 Isaiah’s poetic style again comes to the fore as he further instructs these nations that “It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in: That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.” V. 22-24 His message is quite clear. These nations are not permanent fixtures in the earth as they seem to imagine. They will come naught, and

they are absolutely nothing in comparison to the Majesty of God. He then asks the question, in view of their idolatrous likenesses of Him, "To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth." V. 25-26 This portion simply reinforces the fact that God left creation as a the proof of His Own Existence, but men are doing everything in their power to deny such creation. The simple fact is that if they rid themselves of creation, they also, in their own minds, erase the existence of God. Neither is going to happen, for creation will not disappear, and God is most assuredly Eternal. The fact that God, "...bringeth out their host by number,..." is in reality a declaration of war against these nations. The word "host" means "a mass of persons especially organized for war, an army," and it can surely apply even to the "host" of heavenly elements which God has used to "fight" against man, but it especially speaks of the massive armies The LORD will bring with Him when He engages Satan and the nations. Jesus is actually the subject of this narrative and He will show forth "the greatness of his might," and "not one faileth," for He will most assuredly conquer with a margin! 9

The closing message of this chapter is especially for Israel and they are asked, "Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God?" V. 27 The question still seems to be in regard to the aforementioned idolatry, of which "Jacob" has been repeatedly guilty. God continues to ask, do you really think that your idolatrous ways were hidden from Me? Did you think that there would be no judgment for refusing to acknowledge God? Could it be that thou "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." Apparently Israel did forget the Greatness and Majesty of The Creator described above. Evidently they did not recognize that He neither faints nor grows weary. We learn these glorious lessons in our own experience today and glory in them, but Israel, as a nation, is yet to discover these facts by experience. They surely will learn the fullness of them, during the time of Jacob's trouble, but at the present time they are most assuredly,

not giving Him the opportunity to prove that “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.” V. 29-31 The good news is that Israel will eventually forsake their idolatrous ways and learn all these lessons experimentally. They will “faint,” during the awful 1260 day reign of the antichrist, known also as the time of Jacob’s trouble, wherein they will be preserved in the wilderness. All natural strength and resources will have been exhausted, but He will “renew their strength,” in Him and “they shall mount up with wings of eagles,” even unto to the loftiest heights, as they assume their own place as head of the nations. However, they must first learn “to wait,” upon the LORD. The word means “to bind together (perhaps by twisting),” and speaks of one who is literally bound unto Him by the “twisting,” even excruciating experiences of the tribulation, as they actually become one with Him, and His glorious purposes for their lives.

10 This same time of trouble, depicted by the sickness of Hezekiah, in chapter 39 of this book, will give way to the glorious kingdom blessings described in our current text. We would note also that Matthew is very careful to record these same glorious kingdom blessings, wherein Israel is regarded as being exalted and leading the nations in righteousness. “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. Matt. 28:18-20

ISAIAH 41~ MARK

This present text of Isaiah corresponds with the Gospel of Mark, wherein the “unfaithful servant,” Mark, beautifully writes the profile of the Perfect Servant, Jesus. Acts 15:36-38 records the fact that John Mark “...went not with them to the work,” but this same man was used marvelously to detail the life of The Son of Man as He “...came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” Mk. 19:45 Mark’s gospel is filled with words relevant to a slave, such as straightway, anon, forthwith (immediately), all of them emphasizing a servant’s immediate response to His Master. The works of Jesus are emphasized in this Gospel, rather than His Words, and all but two chapters begin with continuing words of action such as “And, Then, or After.” There is no record of Jesus’ birth in Mark, neither is there a genealogy given, because such details are not in harmony with the information pertinent to a slave. All these things combine to show the Perfect Servant Heart, and works, of Jesus.

Isaiah 41 reveals that that same heart will be perpetuated, and manifest in Israel as a nation. “But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.” V. 8 This will be the glorious role of Israel, after they have accepted their Promised Messiah, for they too will become His servants ministering faithfully throughout the millennial period.

There is also a beautiful correlation between the gospels of Matthew and Mark, just as there is between Isaiah 40 & 41. Both Isaiah 40, and Matthew, present Christ and His Kingdom. Mark depicts Him as the Perfect Servant accomplishing God’s purposes, on this earth. This current chapter of Isaiah likewise shows that the entire nation will manifest that same spirit of servitude during their Messiah’s Millennial reign, as they minister to the nations.

Thus we come to the first verse of this chapter, initiating the story of how this glorious scenario, in regard to Israel, will come to pass. “Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment.” V. 1 It is the nations who must now “keep silence,” for they are no longer in power. The “times of the gentiles,” have ended, and Israel, that is, “the people,” have renewed their strength, to the point that they

are now “in charge.” They will have “come near,” unto Him, and will now be qualified to “speak.” Because of such an approach, it is their voice which will be heard, and this small infant nation will determine the “judgment,” or decisions that are to be made. The emphasis of this portion must be on the fact that God says, “Keep silence before ME,...” meaning that it is God Who has determined all these things, both for the nations and for Israel. It is He, “Who raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? **he** gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to **his** bow.” V. 2 Israel is now that “righteous man,” because they have finally accepted the righteousness of Christ, as they bowed at His Foot. Because of that, the nations must bow before him, that is Israel, this righteous man, and they now rule over the kings of the earth, as God’s leaders throughout the New Kingdom of Christ. Furthermore, “He pursued them, and passed safely; even by the way that he had not gone with his feet.” V. 3 Israel will, by this time, will have pursued her enemies, having “passed safely,” through all the pitfalls of the dark days of the tribulation known as the time of Jacob’s trouble. Though Satan, and his henchman, the antichrist and false prophet, had tried to annihilate them, they have been miraculously preserved, “...even by the way that he had not gone with his feet.” This simply implies that God “carried them,” when they were not able to navigate on their own two feet during this most devastating time, fulfilling the promise that “...the woman,...” Israel, “... were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, **from the face of the serpent.**” Rev. 12:14

12 These glorious blessings of God continue for this nation, with the question as to Who may claim responsibility for it. “Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he.” V. 4 This is none other than a description of Christ Himself even as John proclaimed in Rev. 1:8. “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” He will, indeed, now reign as God Almighty for one thousand years, and the nations must abide by it. “The isles saw it, and feared; the ends of the earth were afraid, drew near, and came.” The nations were

reduced to ashes because of the horrific judgments poured out upon them in the great tribulation and thus Isaiah's prophecy of chapter 45:23-24 is most graphically fulfilled. "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed." Paul likewise asserts, that "...it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." Rom. 14:11 These words surely include Israel, but these next few verses describe the attitude of dependence which will lead them to the fulfillment of their role as God's servants. "They helped every one his neighbour; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage. So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, It is ready for the soldering: and he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved." V. 6-7 This nation will now be in harmony, not only with God, but with themselves, and they will become the "builders," which He intended. They will truly become His faithful servants and the reference to the materials used by the "goldsmith, along with the "nails," bespeaks the deity of Christ, The Nail, Who will be the Central Theme of God's building in that day. 13

"But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away." V. 8-9 The verses are further evidence that God will make good on His promise to this nation. Isaiah proclaims clearly; "Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him." Isa 43:5-7 Thus Israel will be gathered back to their land in order to accomplish the full purpose and promise of God which He gave forth shortly after they had been delivered out of Egypt. "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.

These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.” Ex. 19:6 This nation was chosen long ago to be “...a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation...” It has become quite clear that this will be the fulfillment of the “great commission,” found in Matthew, when this faithful nation will finally “...teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;” Matt. 28:19 God never did “cast thee away,” and this chapter continues with His glorious promise to them.

14 “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” V. 10 The promise here is sevenfold as God exhorts them “Fear thou not...” There will be great cause for such fear during the time of their tremendous abasement, but God’s next decree is that “...I am with thee,” which will be proven beyond doubt that He is able to protect them. “Be not dismayed,” is the third assertion, and it means that they should not be “amazed or bewildered,” because “I am thy God.” He is all the provision they need. The fifth benefit is indeed a glorious reference to divine grace for God declares that “I will strengthen thee,” and then “I will help thee.” This list of seven is completed with the promise that “I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness,” meaning, once again, that Christ will be The Right Hand, of their existence at that time as He truly manifests His Righteousness in them as a collective nation.

Their complete dominance of the nations is next considered for “Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.” V. 11 This is verily the decree against those nations who have vowed to destroy Israel today, and God will make the sevenfold promise, recorded above, extremely practical to them, even before their superiority over such enemies is fully realized. Israel here learns that “Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought.” V. 12 The reason these enemies will not be found is because The LORD will destroy them. Matthew describes Jesus as a Shepherd when, “...before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep

from the goats:” Matt. 25:32 The exact language here is so very interesting for the sheep are said to be “his sheep,” while the goats are simply declared “the goats,” which, according to verse 41, hear this scathing condemnation: “...Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:” The reason for Israel’s glorious victory over those who have vowed their destruction is because “...I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee. Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.” V. 14,15 Yes indeed! This nation must experience the “humiliation” of becoming a “worm,” but that experience will give way to glorious restoration as they experience the fact that “My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.” Psa.121:2 They will further know Him intimately and experimentally, as “...thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.”

Israel will discover, as though they are searching for them, according V. 12, “thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them” that these wicked nations who sought their hurt, no longer exist. Now they learn that God has used them, in great measure, to accomplish that end. “Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff.” God will, in fact, use this tiny nation to exact His judgment on these ungodly nations. Zechariah very poetically portrays this reprisal as Judah being the bow, while Ephraim is the arrow. “When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man.” Zech. 9:13 The “completeness” of this devastation is further described in this analogy. “Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the LORD, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.” V. 16 Israel will finally realize the Majesty of God, “the Holy One of Israel,” when they look first-hand upon this mighty victory that God will accomplish over their enemies and know that He has actually used them, to this end, in the process. The following verses, however, indicate clearly that they must go through the privations of “the valley,” in order to achieve these glorious heights. “When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for

thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.” V. 17,18 These things are a reflection of the “poor and needy,” spirit of Israel, when they are shut up to God in the wilderness of the tribulation. He will come to their rescue, even “in the midst of the valleys,” and completely slake their thirst. This will be a marvelous display of their preservation, but much more is in store for them as they will now experience the unlimited blessings of the millennium.

16 “I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together:” V. 19 The planting indicates “permanency.” This is the same story told by Isaiah in Ch.35:1-2 “The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God.” The over-all purpose is the same as declared in our present text. “That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the LORD hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.” V. 20 One day, all nations, including Israel, will finally realize that the strong Hand of The LORD hath alone “...created it.”

“Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob.” V. 21 This segment is a challenge, issued by God, for Israel to defend their idolatry. It is much like the challenge advanced by Elijah in I Kings 18 when he called on the prophets of Baal to prove “...if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him...” I Kings 18:21 Isaiah likewise says, “Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come.” V. 22 In other words, “let these false gods do the same things that God, Only, is able to do in prophesying, in detail, that which is yet future. Let these gods “Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together.” V. 22 God tells them to produce some kind of works,

even evil ones, in order to prove that they are like unto Him. He then unilaterally concludes that “Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is he that chooseth you.” V. 24 The false god is nothing, in God’s Eyes, and the one who chooses it is deemed “an abomination.” This would include all gods, be they Bhudda, Baal, Allah, or any of god of the Egyptians, or Amorites. None can show forth the mighty acts of the only True God. He next proves His point by prophesying, very specifically, that which will not be fulfilled for hundreds of years. “I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come: from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name: and he shall come upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay.” V. 25 These next few verses are a clear prophecy of Cyrus who would one day liberate the Jews. He will be “raised up...” to “...come upon princes as upon mortar.” Thus God predicted the demise of Babylon, the first world empire, even before it came into being. “That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.” Isa. 44:28 History shows clearly that Cyrus did give the Jews liberty to go back to Jerusalem after the 70 year captivity was over, in order to rebuild the temple. That prophecy was given about 200 years before it came to pass. Cyrus was one who indeed did “call upon my name,” and came forth as the leader of Medo-Persia, the second world empire. “Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.” Ezra 1:1-2

17

Isaiah himself apparently speaks these next few words as he seems to challenge the false prophets to duplicate what God has done. “Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know? and beforetime, that we may say, He is righteous? yea, there is none that sheweth, yea, there is none that declareth, yea, there is none that heareth your words.” V. 26 The prophet concludes that none of these “prognosticators” has the ability to predict such things. These can declare nothing “from the beginning,”

and therefore we could, in no wise say, that “He is righteous.” Therefore, “there is none that heareth your words.” However, God is on record as “The first...,” a direct reference to V. 4 as the One “Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations **from the beginning?** I the LORD, **the first**, and with the last; I am he.” He is indeed The First that “...shall say to Zion, Behold, behold them: and I will give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings.” V. 27 The word “them” is undoubtedly a reference to Cyrus and his armies whom Zion would “behold,” and who would be directly responsible for the freedom of the Jews. This man did, most assuredly bring “good tidings,” to Jerusalem, and according to these prophecies, he was specifically chosen by God to do so.

18 The closing verses of this chapter could have been spoken either by God or Isaiah. “For I beheld, and there was no man; even among them, and there was no counsellor, that, when I asked of them, could answer a word. Behold, they are all vanity; their works are nothing: their molten images are wind and confusion.” V. 28-29 God put these counselors on the defensive, in v. 21-24, but, as noted, in verse 26-27, Isaiah followed the same path as Elijah, when the latter demanded answers of the prophets of Baal. I Kings 18:27 Thus, regardless of who uttered these closing, and rather scathing words, there are none who can even come near to accomplishing what only God can do. “...their works are nothing: their molten images are wind and confusion.”

Cast Away

It is His will that I should cast
My care on Him each day.
He tells me not to cast my
Confidence away.
But Oh! How foolishly I act,
When taken unaware;
I cast away my confidence, and
Carry all my care.

ISAIAH 42 ~ LUKE

This chapter of Isaiah forms a beautiful correlation with the Gospel of Luke, which portrays Christ as The Man. Jesus announced His earthly ministry, as a Man, when He went into the synagogue at Nazareth immediately following His temptation, in the wilderness. “And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor:...to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,...” Luke 4:17-19 This text is actually taken from Isaiah 61, but the same glorious truth of it, describing Jesus’ ministry among men, is also found in verses 1-7 of our present chapter. He is called “my servant,” in verse 1, upon Whom “I have put my spirit,...” Note also that He “shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.” Luke 4 describes the furor in Nazareth when Jesus announced that His ministry also included those despised Gentiles. While they “...wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth,....” they also despised His lowly state in life, with the query, “...Is not this Joseph's son?” This would be a reference to His lowly role as a carpenter’s Son. Lk. 4:22 Their “wrath,” was displayed when He gave three striking examples, from the O.T., demonstrating the fact that God had favored the Gentiles above The Jews, during some of the most troubling and trying times of crisis, the implication being, that The Jews were steeped in unbelief at the time. Luke is simply proclaiming that Jesus, came as a Man among men, and that His ministry did most emphatically include the Gentiles, as noted here in Isaiah.

19

Luke is the only Gospel writer to record the details of Jesus lowly birth in the manger. He alone chronicles His various ages and stages of growth, as The Divine Human, Who grew from an infant, to the time when He would enter His earthly ministry. Only Dr. Luke traces His lineage from the Second Man Adam, back to the first man Adam.

So also, Isaiah 42 describes Jesus’ role as a Man, Who came to minister to the entire world. “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.” V. 1

The Humanity of Jesus is emphasized by His earthly service, and, as seen in Luke, such service does reach even to the “judgment to the Gentiles.” “My servant,…” Jesus, is the subject here, and the prophet makes it quite clear that God will “uphold,” or maintain Him. He was literally anointed with “my spirit,” as The Holy Ghost descended upon Him in the form of a dove, on the banks of the River Jordan, just prior to His temptation in the wilderness. After that, He would launch His aforementioned earthly ministry at Nazareth. Isaiah continues this discourse concerning Him, asserting that “He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.” V. 2 This seems to indicate that He would not cry out for an assemblage “in the street,” in His Own behalf. He had rather come in total obedience to the Will of His Father. His Own demeanor is next described for “A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.” V. 3 He did indeed “bring forth judgment unto truth,” but Jesus first advent set forth a very meek, and humble Man, Who had no intention of pouring out destructive judgment upon mankind. He did not come to break the “bruised reed,” or to inflict more damage and pain upon those who were already hurting. Contrariwise, both Isaiah and Luke declare plainly that He came to “set at liberty them that are bruised.” Note further that He would not quench the “smoking flax,” but would rather fan, even the faintest fire of life and light, into an open flame.

Jesus made it very clear to His disciples that He had not come in a spirit of judgment, even when men openly rejected Him. Listen to Luke’s account in Ch. 9, after He was summarily rejected by the Samaritans. “And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but **to save them**. And they went to another village.” V. 54-56

Our text, here in Isaiah, defining the perspective of judgment, continues as Isaiah proclaims that “He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.” V. 4 This is the purpose for which Jesus came in the flesh, for “...the Word was made flesh, and dwelt

among us,..." John 1:14 He further declared: "...I am the way the truth and the life..." John 14:6 This God-Man did come to establish "judgment in the earth:..." The word means a "verdict or decree," and The Master demonstrated God's decree in Living Color. He showed, by His Life, exactly what God requires of all men and He set such an example by living under the same conditions, and in the same environment, as any other man in this world. He demonstrated plainly the glorious power of God's Word, and thus established such a law, even for the "isles" or Gentiles.

God's Power and Authority, demonstrated by creation, is next announced, and this too, centers on Christ Himself. "Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;" V. 5-6 John plainly declares that "All things were made by him; (The Word) and without him was not any thing made that was made." John 1:3 "He (Christ) was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." John 1:10 Paul is also very emphatic, announcing that God gave creation as a distinct witness of His Own Existence, and thus it is no mystery that men are trying desperately to eliminate the idea of creation. If they get rid of creation, they think God too, will also disappear. Isaiah points out here that Christ is not only the center of creation, He has also been given as "a covenant of the people, for a light to the Gentiles." V. 6 God has ordained a number of covenants with "the people," that is, Israel, throughout the ages, and every one of them were, and are, guaranteed only in Christ. However, He has also come forth as a Light to the Gentiles, for they too are included in these great blessings, even as Jesus declared in Luke 4. That ministry, for all men, is "To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house." V. 7 The truth of this verse is almost verbatim to that outlined in Luke 4:18 wherein it is proclaimed that "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives,

and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.” That is a glorious provision for all men, including the Gentiles.

Isaiah continues this list of things that may be attributed to Christ, declaring that “I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.” Though Luke most assuredly presents Christ as The Man, He is also emphatically declared to be Jehovah, and is thus capable of accomplishing all the aforementioned phenomenon and miracles.

The “LORD,” Jehovah, is His Name and He will not share His glory and praise with the graven images of idolatry. He further distinguishes Himself from these “gods,” by reiterating the same test of falsity which He had ordained in Isaiah 41:23. “Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them.” V. 9 Only God, Jehovah, knows the end from the beginning, and though these ungodly false prophets cannot “...Shew the things that are 22 to come hereafter,...” (Ch. 41:23) God most assuredly can, and indeed He has, testifying of that which will transpire, hundreds, or even thousands, of years in advance. It is for this reason that He must be set apart, as The Only One, Who is worthy of man’s highest praise. Thus all men are exhorted to “Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof.” V. 10 Revelation 5:9 also proclaims a “new song,” which is sung “from the end of the earth,” or Israel, but also includes “...the sea, and all this is therein;” along with “the isles,” all seemingly a reference to the Gentiles. John recorded the song as being sung by those who have been redeemed “...to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;...” Rev. 5:9

Isaiah continues this paean of praise with the invitation to “Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory unto the LORD, and declare his praise in the islands.” V. 11-12 It seems that all, including both Jew and Gentile, are to sing this glorious **song of redemption**, for as the four living ones and twenty four elders proclaim, “...thou wast slain, and

hast redeemed us to God by thy blood..." Isaiah further exhorts "the inhabitants of the rock," Christ Jesus, to sing, and those inhabitants include both Jew and Gentile even as is described in Luke.

Mark proclaims Jesus as the Perfect Servant, while Luke portrays Him as The Man, but His praise must also include the fact that "The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies." V. 13 This LORD is most assuredly The Man, but He is also The Warrior, and His cry, or even "roar," will be one of complete triumph, against all who would dare resist Him in the great tribulation. When Jesus takes His throne in heaven, as seen in Rev. 4-5, all nations on earth will immediately be ruling in usurpation, and will not be willing to relinquish their power. He will thus take the kingdom by force, for as noted here, "I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself: now will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once. I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs; and I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools." V. 14-16 He surely has been most patient during this entire Church Age, but that will change dramatically and judgment will be swift. The mountains and hills, indicating large kingdoms and small, will be completely laid waste and none shall prevail against Him. However, His eternal pattern of showing mercy in the midst of judgment is highlighted in these words. "And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." V. 16

23

These gracious words are simply a promise to the needy, and even in these horrendous days, when the wrath of God will be so severe against rebellion and unbelief, the opportunity to accept Him will still exist. He will still be able to "make the crooked things straight" for the promise "...whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved," will still be valid in that day. Acts 2:21 Isaiah further asserts; "These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them."

It is clearly evident that the blessings of this chapter do include the Gentiles, but the final verses of this text contain a reprimand, and prophecy, directed specifically toward Israel,

which has a radical history of idolatry. Blessing is coming to them, as outlined above, but “They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that trust in graven images, that say to the molten images, Ye are our gods.” V. 17 They shall indeed be “turned back,” for this people must come to an end of their own idolatrous ways. They will also be “greatly ashamed,” so much so, that they will finally bow their knee before The Messiah. These who turned a deaf ear to Him at the beginning of this age, are now exhorted to “Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see. Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the LORD'S servant?” V. 18-19 All these characteristics clearly describe God's Chosen People. He did intend for them to be “my servant,” and “my messenger,” but they went forth in their own perfection, steeped in their own ways rather than those of Christ. God further accuses them of “Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not.” V. 20 They had the opportunity to have known the full spectrum of His promises and purposes for them, but they simply ignored them, choosing rather to walk after their own hypocritical ways. However, “The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable.” V. 21 This is simply an emphatic declaration that God's righteousness is still intact. Despite their unbelief, He will still magnify His law, for that law is bound up in Christ. Israel will one day learn, even as we do today, that the righteousness of the law is fulfilled only in Christ. They too will, in that day, see clearly that “...Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” Rom. 10:4 However, at this present time, “...this is a people robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore. Who among you will give ear to this? who will hearken and hear for the time to come?” V. 22-23 The words seem to be rather hopeless, and they are a literal reflection of present day conditions in Israel. They are “robbed and spoiled” spiritually, but there are also being literally robbed and spoiled of their land as they are, “imprisoned by the nations,” being pressured to give up such land in an effort to “buy” peace. Such a tactic will never work, for God never did intend for them to relinquish that valuable real estate which He freely gave to Abraham. Thus the following

question is both asked, and answered in the closing verses of this chapter. "Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the LORD, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law. Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart." V. 24-25 It is God Who has brought them to this state, because of their rebellion and unbelief. The "fury of his anger," of which Isaiah speaks, is a reference to the great tribulation, and these words will be fulfilled, in their entirety, during the 1260 reign of antichrist known as the time of "Jacob's trouble." It will be the most devastating period the world has ever known, so much so that Jesus said; "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Matt. 24:22 The "elect" is specifically Israel, and God must bring all this "wrath" upon them just to get their attention. Scripture is very clear that they will eventually bow to Him, and when they do, God will finally be able to fulfill the glorious promise of restoration, stated previously in this chapter. "And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." Isa. 42:16 25

My Dearest Wish

May God's dear love be ever near
To bless each day all thru the year;
To give new hope should there be cares;
To light our way and hear your prayers;
To guard and keep you from all harm
Beneath the shelter of His Arm

ISAIAH 43 ~ JOHN

“But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.” V. 1

26 The book of John answers beautifully to this chapter of Isaiah, for John depicts Christ as The Son Of God, The Creator, and Redeemer. The prophet Isaiah likewise includes both redemption, and creation, in these verses, along with the fact that he uses the word “LORD,” revealing Christ as God, and, while his comments here are specifically directed toward Israel, John outlines God’s Plan for the whole of humanity, encompassing both Jew and Gentile. This is the essence of John 10, wherein the beloved apostle portrays the tremendous accomplishments of the redemption offered by The Good Shepherd. “To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.” V. 3,4 “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.” V. 16 “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:” V. 27

Note also the correlation of Isaiah and John as both present Christ in His dual role as The Great Creator and The Son Of God. “But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob,... I am the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel,...” V. 1,15 John says it thus: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.” John 1:1-3 Isaiah further declares; “I am the LORD, your Holy One....your King.” V. 15 John also emphasizes both His Deity and Royalty with this account. “Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.” John 1:49

Both redemption and creation seem to be put forth in these declarations. “I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” Isa. 43:19 This act of creation will surely be literal, but is will also be fulfilled spiritually when Israel is restored. John clearly adds the beautiful spiritual provision of redemption, wherein Isaiah’s “rivers,” are presented as the waters of The Holy

Ghost which flow freely, because of Jesus' work on Calvary. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" John 7:37-39

It is quite intriguing that Isaiah employs the word "LORD" seven times in this chapter. That is the term used for Jehovah, and, once again, shows forth Christ as The Son Of God, one of the very prominent themes of John's Gospel.

Creation, and redemption, the glorious subjects couched in this first verse of our chapter, are especially refreshing after the judgments seen in chapter 42. The order presented here, portrays the fact that glorious blessing will follow the tremendous devastation of the tribulation period. God will redeem His people and will take them unto Himself, calling them, "...by thy name; (Jacob) thou art mine." He surely does "own" them, because He has both created, and redeemed, them. Their glorious blessing continues, promising; "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." V. 2 Many have claimed the "personal benefit" of this verse over the years, but its primary fulfillment is in reference to the tribulation. Moses' experience at the "burning bush," presents the same truth since "...the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." Ex. 3:2 Israel will likewise walk through the horrendous fires of tribulation, but they will never be destroyed, even as is the message in Isa. 42:25 "...and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart." The glorious reason for all this preservation of Israel seems to be two-fold as expressed in the next two verses. The first is that He will sacrifice the nations in behalf of Israel. "For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee." V. 3 This same pattern will be repeated yet again. Egypt was absolutely decimated when "...the LORD said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he

drive them out of his land.” Ex. 6:1 Pharoah’s advisors had also plead with him, “...How long shall this man be a snare unto us? let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?” Ex 10:7 So also shall the entire world be annihilated, yet Israel shall be protected, indeed snatched from the jaws of destruction as they experience first-hand the salvation of their Saviour. The second reason they are spared is because “...thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.” V. 4 God declared in the ages past that “The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers,...” Deut. 7:7-8 God was motivated simply by His love, and the honor of keeping His promises unto them, but we note also these words declaring, “...thou hast been honourable...” History proves conclusively that this was not always the case, for God Himself has concluded, numerous times, that this nation is a most rebellious, and dishonorable one. However, by the time the above prophecy comes to fruition, they will have learned the glorious splendor and magnitude of their redemption in Christ Jesus. He will make them honourable, through Christ Jesus, and they will, at last become the nation He envisioned from the beginning. Thus the re-gathering of this people, even though the rest of the world is in shambles, will quickly come to pass as The Lord indeed proclaims; “Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;” V. 5-6 Israel shall be gathered from the four corners of the earth, whence they have been scattered, “Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.” V. 7 Paul also corroborates this same glorious promise, declaring emphatically that “...all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:” Rom. 11:26 Isaiah likewise proclaims that the reason for this marvelous restoration is directly because they are now “...called by my name...I have created him...I have formed him...I have

made him.” All of this is a description of God’s handiwork, the exact same process as we are privileged to experience today. “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Eph 2:10 Such a personal, and individual, “creation,” is most beautifully performed in The Church today, but Isaiah describes this on a national level, for this entire nation of Israel, will most assuredly manifest “my glory,” during the Millennium.

The path to the above conclusion, for this restored nation, is found in the exhortation; “Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears.” V. 8 These words are, in part, the fulfillment of Jesus’ ministry outlined in chapter 42, “To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison,... And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not;... I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.” Isa. 42:7 & 16 All of these blessings have been made possible due to the devastating experiences inflicted upon them during the time of Jacob’s trouble, wherein The LORD has finally arrested the attention of this once idolatrous and rebellious people. Theirs is most assuredly the primary story here, but God would have all men bear witness to His Mighty Acts.

29

“Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth.” V. 9 The “nations,” that is, the Gentiles, along with “the people,” or Israel, are all included in this gathering to acknowledge that which only God is able to do. This “challenge” to “shew us former things,” is very much reminiscent of that which was issued in Isa. 41:23 where God demanded that if they were gods, as they claimed to be, then “Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods:” He further asserts “Ye (both Israel and the nations) are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.” V. 10 God’s purpose has always been that there be no other gods before me,” This is the message which He has so clearly demonstrated, throughout the ages, and Israel is living proof of His Words. He would have all to know

that "...I am he:..." It is noteworthy that these are the same words, uttered by Jesus on the night He was arrested, and John is the only gospel writer to relate them. "Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, **I am he**....As soon then as he had said unto them, **I am he**, they went backward, and fell to the ground. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that **I am he:...**" John 18:4-8 The italicized "*he*," in John's text, indicates that this word was not a part of the original text, thus Jesus actually said "I Am...." Those two powerful words sent these detractors flailing "backward...to the ground," conveying the same truth as He did to the rebellious, and critical Jews in John 8:58 "...Before Abraham was, I am." It means that He too is an intricate part of the Great I Am, and Isaiah reinforces that same glorious truth declaring that "I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour." V. 11 This has always been true, but in the context of this portion, wherein Israel's deliverance from the fires of tribulation is clearly seen, Jesus The Messiah emerges as The Champion and Glorious Deliverer of an otherwise doomed people. This is what all these "witnesses," both Jew and Gentle, must convey, for both have surely seen His Miraculous Power and Ability in Israel's deliverance, during impossible circumstance. Thus God shouts forth; "I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God." V. 12 The language here reads as though this has already happened, for God does most assuredly know the end from the beginning. He prophesied long ago of the glorious deliverance which Israel will experience, and though it has not come to fruition, even at this present time, it is a good as done!

This message from "I Am," continues, proclaiming "Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?" V. 13 The "day," of which He speaks must undoubtedly be the day of judgment as "...there is none that can deliver out of my hand." The time, of which He speaks here, is "before the day was,..." meaning that God has been in charge even long before this day of judgment came into view, and has borne witness of it. He further states

that “I will work and who shall let it?” The word “let” signifies “who will turn it back or reverse it,” the inference being that none can stop the heavy hand of judgment which God has decreed for this world. Our world today will surely learn that judgment is coming, upon the entire globe, and none can stay the Hand of God. However, this chapter continues with the glorious precept of “mercy in the midst of judgment,” for His elect, Israel.

“Thus saith the LORD, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships.” It is evident that the local context of Isaiah’s writings, center around Israel’s enemies of that day, but those nations are simply prophetic of the coming national coalition which will be led by the antichrist. God will also bring “down all their nobles...” for none shall stand against Him or “deliver out of my hand,...” for once again, “I am the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King.” V. 15 He will be true to His promise in redeeming Israel, even at the expense of these ungodly nations. The next few verses explain exactly how He will accomplish that task.

31

“Thus saith the LORD, which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters;” V. 16 These “mighty waters,” are a reference to these wicked nations which will, indeed, surround Israel, but God will make “a path,” even paths of destruction. Those paths will be quite manifest against that “Which bringeth forth the chariot and horse, the army and the power; they shall lie down together, they shall not rise: they are extinct, they are quenched as tow. (flax) Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old.” V.17-18 It makes no difference as to how these nations may come against her, whether it be literally by the waters or the armies and powers on land, all such efforts will be thwarted against Israel. God’s counsel here is “Remember ye not the former things,...” that is those tactics of the nations which have been so successful heretofore. Rather, the rules have now changed and, “Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.” V. 19 This path is most clearly shown forth by God’s preservation of the woman in the wilderness during those dark days of tribulation. “And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he

persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness...And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman,... And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood....” Rev. 12:13-15 God will not allow Satan and his host to destroy His Chosen People, His Elect, and Isaiah preaches this same message for “The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen.” V. 20 The owls and dragons simply put portray the wicked Satanic spirits which are behind the beastly antichrist, and the wicked nations, which are obsessed with Israel’s destruction. All those efforts will fail because “This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.” V. 21 This little, and despised, nation will achieve such a coveted status, once they have bowed to their Messiah. God will preserve and sustain them even as is evidenced here in Isaiah and Rev. 12 However, the immediate problem in Israel, at the time then present, as well as those days prior to the tribulation period, must be addressed first.

“But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel. Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt offerings; neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices. I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense. Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.” V. 22-24 These are the Divine accusations against Israel. God insists “I have not caused thee to serve with an offering,...” meaning that He had not FORCED them to accept the offering of Jesus, but neither had they accepted His Work of Redemption on their own. They had not called upon Him nor “honoured me with thy sacrifices,” that is, they had not bowed to the provisions which Jesus had made at Calvary. Because of that rejection, “...thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.” When men refuse Christ, they are yet in their sins, and that produces this “weariness,” unto God. The joyous news is that God is never at a loss. He always has the answer, and it is still the cross of Christ. He loudly proclaims His redemption, unto this nation which has

wearied Him beyond measure, crying out, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." V. 25 Calvary has already accomplished this glorious victory, but it can only be enjoyed by those who receive The Christ of Redemption. Therefore, God continues to set forth His invitation to "Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified." V. 26 We know, from God's Word, that an entire nation will learn what we, as individuals, have already experienced when we accepted this Christ, "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Rom. 4:25

"Thy first father hath sinned, and thy teachers have transgressed against me." V. 27 This too is a lesson that all Christians have already learned. Our "first father," Adam, was responsible for plunging the whole human race into total chaos and depravity. Israel, as a nation, must learn the same lesson and, in addition, realize that all "thy teachers have transgressed against me." They must finally acknowledge that all the "orthodox" traditions, and rigid requirements of the law, which denied Christ, must be put away, leaving only the knowledge that the Lowly Jesus, Whom they rejected, is The Messiah.

33

This chapter closes with the reason as to why Israel must yet abide the horrendous fires and waters of the tribulation. "Therefore I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary, and have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches." V. 28 We know from the above texts, as well as many others, that this nation will occupy the lofty place God has chosen for them, but at this present time, they, as a nation, are still locked in throes of unbelief and rebellion, and this temporary "curse," and "reproaches," among the nations, will remain until they finally forsake the teachings of these profaned "princes of the sanctuary," and fully embrace their Messiah, "...the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel,..." V. 1

ISAIAH 44 ~ ACTS

“**F**or I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:” V. 3

The Book of Acts comes into focus in this chapter, for both texts bespeak the glorious waters of refreshing that have been “poured out,” by the power of The Holy Ghost. Isaiah declares “...I will pour water upon him that is thirsty...I will pour my spirit upon thy seed.” Dr. Luke, uses much the same language in Acts 2:18. “And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:” Both of these citations are fulfilled during this Church Age, but the greater fulfillment will not be fully realized until the Millennium. This portion in Acts specifically states that “I will pour out in those days OF my spirit,” meaning that the glorious happenings, during and after the Day Of Pentecost, were only a small foretaste of the massive demonstration of God’s Power which will be evidenced during the Millennial Age.

34 Verse 8 of our current chapter also asserts that “...ye are my witnesses.” Luke likewise outlines God’s purpose for the early apostles of the Church Age, promising that “...ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be **witnesses unto me** both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” The Holy Ghost is responsible for this “witness” AFTER that He has come upon them, and this same pattern will likewise prevail, after Israel has been restored, as a Spirit-filled Nation, following her acceptance of The Messiah. Verse 24, here in Isaiah, declares plainly, “Thus saith the LORD, **thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb**, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;” Israel will have experienced such glorious redemption, by experience when these things come to pass, and the same Majesty of God recorded here, is also found in Acts 17:24 “God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;” This message too, will especially be conveyed during the Millennium when Israel is fully manifest as having been redeemed to the fullest extent, after Jesus has

claimed His rightful place as “King of kings, and Lord of lords.

Isaiah begins this chapter by announcing the very sovereignty of God, in bringing to pass His purposes for Israel. “Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen:” V. 1 This nation did absolutely nothing to warrant such treatment. Our previous chapter contains similar language and, as noted, “The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people;...But because the LORD loved you,...” Deut. 7,8 God sovereignly chose them as the apple of His eye, and only His Great Love for them, prompted all these glorious actions, and benefits, in their behalf. “Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:” V. 2-3 Israel can hope for much, according to these promises, and there are at least ten elements to consider in these verses. First, God reiterates a great theme from Ch. 43 that He has “made and formed thee.” That “creation,” as already seen, is “in Christ,” even as we enjoy today during this present Church Age. Secondly God’s work has been “from the womb,” meaning that He was already at work to perform these things before Israel was even a nation. Third, I will “help thee.” Such help will be in “full bloom,” during the tribulation period, when God will deliver them from the horrendous fires of tribulation as seen in the previous chapter. It is during this time that this small remnant, which will indeed become an entire nation, will experience the fourth provision which is “fear not.” Such freedom from fear is not just because I “will help thee,” but also brings us to the fifth benefit recorded here, for this people has become “Jacob,” that is, “the supplanter.” They need not fear, for God will surely make of them the nation He had promised heretofore. Jacob of old is often maligned for being a “thief, and scoundrel,” but he was rather a man of faith who highly esteemed the place mandated by the “birthright.” This coveted place was actually his by promise, for God had said, **even before he and Esau were born**, “the elder shall serve the younger.” Gen. 25:23 Thus Jacob “supplanted,” or took the place of the first born, even as God had already decreed. Jacob took the place of Esau even as Israel will

eventually supplant all the nations. This introduces the sixth part of this glorious blessing, for now Israel, as a nation, will become “my servant,” in actual experience. They will, in this capacity, serve Him throughout the Kingdom Age, as they will, at long last, be His witnesses even “...unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

The seventh benefit to be claimed is “...thou Jeshrun.” This is simply another name for this same chosen nation, but it also speaks of glorious experience, for Jeshrun means “the righteous one.” Jacob has, in no wise, been able to boast such a state, due to their history of rebellion and idolatry, but God’s creativity has changed that, and they will now display the practical righteousness of The Messiah. Furthermore, number eight, is that they are now manifest as those “whom I have chosen.” This is a message that, even the nations, must absolutely acknowledge when God brings it to pass. Today Israel is a most despised people, but there will come the day when all men will know, without doubt, that God has specifically chosen them for their new role of superiority.

36 This brings us to the ninth benefit recorded in this verse which, once again, hearkens back to the book of Acts. “For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty,... I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:” V. 3 These are the refreshing waters of the Holy Ghost, which will be so very prevalent in that day, not only for Israel, but for all the nations to whom they shall minister. The result of that ministry is found in the 10th and final, avenue of blessing. “And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses.” V. 4 The fruitfulness, depicted here, is undoubtedly literal, for Isaiah 35:1 promises that “The wilderness and the solitary place shall... blossom as the rose.” However, this fruit must also include the fruit of the spirit, which will be so freely produced as the Holy Ghost, is freely poured out in that day, and, as seen above, not only Israel shall be fruitful, but the nations as well.

“One shall say, I am the LORD'S; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the LORD, and surname himself by the name of Israel.” V. 5 This verse seems to be a general summation of the foregoing multiple array of blessings, and shows that men, in that day, just as is seen in the Church today, will determine how much blessing they will receive. “One shall say I am the LORD'S,...” simply indicating that he now belongs to the Great

"I Am." Another claims the name of "Jacob," which is a glorious place, but there seems to be an even greater one as "another shall subscribe with his hand unto the LORD, and surname himself... Israel." Jacob discovered this same glorious truth, for God changed his name to Israel. However, it took Jacob, a bit of time, and some rather harsh experience, before he finally laid claim to his new name of "Israel," meaning "prince of God," for he still saw himself as "supplanting another." Likewise, many in the millennial kingdom may not readily see their new role of royalty, but when one shall "subscribe with his hand unto the LORD, it means that he "writes or records" it, somewhat like a contract, claiming it for himself, even as Jacob did, appropriating by actual experience, the truth that "...as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." Gen. 32:28 This surely suggests that there will be ranks in the Kingdom Age, just as there are ranks in The Church. All of these outstanding blessings will come to fruition for Israel directly because this nation finally accepts their Messiah, Who speaks the following glorious words.

"Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his (Israel's) redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God." V. 6 These are most emphatically the words of Jesus! John heard them almost verbatim in Rev. 1:11-18 "...I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last:...And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen..." Both Isaiah and John declare the same message: Jesus will reign as God! He became the "redeemer," not only for Israel, but the entire world, when He paid the price, which God's Government demanded, on the cross of Calvary, and no one else is qualified to claim His place as Sovereign. Thus the following questions are posed.

"And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? And the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them." V. 7 These words are actually a challenge directed toward those who would try to predict and accomplish the things that only He can do. He says, in essence, "Who can stand in My Place, and set things in order for the ancient people?" He further challenges them to declare "...the things that are coming and shall come, let them shew unto them." This hearkens back to those, of Ch.

41:22, who were likewise exhorted to bring forth "...and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, ...or declare us things for to come." Our present text seems to call on these "prognosticators" to "shew unto them," that is, Israel or "the ancient people," the things that are coming, but who are they? This could most assuredly include to the "false prophets" of Israel, but due to the fact that the nations are so heavily involved with the affairs of Israel, and truly believe that they can solve all their dilemmas, these words most likely apply to Gentile World Powers, who are now called upon to "...shew them." They are the ones who must eventually acknowledge that none can set the affairs of this chosen people "...in order for me." There is none that can take the place of the LORD, for Christ Alone controls the destiny of this select nation.

38

The message to His Own "ancient people," because of His Superiority, is "Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any." V. 8 The Same One Who prophesied all these choice blessings for Israel, and proved Himself to them over and over, even from those long ago ages, now assures this people that there is no need for fear, because He lives on eternally to bring His prophetic words to pass. Contrariwise, "They that make a graven image are all of them vanity; and their delectable (beautiful, beloved) things shall not profit; and they are their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed." V. 9 Surely the day is coming when all of those who engage in idolatry must admit or become "their own witnesses," that they "see not, nor know;" what they are talking about.

The True Master of prophecy continues, assaulting those who are so steeped in idolatry, asking the question: "Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image that is profitable for nothing?" V. 10 We know that Israel has bowed to gross idolatry throughout their history, but given the repeated references to the nations in this chapter, calling on them to be witnesses of His Power, and to acknowledge the ineffectiveness of their own, efforts toward Israel, this reference to graven images undoubtedly includes their own involvement with idols. The answer to the question here, "Who hath formed a god...that is profitable for nothing?" would have to be "no one." Thus "Behold, all his fellows

shall be ashamed: and the workmen, they are of men: let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; yet they shall fear, and they shall be ashamed together.” V. 11 Despite the following vast array of individuals involved in creating these idols, all of them are “vanity” (V.9) and “profitable for nothing.” V. 10 Such idols which are simply the work of men’s hands, did not profit or accomplish anything!

All of these “craftsmen,” seem to be rather adept at their trade for, “The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms: yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth: he drinketh no water, and is faint. The carpenter stretcheth out his rule; he marketh it out with a line; he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man; that it may remain in the house.

He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it. Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire:” V. 12-

16 The general message of these verses is that these “experts,” are bent toward idolatry. The dedication of the smith seems extraordinary as he uses all his power and expertise to accomplish his task and, even though he is hungry and weak, refuses to even drink water. The carpenter is likewise totally absorbed in his work, but his tree is used for his own comfort of warmth, and the baking of bread. The fire of his tree also provides for the roasting of meat, and though all of these are God’s intended purposes for the tree, with “...the residue thereof he maketh a god even his graven image...” V. 17 After that he “...falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me: for thou art my god.” We can only wonder at the foolishness of men who would use this tree for these every day requirements, and then worship “the residue,” of the same tree, as being some deity, which would come to his aid. God also concludes that “They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that

they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand.”

V. 18 Paul reiterates this same message in the book of Acts, as he quoted directly from Isaiah 6. “And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:” Acts 28:24-26 We would emphasize that, according to the text here in Isaiah 44, “...he (God) hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see...” This was not a Sovereign Act whereby God unilaterally prevented them from “seeing and hearing, but rather, all these citations simply mean that He was faithful to display the truth before them, and because of their rebellion and unbelief, the light became darkness. Jesus taught the same lesson when the disciples asked Him “...Why speakest thou unto them in parables?” Matt. 13:10 His response was; “...Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.” Matt. 13:11 He then explains, “Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.” He then quoted the truth of these same texts from Isaiah. “And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive; For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed;...”

V. 13-15 The Master plainly insists that their own rebellion and unbelief prevent them from understanding the parables which are simply a “secret code,” whereby God will separate the one who has a hearing ear, from the one who does not.

Isaiah likewise asserts that the problem lies in the heart. “And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?” V. 19 Apparently this idolater is so engrossed in his own vision that he can in no wise ask these questions and consider the foolishness of what he is doing. He simply cannot consider “in his heart,” that if this tree is to be worshipped, which part do you separate, as being deity,

and which part would be used for such mundane purposes as cooking and keeping him warm? Neither does he consider God's view, that such worship is "...an abomination." God is certainly at no loss for answers for He plainly outlines the results of such idolatry. "He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" V. 20 Ashes are his bread, and a "deceived heart," has doomed him to the point that he does not even realize that he has believed a lie, which is a direct consequence of refusing any truth. "...because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." II Thess. 2:10-11

"Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me." V. 21 Though Israel is most assuredly guilty of the idolatry described above, God exhorts them to "Remember these," that is, these examples of unbelief, and the fact that "thou art my servant..." Despite all their history of rebellion and rejection, they are still God's Chosen People, and He will not forget them. That truth is reinforced by the fact of redemption for "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee." V. 22 First, God has already "blotted out...thy transgressions, and,...thy sins..." That happened at the Cross, as it did for all men, now the path is clear for them to "return unto me..." This glorious advantage will belong to Israel, as a nation, the day they accept the Messiah Whom they have so long rejected. We would also note, that when Israel assumes their rightful place, the whole universe will respond with this song of victory, giving honor to The LORD. "Sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel." V. 23 Only The LORD could perform these stupendous acts in restoring this nation to her appointed place, and it has all been through the glorious process of redemption found in Christ Jesus. Scripture is very plain that all men have been redeemed, but God's purposes have always centered around Israel, as is demonstrated by V. 24. "Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb,..." Then follows the fact

that "...I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;" The language here, once again, parallels the book of Acts. "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;" Acts 17:24 God is seen here as the Only Creator, and presents Himself in direct contrast to the false gods who boast of their own accomplishments and abilities. He is further rather adamant in proclaiming that He "frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish;" V. 25 All of these things declare just how Unique and Superior The LORD Is. He Alone can accomplish such feats of creation, and He "frustrates the tokens of the liars,..." The word "tokens" means "monuments, flags, or beacons," which supposedly present evidence, that these gods exist. God has repeatedly invited these diviners and wise men to prove themselves, and predict the future, as only He can do, but they have been unable to accomplish it. He frustrates them with specifics of what He can do for God is The ONE "That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof:" His "servant," is undoubtedly a direct reference to Isaiah, who did most assuredly prophesy a number of things that came to pass before their very eyes. God also went on record saying "...to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built,..." This bespeaks the fact that Jerusalem would be rebuilt after the Babylonish captivity, and history confirms that this restoration did come to pass. It is also a prophecy of the end time promising that Jerusalem, which even in this day, is under siege by a great number of opposing powers, will be restored in all her glory. Not only so, but He "... saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers:" V. 27 God did that locally when He gave those, who went back to Jerusalem under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, great victories over the "deep," waters and "rivers" of their enemies. The greater fulfillment will be when He literally annihilates the "gentile waters," or nations during the great tribulation. Furthermore, This Same Majestic Champion, is very specific when He "...saith of Cyrus, He is my (God's) shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even

saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.” Isaiah uttered these words hundreds of years, before they came to pass, long before Cyrus was even born, and long before Jerusalem would be taken captive to Babylon. This message testifies to the fact that Jerusalem, which was completely demolished, and burned with fire by Nebuchadnezzar, would be restored after 70 years, by the decree of Cyrus, who became the leader of the second world empire known as Medo-Perisa. The confirmation of Cyrus’ role in this matter is found in II Chron. 36:22-23 “Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah (Jer. 25:11-12) might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up.”

Isaiah 45, verses 1 & 4, also designate Cyrus, by name, as he whom God would use to implement His purposes, thus showing once again, that God only, is God. He Alone can distinguish Himself from all these other gods, who would try to, even remotely, imitate that which only The LORD can do. 43

Hold Me Fast

Hold me fast, O mighty Savior,
hold me fast,
While storms and tempests lash my
ship, hulk and mast.
Keep me safe these nights of
terror—thru hours vast—
Till the dawn, that I may
hear first trumpet blast,
Caught away ‘in Jesus’ arms,
“The First and Last.”

ISAIAH 45 ~ ROMANS

The glorious truths, of the Power and Dominion of God, along with the call to salvation by faith presented in the book of Romans, are beautifully set forth in this 45th chapter of Isaiah. Both writers share verses that are almost verbatim in the truth they convey. Consider the following:

Isa. 45:9 “Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?”

Rom. 9:20-21 “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?”

Isa. 45:17 “But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.”

44

Rom. 11:25-26 “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:” Both Paul and Isaiah describe the God’s Work, in restoring the nation of Israel, as He fashions them according to His Plan and implements It by making them a new creation in Christ Jesus “All Israel” shall surely “be saved,” but it will be by virtue of the new birth.

This next portion from Isaiah describe the requirement for bringing this wholesale restoration to pass. “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else... In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.” Isa. 45:22 & 25 Now hear Paul. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” Rom. 1:16 He further instructs that the path to salvation for all men is by grace through faith. “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:” Rom. 3:24 “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace

with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:" Rom. 5:1

These two stalwarts of Truth are also in complete agreement, as they loudly proclaim the Majesty and Complete Dominion of Jesus, when He fully assumes His Role as King of kings and Lord of lords. Isaiah emphatically writes, "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." Isa. 45: 23 Paul likewise chimes in shouting; "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." Rom. 14:11

Isaiah begins our current chapter at the same point where Ch. 44 ends. "Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;" V. 1 The first ten verses of this chapter seem to be addressed directly to Cyrus, but they are "For Jacob my servant's sake and Israel mine elect,..." V. 4 The message of this first verse is clearly a prophecy of Babylon's demise, for God would "loose the loins of kings to open before him the leaved gates,..." that is, Cyrus would be given unrestrained, and permanent entrance into Babylon. God also promises that "I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron; And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel." V. 2-3 God proved to be true to His Word, for Cyrus became the supreme leader of the second world empire known as Medo-Persia. Not one would be able to resist him for God would "...break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron;" and he most assuredly did gain possession of all the "... the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places,..." which formerly belonged to Babylon. God's intent was that "... that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel." He would have Cyrus know Who is actually in charge here, and the next part of His message seems to indicate that all the power and prosperity given to him, is directly in behalf of Israel. "For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me." V. 4 God declared specifically

that “I have called thee by name,” but that name is not just Cyrus. He rather says that I have “surnamed thee,” and that surname would be “anointed,” as seen in V. 1 “Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus...” The word carries exactly the same meaning as “Messiah,” and Cyrus is most assuredly typical of the Real Messiah, Jesus, Who will liberate and enrich the Jews of the end time. It is also noteworthy that these riches, out of the coffers of Babylon, were made available to the Jews for the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem, for “...Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods; Even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah. And this is the number of them: thirty chargers of gold, a thousand chargers of silver,... Thirty basons of gold, silver basons ...All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred. All these did Sheshbazzar bring up with them of the captivity that were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem.” Ezra 1:7-11

46

All of this “enabling” by Cyrus, was to ensure that he knew God’s purpose that “I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:” V. 5 Cyrus becomes another typical figure at this juncture, for he now speaks of the nations, which God will use as instruments for His Own People at the very end of this age. Twice, in these last two verses, it is said of Cyrus, “...thou has not known me.” So also, all the nations of the end time will need such an “introduction,” to this same God of Israel. They too will learn, by bitter experience that “I am the LORD,...there is none else, there is no God beside me:...” as, once again, God does stand up for His people and they shall be delivered, even at the expense of these same nations. All such nations are surely meant by V. 6 “That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me I am the LORD, and there is none else.” This message addressed to Cyrus, and meant for all those nations who will survive the tribulation, continues with these rather mysterious words. “I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.” V. 7 The tenor of this address is a familiar one, from previous chapters, where God outlines things that He

can do, but men simply cannot. Scripture is quite clear that "... God is light, and in him is no darkness at all," (I John 1:5) so how is it that He creates darkness? The mystery is actually revealed in this same verse. Darkness is revealed or "created," when God would "form the light," and thus reveal darkness for what it is. Likewise evil is "created" in the sense that God demonstrates the glorious attributes of "peace," through the Lord Jesus Christ. When these things are fully manifest, it will be shown, to all the world, that God has brought about the long sought peace for His People, when all these nations, with their "evil machinations," will have miserably failed. This process continues as God reveals that all the solutions to the ills of mankind are from above. "Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it." We learn these lessons today, knowing first-hand that righteousness comes only through the Lord Jesus Christ. This same glorious truth will be manifested universally to all the nations of this earth when Jesus assumes His Rightful Place as King of kings and Lord of lords. He Alone will bring the "salvation," for which whole earth has yearned, and waited, and the earth will surely spring forth in righteousness on a world-wide scale. However, with this glorious projection of righteousness and peace, there also comes forth a very severe warning, and it seems to be directed both toward Israel and the nations.

47

"Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?" V. 9 This verse could be paraphrased as follows. "Let these 'sherds,' or pieces, referring to the nations, strive with one another all they want to, but DO NOT STRIVE AGAINST YOUR MAKER, because there will be severe consequences if you do." "Woe unto him that saith unto his father, What begettest thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth?" V. 10 The Superiority of God is the lesson taught here, and it must be observed both by individuals and nations. All men must learn that; It was God who chose our natural parents, and we can neither question, nor blame, Him for the choices He has made for us. "Woe" awaits the one who does, for He has His own Purposes to fulfill, His Own Reasons for the way He does it, and one day,

the Nations, will learn that all their own existence must center around Israel. The Millennium will bring forth a nation which will, as it were, be a “Father,” to all the world, instructing the entire kingdom in the ways of God’s Righteousness. This fact is reinforced by the next segment of Isaiah’s discourse. “Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me. I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.” V. 11-12 Israel is clearly the central subject of these words, but it is also quite clear that the nations are included for they too are “...the work of my hands,...” and a part of the earth which He Alone has created. They too must observe the fact that God’s Ways are not to be questioned and one of the specific things that they should do is “...Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me.” God is literally inviting the nations to ask, of Him, the plans that He has already ordained for this very Select and Chosen People.” We know of a surety that none of the nations of our day have any intention of seeking such information concerning this Little Nation which has become a thorn in the side of the whole world, but one day they will be forced to bow before Christ and accept God’s Plan “...concerning my sons...”

48

“I have made the earth,...” declares God, and this also is one of the primary themes in Romans where Paul tells us emphatically that God has left creation as an absolute witness of His Own Existence. “Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; **so that they are without excuse:**” Rom. 1:19-20 It is no wonder that men are fighting so desperately to proclaim the myth of evolution, rather than embrace the truth of creation, for then they would have to acknowledge God. However, all their efforts will be in vain for The Creator will not be denied, and He becomes even more specific in regard to His creation and His plan of bringing righteousness into this world. Our present text continues, informing us that God did create the earth “...and created man upon it:...” but the next verse clearly announces the fact that The Maker has a specific Man in mind, Who will bring

about all His promised blessing for Israel. "I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts." V. 13 Locally, this man would have been Cyrus, who would set the Jews free to go back to Jerusalem, and he would not be bound by "...price or reward,..." meaning that he would not be "bribed," or controlled by man, for he was under the direct control and direction of The LORD. The greater fulfillment will of course be realized when King Jesus liberates this same nation in the end time and establishes Jerusalem as His Own, bringing everlasting righteousness to the entire world, as is seen in the next segment of this prophecy.

"Thus saith the LORD, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, Surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God." V. 14 These words were surely fulfilled when the surrounding nations were forced to bow before these lowly Jews when they went back to Jerusalem, following Cyrus' decree, but once again, their real fulfillment will come when all nations of the world are forced to be subservient to Israel. Note the elements, of which the world boasts, which are presented here. The "labour," or hard work, which is the mantra of success for much of the planet, must bow to Israel. The merchandisers and great men of stature, represented by Ethiopia and the Sabeans are likewise represented as being an asset, not to themselves, but to Israel. Israel, as the head and not the tail of the nations, shall be dominant over them all and the greater part of this glorious prophecy is that, at long last "...they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, Surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God. Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour." V. 14-15 This is the direct fulfillment of Rev. 2:26 "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works **unto the end**, (of the tribulation) to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father." It is Christ Who will be shown as the Dominant One, even through His Own People, Israel.

That total domination, by Israel over these nations,

continues asserting that “They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols.” V. 16 Israel has had their share of association with idols, down through the ages, but these words apply especially to the nations which had erroneously assumed that Israel would bow down to them forever. It is quite true that God did exalt these Gentile Nations over Israel during Gentile Times, but that time is soon to be over, despite the message these Gentile may have gotten from their lying “idols.” God declares emphatically that “...Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.” V. 17 The humiliation for Israel will be complete and the correlation with Romans, as Paul describes the future of Israel, is remarkable at this juncture. “And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.” Rom. 11:26-27 Such salvation is, by no means arbitrary, but rather, directly because they have finally accepted Their Messiah, and this glorious message of restoration continues as God once again reiterates His Role as The Creator.

50

“For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else.” V. 18 The little word “For” in this verse connects it with V. 17, and describes exactly **how** “Israel shall be saved...” This portion beautifully describes the natural creation recorded in Gen. 1:1-2 “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep...” Our current verse, here in Isaiah, tells us that God did not create the world “without form and void,...” He specifically “...formed the earth and made it;...established it,...created it not in vain,...formed it to be inhabited:...” However, due to the fall of Satan, and the universal upheaval which ensued, God re-created the heavens and the earth according to the pattern in Genesis. This account should quiet the critic who insists that the Bible cannot be true because the world is far older than the supposed 6,000 years, indicated by Genesis 1-2, which indeed it is. The fact is that all the prehistoric discoveries men have made, were a part of the **FIRST** creation of

the earth, and that means God could have created them millions, or even billions of years ago. We would ask our own question. How old is Satan? If one can answer that, he can determine how old the earth is for Satan was a part of God's first creation.

This same pattern applies to Israel. He did not create them in vain but they, like the world, had a "sick spell," whereby God had to re-create them IN CHRIST JESUS. They too will ultimately be the creation which He intended, thus His message directly to them. "I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right." V. 19 He does declare that which is Right, True, and Factual, and it is right for Israel to occupy first place among the nations. That means that this little, insignificant nation, will now lead their former oppressors in the ways of righteousness. They will now literally lead them out of idolatry.

"Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save. Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me." Israel has learned this message of salvation in actual experience, and now they are exhorted to "Assemble yourselves....draw near together...." This would have been the admonition following the Babylonish Captivity, after the Jews had been freed by Cyrus, but it is especially indicative of the end time when this nation will convince those of the millennium to forsake praying "...unto a god that cannot save." God says, "bring them near, let them take counsel together..." to understand this God Who has spoken these things from the beginning. They must convey the message that "...there is not God else beside me...." This was God's purpose, from ages past, in making Israel, "...unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel." Ex. 19:6

Isaiah further exhorts, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." V. 22 The message is the same for both Israel and "all the ends of the earth:..." God is God and none can compare with Him.

He is the Saviour, both of His Own Chosen People, and all these Nations, and all men must recognize His Sovereignty.

52 “I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.” V. 23 This attribute of God is true of all The Word of God according to Isa. 55:11 for we read that “...it shall not return unto me void...” However, God makes a very specific point here, iproclaming that “...every knee shall bow,...” whether willingly or unwillingly. It will be a forced submission during the tribulation period, but there will come that day when men will truly acknowledge His Glorious Plan of Redemption and “Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.” V. 24,25 Israel will first learn these glorious lessons, even through the horrendous experience of the tribulation period, but they will also comfort the nations, as a “kingdom of priests,” instructing all men of that day; “...in the LORD have I righteousness and strength:...” Paul likewise answers “And so all Israel shall be saved:...There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and...turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins...For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” Rom. 11:26-29

Thus ends this chapter, with the assurance that Israel shall most assuredly occupy that prime place for which God has created them.

Prayer for the Saints

May God in mercy send you
His Help along the way,
His Grace for every trial,
His Courage for each day;
His Hope for each tomorrow,
His Strength in all you do,
His Guidance and His Blessing—
May He send all this to you!

ISAIAH 46 ~ I CORINTHIANS

“**B**ut of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:” I Cor. 1:30

The above scripture is just one example of how Isaiah 46 forms a clear link with Paul’s message in I Corinthians, where Christ is determined to be our righteousness. Verse 13 of our present chapter declares that “I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.” Both citations are a clear reference to Christ, the only righteousness which God has ever recognized, and both Jew and Gentile are included in its provision.

Both Paul and Isaiah also point out the fallacy of idolatry. God clearly contrasts himself with idols in the following verses as He exhorts His hearers to “Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will **do all my pleasure:**” V. 9-10 The idols pictured in verses 1-2 are in no wise capable of **doing** anything. Rather, they must be ministered TO, and carried about on some carriage, rather than being a service to others. “Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages were heavy loaden; they are a burden to the weary beast. They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity.” 53

Paul likewise declares the vanity of idols, and the Supremacy of God. “...we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.” I Cor. 8:4 The Corinthians were also reminded that, “...ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.” I Cor. 12:2

Idolatry has been a major theme in the last few chapters of Isaiah, as God has repeatedly distinguished Himself as having the ability to perform great feats, while the idols of men remained powerless in the same endeavor. He begins this portion asserting that “Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages were heavy loaden; they are a burden to the weary beast. They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are

gone into captivity.” “Bel” is simply another word for Baal, and “Nebo,” is a Babylonish deity. Isaiah concludes that all of them, though purported to be a great benefit, must be borne about on beasts and carriages. They proved that they could, in no wise, “... deliver the burden,...” but the idols along with those who trusted in them, “...are gone into captivity.” Contrariwise, God invites these idolaters to “Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb:” V. 3 These idols failed in bearing themselves, let alone Israel, but God emphatically states that He has most assuredly borne “...all the remnant of the house of Israel,...” from the very time in which they were conceived as a nation. He also assures them that such care has not ended for “... even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.” V. 4 God never begins something that He cannot finish, and though He has proven these words again and again in the history of Israel, He will yet bring them to the place He has promised. They will be an “aged nation,” by the time all His purposes are fulfilled for them in the Millennium, but still He will bear them unto Himself. Thus God challenges them. “To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like?” V. 5 They have tried multiple gods, but which of them may be compared like unto God? Who can be His equal? “They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god: they fall down, yea, they worship. They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and he standeth; from his place shall he not remove: yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble.” V. 6-7 These idolaters have spent great sums of money to hire one to “create,” a god for them. After that, they fall down, worship it, and carry it about on their own shoulder, rather than being borne about by its own idolatrous power. It is then set in a certain place, and simply remains there, lifeless, unable to move out of his place, even though one may “cry” unto it. It cannot answer such a plea for help, and is certainly unable to “...save him out of his trouble.” All these lessons Israel has learned from their idolatrous ways and now God calls on them to “Remember this, and shew yourselves men: bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors. Remember the

former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me,” V. 8-9 This nation has had experiences with The LORD, from the time they were conceived as a nation in the land of Egypt. God showed Himself Mighty in their behalf as He poured out the plagues of judgment against their captors and led them out of that land across the Red Sea, destroying the Egyptians in the process. Such Mighty Acts were also repeated again and again in the wilderness as He sweetened the waters at Marah, rained down the Manna from heaven, and brought forth Water out of the Rock. Miracles have abounded throughout the history of this nation, and Israel is exhorted to “Remember the former things of old:” in order that they might know that God is indeed God, and “...there is none like me.” He has proven Himself to them multitudinous times and now they are to “...shew yourselves men...” or grow up into what God has ordained for them.

God further defines Himself; “Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:” V. 10 This is one of the major tests which God had put before them in the past few chapters. He had previously called on them to “Produce your cause,...bring forth your strong reasons,... Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen: ...or declare us things for to come. Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: **yea, do good, or do evil**, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together. Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is he that chooseth you.” Isa. 41:21-24 Now, He declares definitively that He can indeed declare, “...the end from the beginning,...” meaning that He can foretell, in intricate detail, what will transpire in the future, and then bring it to pass. These “gods,” have simply proven, beyond doubt, that they cannot accomplish such feats, and thus they can, by no stretch of the imagination, be His equal. He then puts an exclamation point on His message by giving an example of how His “...counsel shall stand , and I will do all my pleasure:”

“Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.” V. 10 This “ravenous bird,” would undoubtedly be the aforementioned

Cyrus, from the east country of Persia, the point being that God foretold his arrival even before the first world empire, Babylon, had been inaugurated. Medo-Persia did not come to power until after the Babylonish Empire collapsed and the 70 year captivity of The Jews was ended. God truly can "...declare the things not yet done," and Cyrus will most assuredly bring to pass all His Counsel, in regard to Israel, and indeed the world.

56 "Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness:" V. 12 The "stouthearted," here would be those of Israel whom God must turn from their idolatrous ways. They are most assuredly "far from righteousness," but according to His Own Counsel, they will come to the place of repentance, where they, as an entire nation will experience the full deliverance promised in the closing verse of this chapter. "I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory." V. 13 Scripture repeatedly testifies of the fact that Israel, and the beloved city of Jerusalem, Zion, will be saved and the good news is that "it shall not be far off." The path to that salvation is through "my righteousness," that is, Christ, Whom Israel will accept as their Messiah. God has spoken it from ages past, "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:" thus assuring that these fulfilled prophecies of "...salvation in Zion..." will produce "...my glory."

OUR HEART CRY

Come Lord. Thy foes are increasing.
With taunting of lips they say,
"Where now is Christ's promised advent?
'Tis years since He went away."

Come Lord. Thy saints are all calling,
While error stalks on its way,
And scoffers are mockingly asking,
"When now is the judgment day?"

Come Lord. Thy reign then beginng,
Over the earth and the sea.
Bring peace to this world of sorrow.
Come Lord, and make all men free.

ISAIAH 47 ~ II CORINTHIANS

“Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate.” V. 1

This chapter of Isaiah is in direct contrast to II Corinthians, where The Apostle Paul espouses, or engages, The Church, as a whole, unto The Lamb. “For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” II Cor. 11:2 Paul most assuredly espoused The Church as a chaste virgin unto Christ, but her over-all condition, at this hour, is certainly not one of virginity. Isaiah’s message is one of judgment, exposing “... Babylon the great...,” or Catholicism, which claims to be the Bride of Christ, as a counterfeit of the True Bride of The Lamb. Thus they are invited to “Come down, and sit in the dust,...sit on the ground...” for “...there is no throne....” All this describes the judgment awaiting this one who did begin as a “...virgin...” Catholicism did not just suddenly appear on the scene, but they were, as they boast, there among those in the upper room on the Day Of Pentecost. They rightfully assert, and boast, that Catholicism is the only Church which can trace her roots back to the early Apostles. However, when making such a claim, they must also own the unbelief and rebellion manifest, throughout the Dark Ages, for by their own admission, they were the only ones there. Therefore, they must recognize the fact that they did not retain their “virgin character,” for they did leave their “first, or chief, love” for Christ, during the Ephesian era of The Church (Rev. 2:4) and then deteriorated rapidly into the Pergamos Era, where they adopted “...the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.” Rev. 2:14 Paul warned the Corinthians about taking other headships, that is, claiming men as their head rather than Christ, in his first epistle to them. “Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” I Cor. 1:12-13 Does this not sound like our own day, when men identify themselves by the organization, or

Church, with which they are affiliated, or in some cases “saved?” Taking such headships of men constitutes spiritual fornication, and Protestantism has followed the same pattern as Catholicism. This same Catholic Church does, in fact, claim the identity of being “*the mother church.*” Scripture agrees, designating her as “the mother of harlots,” (Rev. 17:5) meaning exactly that: she is a harlot, and has surrendered headships to men rather than Christ. This is the essence of the “...doctrine of Balaam,...” wherein this false prophet persuaded Israel, through natural fornication, to bow down to the gods of the Amorites, thus committing spiritual fornication. Num. 25 The term “fornication,” simply indicates that a person either takes, or submits to, a place of headship, which has not been given to him, and this is a part of Catholic doctrine as they force men to bow down before the Pope and “kiss his ring,” homage that is to be given only unto Christ, even as the woman who came to Simon the Pharisee’s house and washed “...his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.” Lk. 7:38 Catholics are also compelled to “confess their sins” unto a priest, which, according to their catechism, has power to absolve them --- for a price. This is in direct violation of God’s Word which plainly proclaims that only Christ “...hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” Acts 5:31 Paul likewise reinforces this scriptural fact that only IN Christ “...we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;” Eph. 1:7 Men simply do not have the power to unilaterally forgive sin. Even the Pharisees proclaimed that message, when they denied the Deity of Jesus. “And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?” Luke 5:21 Jesus, The Judge, further levels these same accusations of such erroneous teachings against this woman in His letter to the Church at Thyatira: “Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which **calleth herself** a prophetess, to teach and to **seduce my servants to commit fornication**, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they

repent of their deeds.” Rev. 2:20-22 This woman deserves the same judgment described by Isaiah, and according to Rev. 17-18, Babylon, will be taken down into the dust, where she will not be recognized as “...tender and delicate,...” a term reserved only for the True Bride of The Lamb. Her judgment will be swift, sure, and complete as the prophet describes in the following text.

“Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers. Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man.” V. 2-3 These words record the direct rejection of this woman. Despite all her contrivances and deception, her true character of idolatry will be revealed, and she shall be stripped naked, proving that she is not the wife of The Lamb “...who hath made herself ready,” for her husband. Rev. 19:8

Isaiah does not reveal the true bridal company, who will take her place after the imposter is uncovered, but he does inform us of Israel’s future. “As for our redeemer, the LORD of hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel.” V. 4 According to Matthew 25, the marriage of The Lamb, will take place somewhere around “midnight,” or the middle of the tribulation week, when the five wise virgins, or 144,000, the final rank of the Church, is safely found in heaven. These two events signify the fact that God’s dealings with the Church will have been completed, and He will now turn His Primary Attention unto Israel. Though this fledgling nation, seen here only as remnant, will be in the severe difficulty known as the “time of Jacob’s trouble,” (Jer. 30:7) they will most assuredly begin to experience the blessings imparted unto them by “...the redeemer, the LORD of hosts...the Holy One of Israel,” as they endure the last 1260 days of that awful week. 59

History will record a far different story for Babylon, who is now told to “Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms.” V. 5 This is a direct prophecy of Nebuchadnezzar’s political Babylon, which will give way to Medo-Persia, but, as noted above, the greater fulfillment will be in the demise of Babylon The Great. Much of the language found in Rev. 17,18 which records the destruction of the False Church, is almost verbatim to the words of judgment upon Babylon found in this current chapter of Isaiah. The two views of Babylon, one being political, the other religious, may be a bit confusing at times,

but Isaiah's reference to Babylon as a woman is significant, for the religious aspect of nations is often symbolized by women. A religious Babylon is assailed for her idolatry in the previous chapter of this book. The same woman, who introduces our present chapter, is also depicted riding the political beast in Rev. 17, and the judgment pronounced upon her is likewise described in Rev. 18:2-17 "...Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, ...Come out of her, my people,... her sins have reached unto heaven...she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously,...Therefore shall her plagues come in one day,... she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her...The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, ...and slaves, and souls of men...are departed from thee,...Alas, alas, that great city,...in one hour...is come to nought..."

60

Babylon, along with the three world empires which followed her, was permitted to bring Israel into captivity, because "I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand: thou didst shew them no mercy; upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke." V. 6 Nebuchadnezzar, and his host, did take the inhabitants of Jerusalem back to Babylon, but God declares that His "...inheritance..." was "...polluted..." because they were given into his hand, and rather than defending them and taking care of them, Nebuchadnezzar showed "...no mercy..." unto them. He also had apparently had no consideration for the elderly for "...upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke." This same pattern has continued throughout Gentile Times. The nations, as a whole, have had no regard for this people, and, for the most part, have actually abused them. They also seem to think that their role of superiority will never end. "And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it." V. 7 The nations of our day have not departed from the example set by Babylon. They seem to think that they too can do as they wish with God's people, never stopping to consider His requirements in making them caretakers of His "inheritance," which they have "polluted." They will likewise hear this rebuke.

"Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss

of children:" V. 8 Nebuchadnezzar and his grandson Belshazzar, the first and the last rulers of Babylon, possessed this attitude, but once again, it is amazing how these words are almost identical to those describing the inward thoughts of Babylon The Great. "... she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." Rev. 18:7

Despite such "confidence," and assurance in regard to her future, judgment did come to Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon, and the same will prevail for Babylon The Great. "But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments." V. 9 Daniel describes the swift demise of Babylon happening all in one night. "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old." Dan. 5:30,31

The destruction of Religious Babylon will also occur quickly, and for exactly the same reasons: "...they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments." This truth is confirmed in Rev. 18:8 & 23. "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day,...and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her...for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived." 61

The above text assures us that it is God Who judges her, and Isaiah declares the reason. "For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me." V. 10 Is this not the same message heard from The Catholic Church today, proclaiming that she is the only Church and in fact speaking words, that can only be attributed to God: "...I am, and none else beside me." It is only God, The Great I Am, Who can boldly declare "...I am the LORD; and there is none else." Isa. 45:18

Nebuchadnezzar and his regime surely found that none can assume such a place without consequence, "Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it

off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know.” V. 11 This literally happened, as stated above, for history records that Darius the Mede made his entrance into Babylon through the sewer system, while “Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.” Dan. 5:1 This last ruler of Babylon was completely oblivious to the trouble that awaited him, until Daniel interpreted the “hand writing on the wall, informing him that “... Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.” Dan. 5:28

62 Following all these accusations, and indictments against her this woman, representing Religious Babylon, is commanded to “Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail.” V. 12 The word “enchantments,” means “a spell or charmer,” and is the same avenue which the aforementioned Balaam pursued in trying to curse Israel. These enchantments are Satanic, being linked with “...thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth;...” Catholicism abounds with such Satanic superstitions, and traditions, which, by their own admission, have no scriptural basis. Though God used this false system to actually preserve the scriptures throughout the Dark Ages that light will be removed from her according to Rev. 18:23. “And the light of a candle shall shine no more **at all** in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.” She has labored in her sorceries, “from thy youth,” at the expense of The Light she had in the beginning, but now even that light will be gone and that process is already quite evident in our day. Furthermore, “Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee.” V. 13 Despite seducing the nations, and commanding a world-wide following with all her prognostications, and tools of witchcraft, all these “counsels,” will not be able to prevent the destruction of The False Church, any more than all those elements could save ancient Babylon. God assures us that all such “tools,” “...shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the

power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it.” This prophecy means that the fires of destruction will be so intense that there will be nothing left to burn, “...there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it.” Those observing the destruction of the False Church likewise proclaim: “For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.” Rev. 18:17-19

Isaiah concludes this chapter in perfect agreement with the same merchants recorded in Revelation. “Thus shall they be unto thee with whom thou hast laboured, even thy merchants, from thy youth: they shall wander every one to his quarter; none shall save thee.” V. 15 Catholicism has been made rich, and has enriched many merchants by her “religious wares,” even “from thy youth.” That day is now over, and none of those merchants, or any other endeavor, “...shall save thee.”

63

KEEP ON PRAYING

When it seems your prayers are dry,
Keep on praying.

You may please God if you try,
Keep on praying.

He will never let you fail.

By His Word you shall prevail.
Keep on praying.

When you feel you cannot stand,
Keep on praying.

Let Him take you by the hand.
Keep on praying.

Look to Christ your conquering King,
Till you can His praises sing.
Keep on praying.

—Selected.

ISAIAH 48 ~ GALATIANS

“**M**y little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,” Gal. 4:19

“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?” Gal. 3:1

64 This chapter of Isaiah presents a rather interesting correlation with Galatians, in that both Isaiah and Paul reprimand their hearers for trying to portray themselves as something they are not. Paul addressed the Galatians as “little children,” but his questions to them indicate that they were, in no wise, where they “should have been” spiritually. “Ye did run well;...” he cries, “... who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?” Gal. 5:7 He also enquired, “Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” Gal. 3:3 Likewise Isaiah demands, “Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the LORD, and make mention of the God of Israel,...” V. 1 These are most assuredly wonderful traits for this nation to exhibit, however, the latter part of this same verse indicates that they were “...**not in truth, nor in righteousness.** He further accuses them of being “...obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass;” V. 4 They are called by the name of Israel, or “prince with God,” and they “... swear by the name of the LORD,...” but they are walking in the ways of rebellion. Paul also leveled these rather harsh words of reprimand against those who would be justified by the Law rather than Christ. “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace... Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? Gal. 5:4-7 The chief apostle to the Church also severely reprimanded Peter because the latter refused to eat with the Gentiles sending this strong message to those around him. “But when I saw that they **walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel,** I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?” Gal. 2:14

God also knew that Israel also had a great problem with idolatry, and would attribute fulfilled prophecies to the idols,

rather than to Himself, saying; "...Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them." V. 5

Paul also determined that The Galatians had been duped by witchcraft asking "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you,..." or who has used satanic witchcraft against you? Gal. 3:1 He further denounced them for attributing righteousness to the law rather than Christ, explaining that "...if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." Gal. 2:21 Such statements are a tremendous blow unto God's redemption and indeed rob Him of His Glory even as Israel had done. Thus from the outset of this chapter, Isaiah describes the tremendous advantage that was given to this people, but they did not walk in the ways that God had ordained for them.

"Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the LORD, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness." V. 1 God had called them as Israel, or "Prince with God," as noted above. They also sprang from the refreshing "waters of Judah," or "Praise," but apparently when they swore by the "name of the LORD," or made "mention of the name of the God of Israel," it was only a form or pretense to them. There was not real righteousness and truth attached to their actions. They did indeed claim that they had availed themselves of His provisions as "... they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel; The LORD of hosts is his name," but their actions belied their words, as noted in V. 4, "...thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass;" The chief reason for such an accusation seems to be couched in these words. "I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed them; I did them suddenly, and they came to pass." V. 3 God has insisted repeatedly in these last few chapters that He can prophecy things, even thousands of years before they happen, and then bring it to pass. One such prominent example is that of Cyrus, who would deliver the Jews, and make provision for the temple in Jerusalem to be restored after the Babylonish Captivity had ended. However, Israel seems to have the idea that even though God, "...even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it

thee:..." they would give such credit to their idol. The context of these words is that God deliberately spoke these things far in advance "... lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them." V. 5 He further insists "Thou hast heard, see all this; and will not ye declare it? I have shewed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them." V. 6 God emphatically announces that Israel has known all these glorious things, but they simply refuse to make them known as coming from God. They have seen fulfilled prophecy right before their eyes, but will not acknowledge that God is responsible for it. He continues His assault, removing any excuses they might try to use, explaining that "They are created now, and not from the beginning;..." He means that the things He has brought to pass, right in front of them, did not exist from the beginning of time, so to speak, but He created them specifically for their benefit during their time of need. God continues to insist that He has done these things "...even before the day when thou heardest them not; lest thou shouldest say, Behold, I knew them." V. 7 Israel could not say that these miraculous happenings always existed, or that they
66 "would have come to pass anyway." God would expose their rebellious hearts and bring them to repentance, pointing out the fact that "Yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not; yea, from that time that thine ear was not opened: for I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb." V. 8 The Creator surely knew all the rebellion that was a part of the Adamic nature, even "from the womb." It is the same nature as that exhibited by the Galatians when they too would "...not obey the truth..." and "...walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel."

God considered all this, in regard to the whole of humanity but specifically concerning Israel, He now declares, "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." V. 9 God would have been justified in annihilating the entire human race, but He found a way to preserve them. Likewise, He could have destroyed Israel long ago, when they bowed down before the golden calf after He had delivered them out of Egypt. He did, in fact tell Moses, "Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and

I will make of thee a great nation.” Ex. 32:10 God could have destroyed them at that time, and still honored His promises to Abraham through Moses, but through the intercession of this same meek man, He did not do that. Instead, This Mighty Creator, Who is never taken unawares, brought forth His Own Glorious Plan of Redemption. Israel has been most rebellious, steeped in idolatry, but the innovative Ways of God can boldly declare, “Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.” V. 10 This is prophetic of the end time when He will “refine,” this entire nation through the fires of the tribulation. He will bring forth that nation, which He envisioned from the beginning, and it will be “For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another.” V. 11 The glory of God is reflected in His Plan of redemption. His Name would have been “polluted,” that is, “wounded, dissolved, profaned,” but the redemption in Christ Jesus, not only preserved Israel but the whole Adamic race. The only requirement is “Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last.” V. 12 These are the Words of Jesus! He is seen as The Judge in Rev. 1, loudly proclaiming “... I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last:...” Rev. 1:11 He will be reigning as God, when this response from Israel actually comes to fruition. He, as God, will assume full control of both heaven and earth, and “Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together.” V. 13 Jesus has always been God, and these words of creation are borne out in John’s declaration of Him. “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.” John 1:3 However, the fullness of such Majesty will not be fully manifest until that time when He is enthroned as King of kings and Lord of lords, which will signal the full restoration of Israel.

All of these things seem to put forth His “credentials,” for the next command. “All ye, assemble yourselves, and hear; which among them hath declared these things?...” V. 14 These words are in reference to the “idols” which have been so problematic for Israel. God continues to enlarge on the fact that only He is “the first and the last,...” and only He has “...from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee:...”

He Alone can claim this superiority over such powerless idols and thus He asks, "...which among them hath declared these things,..." meaning, which of them has declared the deliverance of Israel described in Vs. 9-13 and which of them has answered the challenge of Ch. 41:23 "Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods:..." Verse 14 continues, showing HOW The LORD will accomplish His deliverance. "... The LORD hath loved him: he will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans." The POWER, in God's redemption of this choice nation, lies in His Love for them. Here He pronounces judgment upon Babylon and the Chaldeans, long before Jerusalem is ever taken captive. He Who Is The First, and The Last, has the ability simply to speak, and know that it will come to pass. "I, even I, have spoken; yea, I have called him: I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous." V. 15 God has called Israel, and while He sends Babylon and the Chaldeans down a path of judgment, He will bring Israel unto Himself, and make their way prosperous. The only requirement for them is to "Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me." V. 16 These words of invitation are most assuredly from The LORD, but they are uttered through His prophet Isaiah. It seems to be Isaiah himself, who is saying "Come ye near unto me... and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me." Isaiah had known "from the beginning," from the time God called him in Ch. 6 that he was to "...Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed" Isa. 6:9-10 He has indeed experienced the rejection and rebellion against his words from The LORD, but it seems from the following verses that Israel is now ready to hear a message whereby they WILL be converted.

"Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go." V. 19 This message sounds much like Paul's entreaty to the Galatians. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

Gal. 5:1 They too needed to experience the full freedom and liberty of the redeemed, and let the Lord lead them too, "...by the way thou shoudest go." Both Israel, and the Galatians, needed to travel the path of correction, for as noted previously, neither of them had achieved what God had intended for them. This is Isaiah's message from the Lord to those of Israel. "O that thou **hadst** hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea: Thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the gravel thereof; his name should not have been cut off nor destroyed from before me." V. 18-19 God says to them, "look what you could have had, fruitful increase that could have been manifest in your midst, had you simply heeded the Word which I spoke among you." They could also have spared themselves the "cutting off," which followed. The good news is that all is not lost!

"Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth; say ye, The LORD hath redeemed his servant Jacob." V. 20 God, once again, had prophesied that they would go forth from Babylon, despite the idolatrous ways which drove them into captivity. That same message will prevail after they are swallowed up of the antichrist in the end time. God will also forcefully deliver them and theirs will once again be a song of rejoicing, reaching truly "...to the end of the earth; say ye, The LORD hath redeemed his servant Jacob." This is a message of redemption that not only Israel will know, but will also be witnessed by all the nations round about them. 69

"And they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts: he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them: he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out." V. 21 These words are a tremendous reminder of God's blessing in the wilderness after Israel came forth from the land of Egypt. They tell the story of Jesus, being smitten by the law, in order that the waters of blessing should "gush" out freely, but this truth of "The Rock," will be even more emphatically true when He rescues Israel from the awful plight of tribulation. They will, at that time, genuinely discover their "Rock," Christ Jesus, Who will pour forth the refreshing, and life giving waters of blessing in the midst of a very dark and trying time of deprivation. Isaiah then brings this chapter to a conclusion emphasizing a message that all the world

must now know, "There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked." V. 22 There is abundant peace and blessing abounding for His Own People, but the wicked who refuse Him, will never enjoy that glorious state.

Stepping - Stumbling Stones

In ,this vale of tears and trials
Filled with test each, rugged mile-
How the evil one attempts to slack our pace,
Placing stones o'er which we stumble;
We can spare ourselves a tumble
Only as we journey on in heaven's grace.
I have learned one lesson duly,
Learned it slowly, learned it truly,
How to treat each subtle hindrance to my way:
By God's help surmount it fairly;
So today I'm standing squarely
On the stone o'er which I stumbled yesterday.

70
Heights of grace will not exempt us
From the Wiles of him who'd tempt us,
But our eyes need not be blind to his device.
Stumbling stones that keep us guessing
Can be turned into a blessing
If we're 'Willing to plod on and pay the price.
Satan tried to keep me worried
As through life I rushed and hurried,
Tried his best to keep me bound 'With doubt and fear;
But God's grace to me was granted,
Now my feet are firmly planted
On the stone that had me worried yesteryear.

I will never fuss or grumble
Though I chance to trip and stumble
On some stone that Satan places in my way;
I'll just simply rise above it-
Make a stepping stone out of it-
That Will lift me nearer to Eternal Day.
Thus my pathway will grow brighter
And my every burden lighter
Till triumphantly I walk life's final mile;
I'll surmount the last temptation
Standing on my firm foundation
Built of all those stumbling stones of yesterwhile.

Clarence Simeon Way

ISAIAH 49 ~ EPHESIANS

This forty ninth chapter of Isaiah, corresponds with the forty ninth book of the Bible, which is Ephesians. Both of them refer to “a bride.” Ephesians provides the qualifications for the bride of Christ, while Isaiah gives instruction regarding Israel, the bride of Jehovah, which analogy is clearly depicted by Hosea. He shows the great difficulty of this nation in being “divorced” by God but the glorious culmination of their journey is summed up in these words. “And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.” Hos. 2:19 Isaiah also declares “Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, and come to thee. As I live, saith the LORD, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee, as a bride doeth.” Isa. 49: 18

Most of the teachings surrounding the bride of Christ today insist that she is comprised of the “whole Church.” However, the language in Rev. 21:2 is very similar to that which is used here by Isaiah. “And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride **adorned** for her husband.” The new Jerusalem is never said to be the bride of Christ, but rather one “adorned for her husband,” meaning that this spectacular city is made up of the bride and those who would provide her adornment, or enhance her appearance. Any wedding ceremony sets forth much more than just the bride and groom. Likewise that of Christ and His Bride, will display attendants, servants, and guests, all adding to her adornment. So also Isaiah proclaims that Israel will be adorned like unto a bride.

Paul’s message in Ephesians, likens the natural marriage unto Christ and His Bride. “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” Eph 5:25-27 It is quite evident that the entire Church does not measure up to this state of “..., not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” This entire book of Ephesians contains some of the deepest mysteries, and truth in scripture, but

the Church as a whole does not appropriate it. Likewise, Israel shall be separated unto Jehovah, as His Bride, set apart from the rest of the nations, directly because they, at last, have heeded the fullness of His Word and have laid hold of this special place which He has afforded them. The first step in that endeavor is found in the very first verse of this chapter.

72 “Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.” V. 1 These words are recorded, in the first person, as being the testimony of Israel, calling out to the “isles” or nations, “ye people from far.” The message they are sending proclaims the Faithfulness of The LORD, which they will have learned by the time they truly become the Bride of Jehovah. Hosea describes in graphic detail how God had “married” this people, but they played the harlot, and sought other lovers among the nations. He then asserted, “Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths. And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now.” Hos. 2:6-7

The above testimony is that of a woman who has been restored after having gone through a path strewn with thorns in the wilderness. She has finally recognized “my first husband,” and has been willing to listen to Him. The results are wonderful, for now He can accomplish His purposes through her, and according to Isaiah, “...hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me;” V. 2 Israel has truly learned the safety of being hidden in “...the shadow of his hand,...” during that horrendous wilderness of tribulation. They have, in turn, now become His mouthpiece, speaking forth the “sharp sword,” of His Word. They have also become an instrument of war or “a polished shaft.” Zechariah, as seen previously in these chapters, bespeaks the fact that God will use Israel to punish the nations. “When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim...And the LORD shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning:... and shall go with whirlwinds of the south.” Zech. 9:13 That “hidden, and polished shaft,” shall go forth at God’s

bidding, for direct communication will have finally been restored between God and this very select woman as is indicated in V. 3 “And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.” Israel will most assuredly attain to this place of glory and God will be glorified because of it. She continues her testimony admitting that her path was one centered around her own desire and self sufficiency. “Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God.” V. 4 Only the throes of the tribulation period will teach her these lessons by experience where she will finally recognize, even as stated by Hosea, “...she shall follow after her lovers,...but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband;...” She will, at long last, let The LORD exercise His judgment, or decision, in her behalf, and will engage in “...my work with my God.”

Moreover, she is willing to claim His Words and promises in her behalf. “And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be 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.” We are confronted here with the fact that God had His purposes for this people when they were formed “from the womb.” He has indeed brought His servant Jacob, “again to him.” However, the pattern manifest here also tells us, “...Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD,...” The voice here must surely be that of the faithful remnant, which will hear His Voice and come forth as the nucleus of the nation which will be born in one day. These are, in fact, represented by the five foolish virgins, of Matt. 25 who had taken no oil in their vessels. They must have surely have gone away and found it, else there would have been no reason to return, but they were too late to gain entrance into the marriage supper of The Lamb. They remain, however, spirit-filled leaders of those left on earth, in learning the choice lessons listed in these verses. This order is confirmed in the following verse which also outlines the occupation of Israel after they have been restored to the place God had long ago ordained for them.

“And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel:...” that is, it will most assuredly be the faithful remnant

that will spark life into the rest of “Jacob.” We learn further that “...I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.” V. 6 This is exactly what the restored nation of Israel, as a whole, will do as they fulfill the “great commission” of Matt. 28:19-20 “Go ye therefore, and **teach all nations**,...Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:...”

74 All of the above blessings through Israel will come to pass in this world, but the following portion of this chapter is a direct message to them, indicative of their present circumstance. “Thus saith the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One,...” This Speaker is none other than Jesus, The Messiah, indeed the “Redeemer of Israel,” the Holy One of God, and His address is “... to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a 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.” V. 7 This same Chosen People is portrayed in all these descriptions. They are the ones despised by men, and abhorred by the nations, even at this present time, and they have, since the beginning of Gentile Times, been a “servant of rulers,” but that is all about to change. The day is quickly coming when “Kings shall see and rise, princes also shall worship, **because of the LORD that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee.**” Those same nations, which have rejected and despised this people, will now most assuredly, recognize that God is for Israel, and He has indeed chosen them. These nations, as well as Israel, will know the very process of God’s intervention in behalf of His People, for “Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;” V. 8 The “acceptable time,” simply refers to the time in which this once rebellious nation has finally dropped all their defenses and accepted the Promised Messiah. When that happens, God will hear their cries and it will be a day of salvation wherein He will help and preserve them. Such salvation will lead to the “ministry,” He long ago ordained for them. They will be given “...for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;” During the Millennium, Israel will literally “own,” the earth

and the “desolate heritages,” are the nations to whom they will minister. They will be able to “... say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.” V. 9-10 This is truly the utopia, for which all of humanity has searched, and it will come only when Jesus brings forth His Kingdom Of Righteousness with the nation of Israel at the helm as His representatives. They will be effective witnesses, for they will have experienced all of these glorious blessings in their own lives, and will thus be able to impart them to the nations round about. These glorious riches wherein none “...shall hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor sun smite them:...” will undoubtedly be literal, natural, provisions, but they must also be spiritual for “...I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted.” V. 11 This description presents a marvelous likeness to the truth which Paul imparted to the saints at Ephesus. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:” Eph 1:3 These “mountains...and my highways...” which “...shall be exalted,” speak beautifully of the spiritual riches from above, that will be forthcoming for those on the earth at that time. They are enjoyed by the Church today, but Israel will lead these earthly nations in those same paths of righteousness wherein Jesus, The Messiah is exalted and pours forth a spiritual trove of heavenly treasure as well as the promised natural riches. The spiritual bounty, however, is especially emphasized here, for “Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim.” V. 12 The “far” land seems to be the place from whence all these others emanate, and those from “the land of Sinim,” are especially interesting. That word means “thorn,” and would therefore be closely associated with Sinai, which means exactly the same thing. There will truly come that day when both Israel and the world will recognize that the blessing they assumed came through the law, comes in reality only through Christ. Such a revelation will produce praise only unto Him.

“Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth

into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted." V. 13 Though the nations will be beneficiaries of the aforementioned benefits, they must also acknowledge that they come through an exalted Israel. It is directly BECAUSE "...the LORD hath **comforted his people...**" that these same nations may now be blessed. That process has surely been a rather long and arduous one at times, and many had undoubtedly lost hope for, as noted here, "... Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." V. 14 These would be the words of a nation steeped in unbelief and idolatry, but God has a different view. "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." The outcome for Israel has proven beyond doubt that God did not forget His promises to Abraham and this nation. Natural love may fail, but Divine Love never will. Men often measure what God will, or will not, do by their own natural inclinations, and some have concluded that even a Christian's conduct could be so bad as to merit being "cut off." God declares here, using Israel as an example, that "...they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." His basis for that redemption is "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." V. 16 This would be an eternal "engraving," symbolized by the nails driven through the palms of His Hands for us. The redeemed forever belong to Him, regardless of the gross errors they may make in their lives, and in this case of "Zion," or Jerusalem, ... thy walls are continually before me," meaning that the protection of this city belongs only unto Him, and that task is continually uppermost in His Mind. Such benefit for Zion goes much farther than just protection from their enemies. Zion continues to be the subject of this portion, and "Thy children shall make haste;..." V. 17 The inference here is that these children of Israel should make haste to the repentance outlined in V. 4. All the glorious benefits manifested in this chapter are predicated upon that fact. This present text also indicates that after they make haste to seek Him, "... thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall go forth of thee." Scripture is very plain that once Israel is repentant, to the point that they freely accept their Messiah, He will arise for them and summarily defeat all their enemies, but that is not the end of their story. Those enemies may be thrust out of their

midst, but this elect is next exhorted to “Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, and come to thee. As I live, saith the LORD, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee, as a bride doeth.” V. 18 This pattern is very familiar, as noted at the beginning of this chapter. Just as other ranks of the Church provide the “ornament,” or “adornment” for the Bride of Christ, these nations, the sheep nations of the world which were **not** destroyed and “went forth of thee,…” will “...gather themselves together, and come to thee,” as the “ornament” or “finery” for Israel, The Bride of Jehovah. That adornment seems to be further reflected in the following text.

“For thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away.” God’s Word is very plain that Israel has never occupied all the land that God promised to Abraham. That new generation of Israel, which marched so triumphantly into the land of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua, and experienced many glorious and miraculous victories, never did drive out all their enemies. Today, even though they are back in their land, many of these other nations are determined to make their dwelling “...too narrow by reason of the inhabitants,…” The Palestinians, at this present time, are determined to occupy the land of Israel, but the promise in this verse emphatically indicates that “...they that swallowed thee up shall be far away.” This simply means that the day is coming when ALL the land which God bequeathed to Abraham, will be firmly in the hands of Israel. There will be adequate space for this nation to expand and grow as Micah emphatically promises, “But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it.” Mic. 4:4 Isaiah tells us that there will be an influx of inhabitants into Israel because all nations whence they have fled, will be forced to return them. “The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell. Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where

had they been?" V. 21-22 The children "thou shalt have after thou hast lost the other,..." describe "new creation Israel," which will replace those who were lost when that rebellious nation was under the law, and a product of unbelief and idolatry. The promise to her, and all these new children now, is "Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders." V. 22 This message speaks plainly of the fact that all Israel will be gathered back to their homeland, and the Gentiles will facilitate the process. These Gentile nations will most assuredly be the "ornament" of V. 18, for these "...kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet;..." V. 23 Such nations will honor Israel, even bowing before them "with their face toward the earth..." This verse has been listed by some as being a "difficult text," the reason being that God has never ordained worship of any but Himself. Some have concluded that it simply denotes demonstrations showing the highest honor and regard for Israel, which is absolutely true, but, due to some other statements in this chapter, we are confident that there is something much deeper on display. The pattern here is somewhat akin to that of Rev. 3 where they of "...the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship **before thy feet**, and to know that I have loved thee." Rev. 3:9 These "worshippers," do not worship that bridal company identified here as the Church at Philadelphia, but since that choice company is already gathered at the feet of Jesus, this group must, of necessity, bow before it when they come to worship Him!

Likewise, our current verse does not indicate that these Gentile nations would bow to worship Israel but rather that they would come to worship God, and, since this choice nation is already in His Presence, they must bow before God's Chosen People. Isaiah has already proclaimed "Thus saith The LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, and His Holy One,....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." V. 7 That is, they must acknowledge that this new state of Israel is the Very Work Of God. By the time these words are actually

fulfilled, the nations will know without doubt that God has chosen Israel! This truth is further reinforced by the fact that “...**all flesh shall know** that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy (Israel’s) Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.” V. 26

The remainder of verse 23 emphasizes the fact that “... thou (Israel) shalt know that I am the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.” Just as the nations have learned this valuable lesson, so Israel will know by first-hand experience that Jesus is LORD. They have indeed learned to wait for Him and His Glorious Deliverance, even during a very devastating time, but He has proven, beyond doubt, that He is Faithful. He then asks the question which would explain how this new state of affairs for The Jews has come to pass. “Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?”

The glorious answer to this question lies in the fact that God did surrender this people to be “captives of the mighty,” way back in 606 BC when Nebuchadnezzar carried them away to Babylon. They were indeed “lawful,” captives because God had ordained it. However, that long era has come to an end, and now “...thus saith the LORD, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.” V. 25 These nations no longer have the liberty to oppress this nation, and any who tries will find themselves in direct contention with The LORD. He has delivered “the prey,” and will most assuredly “...save thy children,” meaning “new creation Israel.” Furthermore, “I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine:...” V. 26 The nations, designated in these last two verses, must be distinguished from those of verses 22-23 which are gathering Israel back to their land in a rather loving and nurturing fashion. These would be considered “sheep” nations. These latter nations, however, would be defined as “goat” nations, and they will suffer the most destructive and devastating wrath of the tribulation period; the battle of Armageddon. God will take vengeance on all those that would oppress His People, but this chapter closes with the clear proclamation that “...all flesh shall know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.” The full scale redemption of This Choice Nation, stands as living proof of God’s Very Presence!

CHAPTER 50 ~ PHILIPPIANS

Both this chapter and the book of Philippians, with which it corresponds, could well be entitled “dedication.” Isaiah describes the attitude and commitment of Jesus to the will of His Father with these words. “For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.” V. 7 Paul likewise outlines his own commitment to the race set before him. “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.” Phil. 3:7-8

Isaiah also shows forth the spirit of true humility, and total obedience, exhibited by Jesus, to accomplish the complete will of God. “The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.” Isa. 50:5-6

80 Paul likewise describes that same spirit with these words, exhorting his charges to follow the example set by Jesus. “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Phil. 2:5-8

The race set before us is that of winning Christ. Jesus’ objective here in Isaiah was to win Israel back to the Ways of The LORD, for as suggested in our previous chapter, and now confirmed by our present text, He had to divorce them due to their unbelief and rebellion. “Thus saith the LORD, Where is the bill of your mother’s divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.” V. 1 Jeremiah also uses this same analogy in describing Israel’s failure to follow in the ways which God had ordained for them. “And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her

away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.” Jer. 3:8 The reference here bespeaks the fact that, after the ten tribes of Israel were severed from the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, they were taken into captivity by Assyria. Judah did walk in the ways of righteousness for a time but then they too, “...played the harlot...,” and succumbed to the same idolatrous ways as Israel. Thus Isaiah, rather poetically, asks “...which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you?” meaning “whom have I allowed to take you captive? Moses used this same terminology in Deuteronomy, promising great victory on the one hand but captivity on the other if they refused to hear Him. “How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up?” Deut. 32:30 Isaiah now asserts: “...for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.”

The general tenor of these questions, in regard to Israel’s divorcement and being sold into captivity, is to assure them that the condition is only temporary. God wants them to produce the “... bill of your mother’s divorcement,...” and basically asks “which of my creditors can lay claim to you?” God has no intention of giving them up forever, and now asks the question, “ Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer?...” He did try to reach them, but apparently there was no spiritual man to stand up and defend them, or to plead their cause. He was instead met with total rejection or “none to answer.” However, God makes it clear, in the remainder of this verse, that His desire for them has not changed, nor His power to accomplish their redemption diminished. “... Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh, because there is no water, and dieth for thirst. I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering.” V. 2-3 He had already demonstrated all of these things in delivering them out of Egypt and leading them through the wilderness. His Power to move heaven and earth in their behalf is unquestioned, but the following verse introduces His Power Of Redemption! “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 morning by morning,

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he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.” V. 4 This is the promise of the Messiah. Despite all their history of rebellion and idolatry, He is ready to speak “...to him that is weary:...” That would be the entire nation which has indeed been divorced and sold into captivity.

The glorious pattern of this entire verse applies not only to Christ, but provides instruction for ourselves also. We too must be willing to “... hear as the learned,...” in order to receive His message and impart it to others. We can but speak that which we receive from Him, and the only way to obtain the “tongue of the learned,” is to follow the example set by Jesus. He “learned” from His Father. He knew Who He was at the age of 12, asking His mother, “...wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” Lk. 2:49 He also affirmed unto the Jews “...that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.” John 8:29 He further demonstrated His “hearing ear,” with this statement; “For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth:...” John 5:20 Only the “tongue of the learned” will give rise to he who has something to say!

82 Jesus’ example also imparts the lesson that such learning is constant, for “...he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.” So also, the one today, who would obtain “the tongue of the learned,” must be in constant communication with that tremendous reservoir of Knowledge and Wisdom. This “tongue of the learned” will enable him to “... speak a word in season...” meaning that, like Jesus, he would be extremely sensitive to any given situation and also affirm “...I do always those things that please him.” John 8:29 Such an attitude goes far beyond “lip service” and literally demands sacrifice as seen in the following verse.

“The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.” He would, in no wise, be deterred from God’s Plan for His Life. The account in Philippians two clearly depicts the tremendous depths of humiliation to which He descended, but the ultimate result will be not only the restoration of Israel, but all of humanity.

“For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know

that I shall not be ashamed.” V. 7 He knew from the beginning that His efforts would not be in vain, and that His Father would not allow Him to be “ashamed,” or disappointed for “He is near that justifieth me;...” God did indeed raise Him from the dead, proving, once and for all, that Jesus was Who He claimed to be: The Son of God. Thus, “.... who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up.” V. 8-9 All these things will be revealed in their entirety, and none will be able to stand before Him. Jesus came the first time in weakness and ultimate humility, but all that will give way to glory and the fullness of power when He reigns, as God, for 1,000 years, and none will be able to stand against Him. Satan and all his host will bow before This Mighty Potentate, who actually won this glorious victory and triumphantly announced it while still hanging on the Cross with those glorious, and victorious words “IT IS FINISHED!” John 19:30 The results of that mighty victory bring this chapter to a conclusion.

“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.” V. 10 These words can surely be claimed by all men but are especially applicable to restored Israel. It is they who now, “feareth the LORD...” and they who now, “...obeyeth the voice of his servant...” Jesus. They who have no light are encouraged to “trust in the name of the LORD...” Israel will finally listen to Him and will themselves be enlightened to the point of literally evangelizing the nations round about them as foretold in the previous chapter, but the last word is a solemn warning to those who dare resist God and try to destroy Israel. “Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.” V. 11 Any that would “kindle a fire,...” of destruction for this nation will “...compass yourselves with sparks...” the reason being that “This shall ye have of mine hand;...” God will thwart any attempt to bring harm to this nation and those destructive efforts will be turned on the one who initiated them. He will see to it that they “...lie down in sorrow.” This principle of God is

declared in Eccl. 10:8. "He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him." It has always been true, but will especially be demonstrated when God takes His Own Chosen Wife back unto Himself, and defends her to the utmost.



The Fruitful Life

A little song When things go wrong,
A little kindness shown,
Will soothe the care and make folk bear
Their trials without moan.

A word of cheer to those in fear
Will comfort all the day.
The effort made will be repaid
By many on life's way.

A little smile to make the while
Of somber fellow's life
Devoid of tear and much less drear
Midst sorrow and midst strife.

Who can define the worth divine
Of saints that are thus kind?
Their names will live and strength will give
To others left behind.

So let us trust; indeed we must,
That Christ in us will shine,
That men may know down here below,
He was the Lord Divine.

CHAPTER 51 ~ COLOSSIANS

And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled..." Col. 1:21

This current chapter of Isaiah beautifully corresponds with Colossians wherein Paul seems, at times, to employ a tone of correction. He clearly defines from whence these saints had come declaring that they were "...sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works..." Verse 13 of this same chapter asserts that He "...hath delivered us from the power of darkness,..." The apostle then strongly urges them to claim their new state which God has provided through redemption. "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, ...Strengthened with all might, ... Giving thanks unto the Father, ... Who... hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: ...In whom we have redemption through his blood, ...And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; ...And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled" Col. 1:9-21

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This same pattern is also found in Isaiah, as Israel is strongly exhorted to "Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD:..." V. 1 "Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me,..." V. 4 Scripture is very plain that this people had not always followed righteousness, nor had they sought The LORD and complied with His law. They, like the Colossians, had walked in their own way, and the exhortations here are to encourage them to vigorously pursue a new path. The last two verses of this chapter describe their full reconciliation, even as the Colossians had been "...alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled." "Thus saith thy Lord the LORD, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again: But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have

said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over." V. 22-23

86 Israel will be fully restored, even as the previous chapters in Isaiah have insisted, but they must surely heed the instructions of this chapter even as the Colossians were admonished to take the place which God had provided for them. The first step of any reconciliation must be to "Hearken..." which term is used three times in the first seven verses. "Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged." V. 1 These words are spoken as though they have already accepted their Messiah and do "...follow after righteousness,..." in a practical sense, having sought the LORD, in actual experience. That must indeed be the case, for history bears ample record to the fact that this nation has, in no wise, always followed His Righteousness. He then exhorts them to "...look unto the rock whence ye are hewn,..." That Rock would be Christ, and, like the Colossians, they too must realize that their peace must come "...through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself;..." Col. 1:20 It is because of this reconciliation that they may now also look "...to the hole of the pit (prison, dungeon) whence ye are digged." This would be the pit of tribulation, which they had indeed "digged" for themselves, but now they can look to it from afar as having been rescued from such a snare. They are further admonished to "Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him." V. 2 This is basically the same message Paul imparted to the Colossians as he prayed that they "...might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;..." The glorious blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant, which are fulfilled in Christ, reach down unto themselves. They are a part of the increase, promised to the Patriarch, and have been called "alone," or separated unto The Lord, even as he had been. It is for this reason that "...the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody." V. 3 These are the glorious blessings which Israel shall enjoy after

having been delivered from the aforementioned "...hole of the pit..." known also as the time of Jacob's trouble. There has been glorious deliverance for them, but that is only the beginning of the real reconciliation, which is centered in Christ Jesus.

"Hearken unto me, my people; and 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 of the people." V. 4 They must, once again, give ear unto Him, and the first message to truly claim is that you are "my people....my nation..." This people must get a genuine revelation of the fact, that they belong to God. He has Redeemed them, and the law, "...that shall proceed from me..." is none other than Christ Himself. The "judgment" which follows indicates the decision He has made for them which is "...to rest for a light of the people." This will apply throughout the duration of the Millennium. Israel will finally enjoy the rest that comes only from Christ and discover that He truly is The Light for both themselves and the entire world. God further declares that "My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust." V. 5

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These wondrous words actually present a beautiful outline of Israel's role in God's "new order." "My righteousness..." refers to the only righteousness God has ever recognized, the Righteousness of Christ. He is the One, Who now prevails as King of kings and Lord of lords, over the earth and the entire universe. Israel, as a nation, will lead all the rest in displaying that righteousness. The "salvation," which has already gone forth, also testifies of this same nation which has been delivered, and stands as an absolute beacon and living testimony of the deliverance and freedom that only God can produce. Thus, "...mine arms shall judge the people;..." The word "judge," means "to pronounce sentence (for or against);" simply indicating a decision. That decision was made for "rest," in V. 4, but the "judgment for the people," here seems to involve "...the isles..." who "...shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust." Those "isles" would be the nations, which are still intact after the tribulation, and the "judgment," or decision that God has made, is that they "...shall wait upon me..." because they have been instructed by this Restored Chosen People, as indicated in Isa. 49:6 "...I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou

mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.”

God continues to enlarge on His “salvation,” with a very familiar refrain. “Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.” V. 6 Jesus spoke this same glorious truth as he described events of the last days saying “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” Matt. 24:35 Our present text is a literal reference to the fact that the present creation will most assuredly be done away. It will not happen until after the millennium, as John plainly informs us that “...I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.” Rev. 21:1 Isaiah is very emphatic that, even though these things shall, without doubt, come to pass, “...my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.” That is because both are guaranteed by the redemption which is in Christ Jesus!

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Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.” V.7 Israel will, once again, be the people that “...know righteousness...” because they, as a nation born in one day, will have accepted Christ. The very law of God will have been implanted within them when they accept their Messiah, and they will be His living testimony of the eternal salvation recorded in V. 6. They are further exhorted to “...fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings,” the reason being that “...the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.” V. 8 God will destroy all these “revilers,” and enemies of Israel, who have treated them so despicably, but this nation will be preserved because of His Righteousness.

“Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?” V. 9 This seems to be restored Israel’s response to the announcement of those glorious victories which will yet come to pass for them. The cry is for The LORD to perform all these Mighty Acts, in behalf

of His Chosen Ones. These “ancient days” are undoubtedly a clear reference to the tremendous victories shown forth in Egypt (Rahab) when God completely demolished the gods of Egypt and proved His Superiority over the magicians, of “the dragon,” which had withstood Moses and Aaron. However, Ezekiel uses much of this same terminology in prophesying the demise of Egypt, or the nations of the world, in the end time. “Speak, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself. But I will put hooks in thy jaws, and I will cause the fish of thy rivers to stick unto thy scales,...And I will leave thee thrown into the wilderness, thee and all the fish of thy rivers: thou shalt fall upon the open fields; thou shalt not be brought together, nor gathered: I have given thee for meat to the beasts of the field and to the fowls of the heaven. And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the LORD, because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel.” Ezek. 29:3-6 Both Satan and the antichrist are represented by the “...dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers,...” meaning the powers that will be manifest in the midst of Egypt, or nations of the world. Both will also make the boast, “...My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself.” But history will repeat itself, for God will arise, as in the days of yore, and “...will put hooks in thy jaws, and I will cause the fish of thy rivers to stick unto thy scales,...” God’s judgment will be swift, and sure, and all those nations who have been allied with the antichrist, will be punished, specifically “...because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel.” We full well know that Israel most assuredly did put their confidence in Egypt, or the nations, rather than God, but it is the Nations who are taken to task here, because those same powers betrayed them. “When they took hold of thee (Egypt) by thy hand, thou didst break, and rend all their shoulder: and when they leaned upon thee, thou brakest, and madest all their loins to be at a stand.” Ezek. 29:7 This is surely borne out in present day Israel, when so many nations, whom Israel trusted to help them, instead turned on them and have brought fear and trembling. The good news is that when they are restored, they will continue to heed the admonition of verses 1-2 remembering their roots, as it were, and calling on The Redeemer to perform the same miracles as He did so long ago.

“Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?” V. 10 The Red Sea victory will seem small by comparison to these who will have the foregoing victories of the end time. They will understand first-hand the following glorious strain reflected in the song of the redeemed.

90 “Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.” V. 11 Present day Jerusalem can in no wise boast this glorious song of victory, for it is in the depths of turmoil and division. Multiple factions are trying to claim it for their own lustful purposes, but the day will come when all will know that only God Owns Jerusalem. It will then become a city of singing and everlasting joy for Israel, because the sorrow and devastation of the tribulation will fade into the distant past. Israel, as a nation will truly experience The God of all comfort. “I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass;” V. 12 By the time these promises come to fruition, God will have proven, beyond doubt, that He has removed all Israel’s sources of fear. Present day Israel seems to endure a constant atmosphere of fear, due to the presence of those who have vowed to destroy them. However, God declares that those who have promised death for His People, will themselves die. Note that this judgment will continue beyond one generation for God asks “who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass;” Present threats, and those that shall arise after these wicked men are gone, mean nothing to God and all of them will suffer the same fate of destruction. This question leads to a few more which Israel must eventually answer.

“And forgettest the LORD thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?” God would remind His People of His Power and Might as the Great Creator. He says, in essence, “Why do you need to fear the fury of the oppressor when I Am the One Who will eliminate him? These are questions that God would ask

Israel when they have been in a state of unbelief. They are also the captive of V. 14. "The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail." Israel, along with the entire complement of end-time nations will learn this glorious truth. Despite their unbelief and rebellion, God will come the aid of His People. They will not die in the "pit" of tribulation, and they will never be destroyed, the reason being that "...I am the LORD thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared: The LORD of hosts is his name." V. 15 God hearkens once again back to the great Red Sea victory and His Purposes for Israel have not changed. He will still bring them to the place which He has long envisioned for them and they will be His witnesses throughout the millennium.

"And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people." V. 16 This is the message Israel, as a nation, will utter, both in word and deed. Their very existence is proof of God's power, as noted in previous chapters, and all the world will know that "...I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand,..." It is also quite clear that ALL God's purposes center around Israel, for the same verse plainly declares "...that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people."

The same pattern, of rebellion and reconciliation, presented in Colossians, continues here in Isaiah. "Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the LORD the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out." V. 17 This is written as though it were now past, and that is most assuredly the case. God gives a detailed account of how Israel had to endure the consequences of unbelief and rebellion. She did have to drink His cup of fury and trembling, during those awful days of Jacob's trouble, but there was a definite purpose in it. She had to learn by experience that "There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up." These "sons" seem to be a reference to the nations, to whom Israel has looked, for guidance and assistance, but they have all failed for that Role belongs only unto The LORD as prophesied by Moses. "So the LORD alone

did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.” Deut. 32:12 When Israel accepts Christ as their Messiah, this will be her testimony, but, as Isaiah has portrayed repeatedly, she must go through a process to bring it to pass. Two specific lessons are outlined in this text for “These two things are come unto thee; who shall be sorry for thee? desolation, and destruction, and the famine, and the sword: by whom shall I comfort thee?” V. 19 The two things are extreme privation, defined by “...desolation, and destruction, and the famine,..” and death, portrayed by “... the sword:...” He then asks, “...by whom shall I comfort thee?” meaning that the powers and resources in which you have trusted have been taken away. Only the above results of devastation have remained. “Thy sons have fainted, 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.” V. 20 Indeed, there is none to comfort you for the “wild bull,” of the nations has also been caught in God’s “net” of judgment because He has poured out “... the fury of the LORD, the rebuke of thy God,” upon them also. This brings forth the following conclusion.

92 “Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine:” V. 21 All of this great desolation, destruction, etc., has come to pass because Israel trusted the nations rather than God. They have now become “afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine,” meaning that they are drunk on the wine of God’s wrath and fury. The good news is “Thus saith thy Lord...” He has now officially claimed them and they have acknowledged Him for He is “thy Lord...” He is further identified as “...the LORD, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people,...” He surely has arisen for them, interceding for “the cause of his people...” having claimed them for His Own. The marvelous reconciliation of this verse continues proclaiming “...Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again:” V. 22. The day of judgment is past. His Fury has been lifted. They have drunk the final dregs of His cup of wrath and need never fear it again, for Israel, as a nation, are indeed in Christ, “... a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” II Cor. 5:17 The story is not so positive, however for the nations who have afflicted them.

“But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee;

which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over.” V. 23 The same cup of wrath from which Israel drank is now put into the hands of her tormentors. It has already been clearly established that Israel was put under Gentile dominion in 606 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar became the first Gentile World Ruler. The message they have heard since that time has been “...Bow down that we may go over...” and many nations have not only been dominant over them but totally abusive, demanding that they lay “...thy body as the ground, and as the street,...” Such is the language of our day when the Palestinians and countless other Muslim nations, at the present time, literally demand that Israel give place to them, demanding their compliance with surrendering the city of Jerusalem and even a major part of their land. When these verses are fulfilled, that time of compromise, with Israel being a literal “door mat,” to all the rest of the nations will have come to an abrupt end. Those same nations will also be severely punished as is written here, but Israel “...the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.” V. 11 93

HIS IMAGE

I am His workmanship; and oh, the joy
To passive lie beneath His hand
And know that every blow that falls
Is making just the thing He planned.

I cannot understand the piercing pain,
The hammer and the chisel bring;
But I can trust and wait and pray,
And knowing Him, rejoice and sing.

Except some friction rise and irk and smart,
The polishing cannot be done.
The little things, the thoughtless acts
That sometimes come from dearest one.

All, all beneath the Savior's guiding hand.
From glory change to glory till,
At His appearing, I shall stand
In His own image by His will.

—Selected.

CHAPTER 52 ~ I THESSALONIANS

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!” V. 7

94 This fifty second chapter of Isaiah actually forms a correlation with I Thess. in two major ways. The above text beautifully portrays the beauty and effectiveness of God’s messengers, and also proclaims the Authority and Superiority of Christ, announcing “Thy God reigneth!” I Thess. sets forth exactly the same pattern as Paul defines both the character and spirit of he and his co-workers as they too published the “good tidings,” of the gospel. “For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness: Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.” I Thess. 2:3-8

Paul likewise emphasizes the second coming of Jesus wherein He will most assuredly reign as God for one thousand years. “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.... we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout,... and the dead in Christ shall rise first:...so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” I Thess. 4:14-17

“Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.” V. 1 This chapter is basically a continuation of the message put forth by Isaiah in the previous one. Israel is seen as coming forth in victory over her, and here they also are exhorted to “wake up,” and realize that a new era has begun. The reason

for that is surely because of the aforementioned fact that “Thy God reigneth!” The awful devastation of the tribulation is past. Jesus has been crowned “King of kings, and Lord of lords,” and the restoration of Jerusalem, or Zion is now a certainty. Thus they must now “Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.” V. 2 They must rise up, from the dust wherein they groveled before the nations, but there is also another dust from whence they must arise. That would be the dust of repentance. David discovered this victory after God had taken, through death, the son which had been conceived in his adulterous relationship with Bathsheba. He lay all night upon the earth, but when the child was dead “...David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped:...” · II Sam. 12:20 There is no substitute for genuine repentance, and crying out for God’s mercy and grace, but once that is accomplished, the guilty must learn that there is no victory in continuing to wallow in the dust. He must take the next steps of rising up from the dust, and worshipping in the house of the LORD. Thus Israel must now shake off such dust “...and sit down...” meaning that they have finally discovered the true rest in Christ Jesus. Furthermore they are to “...loose thyself from the bands of thy neck...” They are no longer a captive to the nations. He has set them free, and as stated numerous times, they are now the head and not the tail of those same nations.

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Israel’s plight, like David’s, was not undeserved. There was the great NEED for repentance, “For thus saith the LORD, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.” V. 3 This “sale” has happened numerous times throughout the history of this nation, but this has a special reference to the fact that Israel will sell themselves into the hands of the antichrist. It shall most assuredly be “for nought,” so much so, that Isaiah has already defined it as “a covenant with death.” Isa. 28:15 However, it is through such travesties that This Chosen People will finally learn by experience this glorious lesson: “...ye shall be redeemed without money.” Isaiah 28:18 emphatically promises that “...your covenant with death shall be disannulled...” and scripture is very plain that such redemption is through the blood of The Lamb.

God further lists the indictments against His people declaring “...thus saith the Lord GOD, My people went down

aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause.” V. 4 This is surely true of the small band which followed Jacob into Egypt when Joseph ruled the land. It is also a reference to the Babylonish Captivity, but both of these eras of bondage are only typical of the greater, fulfillment in the end time when Israel will trust in the arm of the nations, or Egypt, rather than the LORD. The result will also produce the “Assyrian effect” of great oppression, and while these could certainly be called “self inflicted” wounds, such treatment of the nations actually “incites,” The Lord to come to their aid. “Now therefore, what have I here, saith the LORD, that my people is taken away for nought? they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the LORD; and my name continually every day is blasphemed.” God asks, “will these afflictions be for nothing?” The scriptural answer surely indicates that all these things will serve to bring this nation to their knees. Their enemies do make them to “howl,” that is, “to wail or yell,” and it is those cries of affliction which will enter “...into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.”

Jas. 5:4 There is also another cry that comes unto Him, for “...my name continually every day is blasphemed.” Such blasphemy is, no doubt, instigated by these nations who have come to revel in the power they have been given over Israel, and we both see, and hear, it constantly in our day. God did sell them into such bondage, but ungodly nations have abused that power and now blaspheme God in the process. The next portion of Isaiah’s message is thus clearly addressed to Israel. “Therefore my people shall know my name:....” V. 6 This glorious promise is in direct response to the above blasphemy, which will literally provoke God, to arise for His People. Israel, as a nation, shall know the power and glory of That Name, when He sets them free from their foes. It will be no different from The Power of Jesus’ Name, which we enjoy today. “And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” John 14:13

But this verse continues with even more glorious blessing for the restored people for “...they shall know **in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I.**” And speak He will; loudly proclaiming the message, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!” V. 7 Paul adopted these

words in Rom. 10:15, where he outlines the “present,” experience of Israel, and we rejoice greatly that many Jews of our day have already accepted their Messiah. However, the fullness of this proclamation will not come to pass until Jesus actually reigns as King of kings. Judgment will be past, and Israel will be the world-wide messengers, whose “feet” will tread upon all the mountains, or kingdoms of the earth bringing forth the good tidings, and publishing the peace and salvation, which they have already experienced. Zion will indeed be the very center of all God’s dealings with the world. The next portion of this message, specifically addressed to Israel declares that “Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.” V. 8 Once again, the nation of Israel will be God’s “watchmen,” and they shall lift their voices, singing the glorious songs of victory because The LORD has delivered Zion. They will see “eye to eye,” with one another, and The LORD, meaning that they have now become the “kingdom of priests,” completely in harmony with Himself, which God had envisioned from the beginning. Ex. 19:6

The attributes of restoration continue, as Zion is exhorted to “Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.” V. 9 There is no doubt that Jerusalem will be completely laid waste before this glorious time comes to pass. The proposal today is that this city should be divided, giving a portion of it into the hands of Israel’s enemies in order that they might have their own state, with Jerusalem as the Capital. But Jerusalem belongs to God! He plainly told Ahijah, the prophet, that Jerusalem, is “...the city which I have chosen me to put my name there.” I Kings 11:36 That decree will never change, and though His People have gone astray, and have been scattered far and wide, even as He had promised, Jerusalem will be redeemed. Deliverance is guaranteed for “The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.” V. 10 Israel will be restored because of redemption, and will be on display as a testimonial of what only God can do. The nations will have to acknowledge it, and some of them will also experience His salvation.

The next portion, of this message to Israel, records the results of having been redeemed. “Depart ye, depart ye, go ye

out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.” V. 11 “Her,” again refers to Zion, and her religious leaders or those “that bear the vessels of the LORD,” are specifically singled out because they surely bear a great responsibility in bringing Israel down to the dust of V. 2. Present day circumstance in this city also reveals the presence of both Catholics and Muslims, and both must flee, or depart, when Zion is restored, because they have brought defiling unclean doctrine into the midst of God’s City. The antichrist also, will have set up the defiling “...abomination of desolation,...” in the middle of the week bringing tremendous uncleanness to that city. The next departure, however, seems to be a glorious promise for National Israel.

98 “For ye shall **not** go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rereward.” V. 12 Jesus Himself, exhorts the inhabitants of Jerusalem to flee the city. “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:” Matt. 24:15-16 This exhortation is in reference to an earlier time, but now the entire premise has changed. Israel has been forced out of Zion numerous times by the nations, and there will be a mass exodus due to the aforementioned image of the antichrist being set up, but when the above promise to Jerusalem is fulfilled, there will no longer be any reason to evacuate the holy city. That is because “...the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rereward,” that is, “your recovery or restoration.” He will go before and behind them, and the reason is both simple and glorious. “Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.” V. 13 My “servant” is Christ, and He is seen glorified, and in complete control, both in I Thess., and here in Isaiah. “Thy God reigneth,” shouted Isaiah in v. 7, and when He does, all these magnificent changes for Israel, and indeed, the world, will be forthcoming. “Thy God,...” is of course Jesus, and though He will reign, He has paid a tremendous price for it. “As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:” V. 14 This is none other than the Christ of Calvary. Israel, and the whole world have been redeemed

because of the work of redemption which Jesus accomplished on The Cross. We noted in the beginning of this chapter, how Paul and Isaiah portrayed the messengers of the gospel. Here, Isaiah sets forth Jesus as The Messenger, Who set the Example, and Precedent, for all of them. The closing verse of this chapter defines the matchless results of His Glorious Redemption.

“So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.” V. 15 The moment Jesus is enthroned in heaven, every earthly ruler will be usurping His Authority. The nations will, in no wise, willingly surrender their kingdoms unto Him, and thus He will take them all by force. By the time these words come to pass, Jesus will have subdued all His enemies, and not a one of them will have anything to say in his own defense. Those kings shall most assuredly “shut their mouths at him...” Nor can any claim ignorance, “...for that which had not been told them shall they see;...” All of them shall surely “consider,” or “diligently understand,” that the entire world is now under a New World Order And Authority, and all will have no choice but to bow before Him because “Thy God reigneth!”

99

WE SHALL SEE HIM

It may be in the gloaming
When the light is *growing* dim,
We will look above the shadows
And our eyes shall see Him.

While the hours are passing slowly
And the door is left ajar,
We may look above the mountains
And behold His shining Star.

Or it may be in the twilight
As we rest when work is done.
He'll show Himself all glorious,
And we'll rise above the sun.

C.H. Smith

ISAIAH 53 ~ II THESSALONIANS

“Who hath believed our report?... For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: ... He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, ... yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.” V. 1-4

The truth of Isaiah 53 presents a striking contrast to that recorded in II Thessalonians. The latter reveals Christ as The Glorious Conqueror at His second advent, while our current chapter, summarized by the above text, gives us a graphic picture of the Suffering Rejected Christ at His first. The context of Paul’s message to the Thessalonians lies in the fact that some false teachers had tried to convince them that Christ had indeed already come and left them behind. “Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.” II Thess.

2:1 He therefore exhorts them: “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day **shall not come**, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” II Thess. 2:3-4

Many of our day are very insistent that a “revival” is coming to this world, and some are expending great amounts of time, money, and energy to implement it. But, that is not what Paul teaches here. Quite the contrary! The apostle rather declares that the revelation of Christ will be preceded by a “falling away,” which will ultimately culminate with the antichrist setting up the “abomination of desolation,” in the temple. The good news is that Christ will come, even in the midst of this falling away, which will mark the **beginning** of His reign of exaltation in “the day of the Lord.” When that day of power does arrive, then Jesus will claim that which belongs only to Him, and the prevailing atmosphere will be in direct contrast to the tremendous weakness, indignity, shame, and reproach, which He bore at His First Advent, as is so beautifully outlined in this chapter. It is, however, that very work, which provided His Path to Glory, wherein The Lamb will give way to The Lion! Thus Isaiah begins with this record of His rejection.

“Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?” V. 1 John gives us a graphic description of Jesus’ rejection as he describes one of the many confrontations He had with the unbelieving Jews. “Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you... While ye have light, believe in the light,... These things spake Jesus, and departed, and **did hide himself from them.**” John 12:35-36 John then tells us that, despite all the miracles He had done before them, “...yet they believed not on him. That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?” John 12:37-38 This path of gross rejection will ultimately lead to the cross, but Isaiah also shows Christ as The Man among men, Who came into this world to accomplish God’s Plan Of Redemption.

“For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.” V. 2 The Son Of God lived His life, primarily before God, as He grew up “before him,...” He was the “tender plant” in the midst of a very hostile environment, and He was the only “spiritual” thing that was green and growing as a “root out of a dry ground,” meaning that He was indeed the very root or source of righteousness. Though all was “dry” around Him, still He prevailed, as That which God desired.

His life before men was, however, the exact opposite, for “...he hath no form nor comeliness;... there is no beauty that we should desire him.” This is in complete contrast to the Glorified Christ making His Appearance at His Second Advent, and Isaiah continues to declare that “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.” V. 3 He was truly a Man Of Sorrows, Who could well identify with all the hurts and “sorrows” of men. He well knew the depths of grief, common even to least of the least, who were housed in a body of humiliation, and pain, but those same men “...hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.” He had come to help and to heal, but the bulk of men would, in no wise, receive Him. Indeed, “He came unto his own, and his own received him not.” John 1:11

Isaiah declares, in essence, that “He is one of us,” able

to identify in every way with the plight of men as He certainly did feel the pain of such grief and sorrow in His Own Life, but Jesus went far beyond mere sympathy and empathy for mankind. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." V. 4 The word "griefs" literally means "malady, anxiety, calamity:--disease grief, sickness." "Sorrows" signifies "anguish, affliction:--grief, pain, sorrow," and Jesus bore all of it to Calvary. According to Isaiah, all of these belonged to us because "Surely he hath borne **our** griefs..." meaning that He has taken all of them as His Own and we must bear them no longer. Note also that He was "smitten of God," for all of this was done to satisfy God's Righteous Government. Isaiah next declares that "...he was wounded for **our** transgressions, he was bruised for **our** iniquities: the **chastisement of our** peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." V. 5 He was "wounded..." means that He was "profaned or prostituted," "...for our transgressions..." That is, Jesus was made sin for us and paid the price of bearing the judgment of God which should have fallen upon us. But redemption goes even further than that. Yes, our sins have been remitted, punished in the Person Of Jesus, and remembered no more forever against us, but that is just the "negative" side of redemption. The "positive" side is that "with his stripes we are healed." God did not just remove our sins and put us back in the "Garden Of Eden," to repeat the process all over again, but His healing exalted us above what we originally were, in spirit, soul, and body. We are now a new creation in Christ Jesus, "...old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." II Cor. 5:17

Some have concluded that the above "stripes," are a reference to the scourging, inflicted by men, just prior to Jesus' journey to the cross. However, His stripes meaning "bound (with stripes), i.e. a weal (or black-and-blue mark itself):--blueness, bruise, hurt, stripe, wound," was received at The Hand Of God. "...we did esteem him stricken, **smitten of God**, and afflicted..." V. 4 "...the **LORD hath laid on him** the iniquity of us all..." V. 6 "Yet it **pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him** to grief: when **thou** shalt make his soul an offering for sin,..." V. 10 The stripes, literally "carved" into His flesh by the Roman scourge, could not produce the wounds which would bear away our transgressions and iniquities. Only the "blow marks" or

“stripes” of God’s wrath could achieve such results as that, but man did most assuredly do his part in making such wrath necessary.

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” V.6 Man’s rebellion demanded that God pour out His Wrath upon sin, and those arrows of severe judgment found their target in the redemptive wounds which marred the Body of Jesus. God had to punish sin, if His Righteous Government was to stand, and thus “...the LORD hath laid **on him** the iniquity of us all.”

It was directly because of our transgression and iniquity that “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.” V. 7 The word “oppressed,” is rather interesting for it means “to drive (an animal, a workman, a debtor...) to tax, harass, tyrannize:--distress.” All of these analogies are fulfilled in Christ. The latter part of the verse indicates that He was indeed treated as “an animal.” He was “brought as a lamb to the slaughter,...” He surely was also God’s “Workman, and Debtor” for He fully performed all the work, demanded by God, in paying our debt upon the Cross of Calvary. Jesus was “driven, as an animal,” by the Will Of God, but He offered absolutely no resistance to the ungodly men whom God used, to accomplish that purpose, for “as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.” That submission is further emphasized by the fact that “He was taken from prison and from judgment:...” Jesus was in God’s prison, from the time He came into this world. He said of His Father, “...I do always those things that please him.” John 8:29 Isaiah’s expression of that same fact declares that “...he was taken from judgment...” That word is a familiar one, simply meaning God’s “verdict” or decision concerning Him. It was such a decision that led Him to the cross which prompts Isaiah’s next question, “...who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.” V. 8 Scripture is very emphatic that Jesus did not die as a “Good Man, or even as a Martyr,” even as some today try to promote. He was rather **cut off**, in judgment, as a common criminal, “...out of the land of the living, and that by the very decree of God, which was a sentence against all mankind. It is because of that fact that Isaiah would question “...who shall declare his generation?” That query

is soon to be answered, but the facts surrounding Jesus' death continue, and it is made quite clear that He did not die as the elite.

“And he made his grave with the wicked,...” Jesus died as The Worst Offender Of All Time,” for He represented the whole of wicked humanity as God “...hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” II Cor. 5:21 He was crucified between two thieves, the cross being the mode of execution reserved for the most notorious of offenders. He also took the place of Barabbas, the latter being representative of the heinous crimes with which all men have been charged. But this marks the end of the abuse and humiliation which Jesus would suffer at the hands of men. When He cried out “It Is Finished,” and committed His spirit into the Hands of His Father, sinful men were no longer in charge. Though He had “made his grave with the wicked,...” because He died in the midst of them, He also made that “grave...with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.” V. 9 Joseph of Arimathea fulfilled this prophecy and what a difference in attitude he manifests, as compared to the wicked men who put Him on the Tree, for this chosen man literally “begged” for the body of Jesus. He and Nicodemus now handled this Precious Sacrifice with the utmost of “tender loving care,” as Jesus now rests “...with the rich...” “And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: ...And there came also Nicodemus,... and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices...Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus...” John 19:38-42 Matthew informs us that this was Joseph’s “...own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock:..” Matt. 27:59,60

“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief:...” All this grief and misery for Jesus was imperative if He is going to accomplish God’s Plan for both Himself and humanity. It is directly because of this Rejection that Isaiah now answers the question, “...who shall declare his generation?” The glorious results of God’s Redemption, set forth in the remainder of this chapter, will make that declaration, for “...when thou shalt

make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.” V. 10 Jesus did make that “offering for sin,” and because of all the cruelty and punishment He endured at Calvary, He was raised from Joseph’s tomb three days later and “he shall see his seed,...” of the new creation, having obtained eternal life, in prolonging “...his days...” Furthermore, “...the pleasure of the LORD,...” that is, all God’s Will and Purpose for Christ and His People shall most assuredly “...prosper in his hand.”

The truth of both II Thessalonians and Isaiah are firmly couched in these final verses, for “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.” Jesus did “...see...” up close and personal, “the travail of his soul,...” at His First Advent but His satisfaction and the justification of many shall be fully realized directly because He did “bear their iniquities,” at The Cross. The benefits of that work continue with; “Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” The truth of II Thessalonians prevails in the first part of this verse, while Isaiah 53 records the basis for such victory as the grand finale. Jesus will reign as King of kings, and Lord of lords, but He will also share that spoil with His People. His Queen, the Bride of Christ, will reign con-jointly with Him according to Rom. 8:17 and Israel will be the leader of the nations, as all of these recipients of glory enjoy such bounty directly because “...he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

105



“Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.” V. 1

106

We continue to marvel at the power and inspiration of the Holy Ghost in writing the 66 chapters of Isaiah to correspond with the 66 books of the entire Holy Writ. None, but He, could ever perform such a stupendous miracle of comparison and this 54th chapter of Isaiah correlates beautifully with the truth presented in I Timothy, where Paul is found to be an example of the entire nation of Israel. This current text reveals a marked contrast of how Israel’s barrenness under the law, will one day give way to her freedom in being redeemed by Divine Grace. The Apostle Paul stands as a shining beacon, of that same contrast, as his whole life exemplifies the path that his own beloved nation will take. He refers to himself as “...one born out of due time,” in I Cor. 15:8, meaning that he was “born again,” before the rest of this nation will be “born in one day.” He was struck down on the Road to Damascus, just as Israel will literally wallow in the dust of the tribulation in order to bring them to repentance. Paul rose up from such dust specifically to be a minister to the Gentiles, as is conveyed in God’s message to Ananias. “But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he (Saul) is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:” Acts 9:15 Preaching to the Gentiles is the essence of the great commission issued to Israel in Matt. 28 where they are commanded to “Go ye therefore, and **teach all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:” V. 19 Paul likewise outlined this same ministry when he wrote to the Romans. “Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ **to the Gentiles**, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.” Rom. 15:15-16 Paul, as an individual, provided the same service to the Gentiles that an entire nation will perform during the Millennium.

Verse three, of Isaiah 54, conveys this same message

concerning Israel. "For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited." This will come to pass on a global scale when Israel finally experiences the full redemption which God has provided, as seen in V. 5. "For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called." This is the state of a completely restored Israel and Paul's life displays exactly the same pattern, as he proclaims high commendation for the God Who had redeemed him.

"According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." I Tim. 1:11-13 Israel, as a nation, will, in fact, claim this same testimony. A restored Israel will also be trusted with "the glorious gospel," of Divine Grace, having experienced the depths of such favor because they too had been "...a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious:" They too will understand the tremendous mercy which has been extended them, as God will also put them into the aforementioned ministry unto the Gentiles. Paul continues his majestic paean of praise, borne out of his own experience, as he extols the fact that "...the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." I Tim. 1:14-15 Israel too must claim the title, "chief of sinners," because they, like Saul of Tarsus, had the greatest access to the Word of God, and simply squandered it. However, they too will discover the same lesson that Paul learned so well by experience. "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen." I Tim. 1:16-17 The exact same pattern will prevail for this formerly rebellious, and blasphemous nation. They will be the striking example, even to the rest of the nations "...that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to

them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.” Israel’s own experience of deliverance, from the horrendous throes of tribulation, will qualify them to speak first-hand of the matchless grace which will be available to all the nations of the world during the millennium!

It is no wonder, then, that Isaiah begins this chapter shouting, “Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.” V. 1 Israel, like unto Paul, was found in an extremely barren condition because they were completely bound by the yoke of the law “...which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear.” Acts 15:10 Paul likewise severely denounced the Galatians for trying to become fruitful under the law, exclaiming that “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.” Gal. 5:4 The great problem with the law is that it denies Christ His rightful place, but when Israel finally accepts Him, as their only Source of grace and fruitfulness, this formerly “barren” woman will “...break forth into singing,... thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate... saith the LORD.”

108

When this glorious prophecy is fulfilled they will be further admonished to “Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes;” V. 2 This “enlargement” of Israeli space will, in fact be literal, as well as spiritual. Their present experience is one of confinement, when many among the nations are desperately trying to diminish their borders and even force them to surrender a goodly of portion of Jerusalem to accommodate a Palestinian State. The fact is that Israel has never enjoyed the full complement of the land which was promised to Abraham. However, when this prophecy comes to pass, God’s Chosen People will most assuredly expand their tent of dwelling. Their borders or “stakes,” will be strengthened and they will occupy every foot breadth of the land which Abraham walked so long ago. All of it will be under their sole possession, and it will truly be a “habitation,” and not simply a fleeting or temporary occupation of it. They will, without reservation, or constraint from the nations, “...break forth on the right hand and

on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.” V. 3 These are the possessions of a restored Israel, and none shall deprive them of such blessings. They are now exhorted to “Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.” V. 4 This is the fulfillment of II Cor. 5:17 on a National Level, when “...old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” Just as Paul had suffered the shame and reproach of being the “chief of sinners,” so also Israel’s day of blasphemy and rebellion will fade into the past as a distant memory. Their days of “widowhood” will be replaced with the glorious re-uniting with Her Husband, “For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.” V. 5 The Bride of Christ is portrayed as a “rib portion,” taken out of the Church, but the Wife of Jehovah is Restored Israel! We would note, however, that that restored Union, is made possible only because of “...thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.” Jesus! is “thy Redeemer,” and when these words are fulfilled, He will reign, AS GOD, for 1000 years, truly “...The God of the whole earth...” This Glorious Redeemer has made possible the dramatic reversal of the downward trek Israel had chosen, as is seen in the following promise. “For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.” V. 6

109

The first two chapters of Hosea, graphically display this analogy of Israel being the Wife of Jehovah, both in her rejection, “...when thou was refused,...” and in her restoration. Hosea himself, was chosen to typify A Righteous and Gracious Husband, and was required to marry “a wife of whoredoms,” named “Gomer,” which means “completion.” That name is prophetic, for it tells us that, despite Israel’s adultery and unfaithfulness to her Husband, God will still complete His Purposes, both in, and through, her. Two children were very quickly born to this union, but they actually reflect the “barrenness” of V. 1 and “...the reproach of widowhood...” as seen in V. 4 Gomer bore a son to Hosea, named Jezreel, followed by a daughter who was called “Loruhamah.” Both of these names also carry prophetic

import, for Jezreel means “sown of God,” and according to Hos. 1:4,5, is symbolic of the vengeance God will pour out upon Israel because of her sins. Loruhamah signifies “not shown mercy,” depicting the condition of Israel when they are no longer under the protective umbrella of Divine Grace and He will “...utterly take them away,” in captivity. Hos. 1:6

Gomer conceived again, and a son named “Loammi,” was born declaring this message from God: “...ye are not my people, and I will not be your God.” Hos. 1:9 However, Hosea quickly adds, “Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.” V. 10 These two declarations seem almost contradictory, but they simply serve to show that God is not bound by time. He will bring this nation through some very devastating experiences, but they will emerge triumphant. The message here is exactly the same as that prophesied by Isaiah 54:1 promising an abundantly fruitful Wife of Jehovah, bearing “...sons of the living God,” which indicates mature spiritual fruit.

110

The second chapter of Hosea portrays the process of this same story revealing how God will “...strip her naked, ...make her as a wilderness, ...set her like a dry land, ...slay her with thirst.” V. 2-3 He further assails her because she “...hath played the harlot:...hath done shamefully: for she said, I will go after my lovers,...” and herein lies the great cause of all her troubles. It is this horrendous “heart condition,” devoid of the motivation and intense desire for her Husband, and His Word, that has caused the rift between Jehovah and His Wife. “Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths. And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now.” Hos. 2:6-7 That “hedge of thorns,” is otherwise known as the “time of Jacob’s trouble,” wherein Israel will finally learn the futility of trusting the nations, and will cease her efforts to find help outside the Protective Arms of Jehovah. She will humbly bow her knee before Him and He will receive her unto Himself. “And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call me Ishi; (husband) and shalt call

me no more Baali. (Lord, Master, Owner.” Hos. 2:16 God shall indeed be known as “...thine husband...” as Isaiah so beautifully describes her in v. 5, and as Hosea emphatically declares “...I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD.” Hos. 2:19-20

Isaiah sheds great light on the contradictory thought of Israel being set aside, yet received “...unto me in righteousness,...” explaining that “For a **small moment** have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.” V. 7-8 “For a little moment,...” says The LORD. “...One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” II Pet. 3:8 It is but a moment, from His point of view, that Israel has been set aside, but He will have mercy on her forever, and He seals that promise, using the experience of Noah as an example. “For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.” V. 9 The flood waters upon this earth did not continue indefinitely, but were rather abated after a period of time. Likewise, God never did intend that Israel should be destroyed with the waters of tribulation and that she should be, forever, cast out of His Sight. Instead, He will deliver them, but in the process He will also remove the nations whom He had used to punish their iniquity. “For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.” V. 10 Nations, both large “mountains” and small “hills,” will be removed by the judgments of the tribulation period which will be consummated with the Battle of Armageddon, and though those mighty powers will be eliminated, this small unknown Nation of Israel will be preserved and she shall finally enjoy “... the covenant of my peace,...” which shall not be removed. Israel will most assuredly be preserved by God’s Matchless Display of Mercy, and then shall she hear these glorious words of comfort and reconciliation. “O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay

thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.” V. 11-12 Israel will most assuredly have been “afflicted,” by the tremendous “tempest” of tribulation by the time these words come to pass. Comfort will have eluded them, over and over again, but that day is now past, and the rebuilding process has begun. The description here of “...stones with fair colours,...” and foundations of precious stones together with “...windows of agates, and gates of carbuncles,...” could be a reference to either the Millennial Temple or the entire city of Jerusalem, for both of them will be magnificently restored. However, the real treasure will be in the hearts of this reconciled people for “... all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children.” V. 13 Those “children,” undoubtedly include their spiritual children of the Gentiles, for Israel will be their teacher “...of the LORD,...” during the Kingdom Age even as Paul was a teacher of the Gentiles during this Church Age, indeed calling the Galatians “My little children...” Gal. 4:19

112 The result of that ministry would apply to both Israel and “her children, for “In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee.” V. 14 This people will finally understand the “righteousness,” that is found only in their Messiah, Christ Jesus, and they shall be established then, even as we are now, by the truth of Paul’s message of grace. They will also finally reap the benefits of peace which have eluded them for generations for “...thou shalt be far from oppression,...” The LORD having delivered them Mightily as seen in V. 10 This deliverance is guaranteed even against future generations as God promises “Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake.” V. 11 Despite the utopia that will exist during the Millennium, the flesh will still be present and evil will continue. Isaiah explains the immediate and severe justice of God upon wrong doing in chapter 65. This present text promises severe retribution for anyone who rises up against His Chosen People. If they gather together against His Own, God says it is surely “...not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake.” God will authorize no enemy to come against Israel in the Millennium, as He had done before, and He further instructs

them saying “Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy.” V. 16 Any ability, that man may have, even in creating weapons or instruments of destruction, comes from God, but that expertise will not be allowed against this restored nation. God emphatically promises that “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.” V. 17 These glorious promises portray the life of peace, safety, and security which Israel, and all the Kingdom of Christ, will enjoy during the coming Kingdom Age. It is their “heritage,” because of “...their righteousness,...” which is, in fact, The Righteousness Of Christ!

Judge Not

Judge not; the working of His brain
And of His heart thou canst not see;
What looks to thy dim eyes a strain,
In God's pure light may only be
A scar, brought from some well won field,
Where thou wouldst only faint and yield.

The look, the air, that frets thy sight
May be a token, that below
The soul has closed in deadly fight
With some infernal fiery foe.
Whose glance would scorch thy smiling grace,
And cast thee shuddering on thy face!

The fall thou darest to despise—
May be the angel's slackened hand
Has suffered it, that he may rise
And take a firmer, surer stand;
Or, trusting less to earthly things,
May henceforth learn to use his wings.

And judge none lost; but wait and see,
With hopeful pity, not disdain;
The depth of the abyss may be
The measure of the height and pain
And love and glory that may raise
This soul to God in after days!

Adelaide A. Proctor

“**H**o, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters...
 Hearken diligently unto me,... Incline your ear, and
 come unto me: hear....” Isa. 55:1-3

“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard
 of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.” II Tim. 1:13

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth
 not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” II Tim. 2:15

“...from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures,
 which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith
 which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration
 of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for
 correction, for instruction in righteousness:” II Tim. 3:15-16

“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus
 Christ, ...Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season;
 ...exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.” II Tim. 4:1-2

114 The theme of God’s Word, runs like a thread through
 all four chapters of II Timothy as the magnificent correlation
 of Isaiah with the corresponding books of Scripture continues.
 Paul exhorts his young successor to “study” the Word in order
 that he might “rightly divide the Word of Truth, and not only
 be unashamed as a workman, but also approved unto God.
 Timothy is highly commended for putting high emphasis on
 God’s Word, even from a child, and is now admonished to
 “Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard
 of me,....” and to “preach...” that same message to others.

This current chapter of Isaiah, is likewise, devoted
 to “...my word...that goeth forth out of my mouth:...”
 Thus Isaiah begins this treatise with much the same
 urgency which Paul employed in writing to son Timothy.

“Ho,...” he cries, using a very strong word of invitation
 that expresses “one crying out,” even in “lamentation or grief.”
 This would surely express the depths of personal interest that
 Isaiah had for his own people as he, like Paul, was consumed
 with the desire that men would heed the tremendous opportunity
 offered them. He continues his “lament,” deeply appealing to
 “... every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters,...” This
 informs us of the deep plight suffered by all humanity, even as
 Jesus laid bare the need of the woman He met at the Samaritan

well, promising that "...Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." John 4:13

Isaiah continues with this entreaty proclaiming the Majesty of Divine Grace, which gives freely, inviting "...he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." V. 1 The "...wine and milk..." express the intoxicating and pure qualities of this gospel message and the invitation to buy without money is not simply an offer of kindness, but rather an absolute, and mandatory, requirement of Divine Grace. Men **MUST** come acknowledging that they have, absolutely, nothing to offer God. No man can "pay," Him or "bargain with Him," for all the glorious provisions of redemption recorded in The Word Of God. Who could even dare set a price on all these benefits which are freely bestowed upon us because of Jesus' Work Of Redemption on the Cross Of Calvary? Isaiah then asks more questions to magnify his point.

"Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." V. 2 Men, even down to our day, have not changed in their endeavor to satisfy the void and longing in their hearts for fulfillment. They spend all their resources for a "bread," which simply does not meet the real need of their lives, and often learn, as did Solomon, that their "labour" and "...all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit." Ecc. 1:14 Isaiah found the answer, for such frustration, crying out, "...hearken diligently unto me...." He then informs us that this message of grace must be appropriated in a very practical manner for you must "...eat that which is good..." "O taste and see that the LORD is good:..." cried the Psalmist, (Psa. 34:8) and now Isaiah describes the glorious result of such an action, "...let your soul delight itself in fatness."

The Prophet then continues, with the predominant theme of this chapter, exhorting his hearers to heed God's Word. "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." V. 3 The word "incline," is another word expressing extreme energy. It means "to stretch or

spread out; by implication, to bend away,” indicating that men must put forth more than just a “casual, or convenient,” effort if they would truly learn and experience the depths of God’s Word. Mere “mental assent,” will not be sufficient in this matter. There is a definite order expressed in this verse, for once genuine “inclination” is achieved it will lead to “...come unto me...” which will then give way to “hear and your soul shall live.” There is glorious simplicity in such a statement, but it applies to every truth in scripture. When men simply embrace the wonder of God’s Word, the Power thereof, expressed in the admonition, “hear and live,” will be radiated throughout his entire being, even as Jesus promised, “...I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” John 10:10

116 The last part of this glorious verse lends special reference to the Davidic Covenant, and is especially applicable to the nation of Israel, promising that “...I will make an everlasting covenant with you even the sure mercies of David.” These “sure mercies,” relate the glorious grace promised to David when God declared that “...my mercy shall not depart away from him, (Solomon) as I took it from Saul,...And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.” II Sam. 7:15-16 Scripture is very clear that David understood the magnitude of this grace or mercy for “Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, Who am I, O Lord GOD? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?” II Sam. 7:18 Isaiah’s promise to Israel is that God will make good on this “everlasting covenant,” which will be fulfilled when The Son of David, occupies the his throne forever. His role is further defined in the following irrevocable decree.

“Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.” V. 4 Solomon was the local fulfillment of this Davidic Covenant, but Christ Himself will soon appear as the real “...witness to the people,...” He will become both Leader and Commander, and “He shall build an house for my name,...” (II Sam. 7:13) which means, that He will rule in righteousness, bringing men into fellowship with God. Israel will be the primary recipient of that endeavor for “Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.” V. 5

When Christ becomes King of kings and Lord of lords, this tiny Nation Of Israel, will likewise be exalted. She will have been effectively ignored and unrecognized by the rest of the nations, even as is manifest during this present day, but one day these same nations "...shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God...." Israel will become the very channel of blessings to these Millennial Nations because God "...hath glorified thee."

The above scenario will come to absolute, and complete fruition, but they must first "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:" V. 6 Israel, as a Nation, will one day seek Him, even in the midst of Great Tribulation, but this principle also applies to the Church today. Paul quotes from Isa. 49:8 admonishing the Corinthians. "(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)" II Cor. 6:2 Time is of the essence in seeking The Lord, regardless of the dispensation, and the order here remains the same for all who would seek Him, as Isaiah's next instruction is to "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." V. 7 Men must seek The LORD **first**, in order to "forsake" their wicked ways. Paul testified of this order when he wrote to the Thessalonians and commended them for the fact that; "...ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God." I Thess. 1:9 Every repentant man must then know that "...the unrighteous man..." must also forsake "...his thoughts:..." This is most assuredly a process, because, "... my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD." V. 8 Even after a person "accepts the Lord," his thinking must be changed because natural reason is just exactly opposite the ways of Divine Grace. Man truly believes that he must "earn," the blessing of God, but scripture is very plain in declaring that, because of His mercy and grace, "...he will abundantly pardon. Thus the prophet continues, crying out, "...let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him;..."

God continues His Assault against the thoughts and ways of men, demonstrating His Superiority with an analogy, which describes how "...the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

V. 9 God's Wisdom and Knowledge is far superior to that of man, and His example, of the heavens standing above the earth, simply magnifies the fact that there is no comparison. God would, however, "change" such thoughts of man, like unto His Own, and the next portion of Isaiah's message, outline a specific detail of that process.

"For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." V. 10-11 The Power of God's Word is here demonstrated, and likened unto the rain which "cometh down and the snow from heaven..." The rain beautifully portrays that gentle warm moisture containing God's message from above. The snow reflects the "cold" moisture descending upon us, but it reflects the glorious benefits and blessings of heaven. God asked Job, "Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?..." Job 38:22 Those "treasures" are
118 legion and Isaiah defines one of them as representing "purity," for "...though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow;..." Isa. 1:18 The Virtuous Woman, also discovered some the treasures of the snow for "She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet." Prov. 31:21 The snow here represents cold adversity, but it is from God, and this woman has learned, by experience, to claim the scarlet blood of Jesus for protection. Isaiah likens both the rain and snow to The Word of God. There are times when It is most assuredly gentle, warm, and comforting, but there are also those times when God must speak in much harsher terms. It makes no difference which one "cometh down...from heaven..." both, are beneficial and "...watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:" God's Word is all inclusive in meeting the needs of men and we are further instructed that, just as the rain and snow will not return to heaven before they have accomplished their intended mission, neither shall My Word "...return unto me void, ..." Some often interpret these words to mean that "everything and everybody," will be automatically regenerated, regardless of the ill-advised decisions that some would make in regard to the benefits of redemption, but that is not what Isaiah teaches. The message here is that

God's Word will never remain "neutral!" It will always have an effect, regardless of whether or not men believe it. Scripture is very plain that "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise,... is longsuffering...not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." II Pet. 3:9 God made every provision that all men should be saved, and He sent His Word to accomplish that purpose, but all men will not bow before Him. However, His Word will not return unto Him void. It will have some effect. If God's Message be received, the result will be life, fruitfulness and prosperity. But when one rejects such an offer, that same message will have the effect of "darkening" them or hardening their hearts, as is seen in Pharaoh. "And the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might shew these my signs before him:" Ex 10:1 God's Word will always have a result, "...it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it," for every "target," of that Piercing Utterance, will be forced to some decision, even as is quite evident on the Day Of Pentecost.

"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Acts 2:37 This was the response of those who heard Peter's marvelous sermon explaining the advent of The Holy Ghost. The Word of God had "pricked" their hearts prompting the question "...what shall we do?" Peter had the answer: "...Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2:38

This same pattern is again in evidence after Stephen preached Christ to the unbelieving Jews about seven years later, but this time "When they heard these things, they were **cut** to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth." Acts 7:54 There was no repentance, even though the "pricks," have intensified to a much deeper "...cut to the heart..." and when Stephen "...being full of the Holy Ghost, ...saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice,...stopped their ears,...cast him out of the city, and stoned him..." Acts 7:55-58 This severe reaction, by ungodly men, is simply another example of the fact, that God's Word will

always elicit a response, proving that none can remain neutral.

Saul of Tarsus, who, also beheld that scene, and was consenting to the death of Stephen, had his own experience with the convicting power of God's Word, on the Road to Damascus. The Words of Jesus Himself pierced his heart as He said, "...I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." Acts 9:5 The glorious news here is that Saul did not reject those "pricks," of God's Word but rather responded with "...Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?..." revealing, once again, that "...my word...shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

120 My Word "...shall not return unto me void,..." is an absolute fact, in regard to the whole of God's Promises, but the closing portion of this chapter puts a special exclamation point on that declaration, insofar as Israel is concerned. Though this nation has been steeped in rebellion and idolatry throughout the ages of their history, "...it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." The "apple of God's Eye," will, at last, occupy the place which He promised so long ago, "For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." V. 12 This is a glorious picture of New Creation Israel, when they are restored to their land during the Millennium. "Peace" will be the central theme of their very existence, and the nations will follow their lead, as "...the mountains and the hills,..." representing all the kingdoms of that age, both small and large, "...shall break forth in to singing." A most glorious atmosphere will erupt in that day, as the nations, led by Israel, will break forth into songs of victory following the tremendous devastation and oppression of the tribulation period. The "trees of the field,..." showing forth the fruits of God's New Creation, manifesting the fact that Israel has finally fulfilled the "great commission," of teaching "...all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" will indeed "clap their hands" in joyous celebraton. Matt. 28:19

Finally, the curse imposed on the ground from The Garden of Eden, "...cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;..." (Gen. 3:17) is lifted, for "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the

brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.” V. 13 These “green and growing” trees, which replace the thorns and briars brought forth by the curse, reflect the “new birth,” both spiritually and naturally. The “rains” of God’s Word will produce righteousness during the Kingdom Age, and the earth itself “...shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.” Isa 35:1 The Word of God will not return void and, at long last, God shall be glorified and receive His Due, for all of these glorious changes “... shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”

Caught Up!

Caught up! Caught up! No wing required;
Caught up to Him, by love inspired,
To meet Him in the air.
Spurning the earth with upward bound
Nor casting a single glance around,
Nor listing a single earth-born sound;
Caught up in the radiant air.

121

Caught up with rapture and surprise,
Caught up—our fond affections rise,
Our coming Lord to meet,
Hearing the trumpet’s glorious sound,
Soaring to join the rising crowd,
Gazing beyond the parted cloud
Beneath His pierced feet.

Oh blessed, oh thrice-blessed word,
To be forever with the Lord
In heavenly beauty fair!
Up! up! We long to hear the cry;
Up! up! The absent Lord draws nigh.
Yes, in the twinkling of an eye,
Caught up in the radiant air.

-Selected.

“**B**lessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil.” Isa. 56:2

The glorious theme of this chapter is “rest,” as indicated by repeated references to “the Sabbath.” It forms a beautiful correlation with Titus, which also testifies of God’s Rest. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;” Tit. 3:5 The prevailing theme of Paul’s gospel is, rest, due to the glorious merits of Divine Grace. Works must recede into the back ground even as we read here, “Not by works... but according to his mercy he saved us,...” The apostle enlarges upon this same theme in the second chapter of this book emphatically asserting that “...the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;” Tit. 2:11- 13 The “rest,” of God is produced by His Matchless Grace, and Paul lists 7 majestic lessons which we learn by entering in to that “Rest” which is found only in Christ Jesus. First, it is the grace, of this rest, which literally teaches us to deny ungodliness. Secondly, we also deny the very motivation behind such deeds as grace teaches how to refuse “worldly lusts.” The third lesson is that we “live soberly,” that is “safe, sound, moderate, self-controlled.” Next we live “righteously,” a reference to the righteous deeds, or acts, manifest in this mortal body. Number five indicates that we are to live “godly” lives before Him, once again, a lesson that only Divine Grace can teach. The sixth point is that we are taught to look “... for that blessed hope...” that hope of deliverance which has been afforded us because of Jesus’ Work of Redemption. Finally we are to look for the literal, “...glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Both Isaiah and Titus also inform us **how**, such promised rest must come. Isaiah exhorts “...Keep ye judgment, and do justice;...” while Paul instructs Titus, “In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness,

gravity, sincerity,” Tit. 2:7 The apostle also instructs him to “... to be ready to every good work, To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.” Tit. 3:1-2 The word “judgment” found in Isaiah’s exhortation means “right decisions, justice, or rightness, that is righteous works.” Both Isaiah and Paul admonish their hearers to engage in right decisions, both in doctrine and practice, and the results will lead to enjoying that glorious rest which is promised by The Sabbath. So it is that Isaiah begins his dissertation, “Thus saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed.” V. 1 “...my salvation...” and “...my righteousness...” means that, for which “...the LORD,...” is responsible, both of which are found **in Christ!** His salvation is “...near to come...” even as Paul announced in Titus, “...the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,...” and is a beautiful reference to the rest that Israel will find, through divine grace, in the Millennium. However, they must “...Keep ye judgment,...” or make right decisions. They must also “...do justice...” meaning that such decisions must also be put into practice, even as Paul also instructed Titus. This will be comparatively easy in the Kingdom Age, for Satan will be bound a thousand years, and men will have little resistance in performing those righteous works. The reward for following this path is announced immediately. “Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil.” V. 2 Keeping the Sabbath means the same as it has always meant. Israel tried to make it a very cold, rigid, and unbending law, in regard to a special day of the week, but the Sabbath is a reference to our Rest In Christ. Jesus declared plainly that “... The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath:” Mk. 2:27 He meant that the Sabbath was provided as a glorious benefit of rest for mankind, not a rigid decree to bring him into bondage. The way to pollute the Sabbath, is to deny the rest which Christ has provided from sin and unrighteousness.

123

The order of this verse is also very instructive as one must keep “...the sabbath...” before he can keep “...his hand from doing any evil.” The only way any man can live a godly life is to discover this mandatory rest in, “The Sabbath,” which is Jesus, and the next portion of these promises applies especially to the millennium.

“Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree.” V. 3 The LORD did not receive this “stranger,” of the Gentiles, to discriminate against him, just because he is not a Jew. Neither is he to be like unto a “eunuch,” that is devoid of spiritual fruit, and therefore useless. God does have a plan, even for those who have been so unfruitful and useless heretofore, “For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant;” V. 4 This is another glorious demonstration of what Divine Grace can do when one accepts God’s Sabbath, and the invitation will be held out, even to the Gentile, during that Age of Rest in the Millennium. When these strangers and unprofitable eunuchs of the Gentiles, join themselves “...to the Lord...keep my sabbaths...choose the things that please me,...” and “...take hold of my covenant,...” there are eternal riches which will be bestowed upon them, for God has always rewarded faith, regardless of where He has found it. These words seem to indicate that there will be those Gentiles, in the Millennium, who will surpass some Jews in believing God for these choicest of riches found in His Sabbath Of Rest. It is a pattern that is not unfamiliar in regard to the nation of Israel. Those blessings, for this kind of spirituality, continue, with the following promises, “Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.” V. 5-7 The rewards to this company are many, and God continues to insist that there is no discrimination in distributing them. Those who “qualify” for such blessings are listed in these verses as being “sons of the stranger,...join themselves to the LORD,...serve him,...love the name of the LORD,...his servants,...keepeth the sabbath from polluting it,...taketh hold of my covenant;” All of these are vivid demonstrations of faith, which will never go

unrewarded, and thus these “strangers,” will be afforded the privileges of being brought “...to my holy mountain,...” They will be “...joyful in my house of prayer:...” All their “...burnt offerings...sacrifices...accepted upon mine altar;...mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.” Thus this marvelous Sabbath Of Rest, is surely available to all, during this Utopia, and the pattern for these Gentiles seems to follow the exact manner in which God treated Israel.

“The Lord GOD which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him.” V. 8 The truth of this verse lies in the fact that Israel, as a nation, will be instrumental in gathering the other nations unto The LORD at that time. The aforementioned blessings will prevail to those who have found their Rest In Christ, but the remainder of this chapter assumes a decidedly different tone, and seems to point to the very end of the Millennium.

“All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, yea, all ye beasts in the forest.” V. 9 We might wonder how these verses could be written in connection with the glorious splendor described above, but scripture is very plain that Satan will be loosed at the end of the one thousand year reign of Christ. Not all men will believe during that time, and thus the seeds of their “beastly” hearts will emerge when they are literally “stirred up,” by this arch enemy and, “...come to devour,...” that which belongs to God. Those beasts are further described in the remaining verses of this chapter. “His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter. V. 10-11 This seems to be a description of religious leaders who were supposed to “watchmen,” but they failed miserably in that regard, and follow much the same path as is manifest in the closing days of this present Church Age. They “...are all ignorant,...” of God’s Word and they are also termed “...dumb dogs...” for they have never had a born-again experience. They are pretty well benign, in that they “...cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber,” rather than sounding the warning of impending danger. Furthermore, “...they are greedy dogs which can never have enough,... shepherds that cannot understand:...

every one for his gain, for his quarter.” All these traits apparently describe “religious shepherds,” who are so self absorbed that they cannot even be bothered to keep the charge committed to them. Their attitude, once again, seems to parallel the conditions of our day for, “Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.” V. 12 The Millennium will close with the battle of Gog and Magog, (Rev. 20:28) just as the Church Age was finalized by the tribulation and the Battle of Armageddon. Apparently these “shepherds,” had no intention of warning the people about such a battle and continued with the same mental philosophy heard today, “...saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” II Pet. 3:4 Though the Kingdom Age will be predominantly indentified as the age of peace and tranquility, it too will end in judgment, and these “shepherds” will also be held to account.

THE LIVING WATER

When thru Samaria's land the Master trod,
Did not the Father's Will His steps impel?
And was it not the wondrous plan of God
That He should go by way of Sychar's well?

The very languor of His human frame
Was woven in that plan, that one might see
And know His deity, His mighty Name,
And take from Him the living water—free.

A burdened, sinful, yet a thirsty soul,
She came that hour because of earthly need;
But there she met the Lord and was made whole,
And with His gift was satisfied indeed.

O precious living Spring that shall not cease!
Eternal Life, eternal joy and peace!

F.D. Walker

ISAIAH 57 ~ PHILEMON

Isaiah 57 corresponds with Philemon, which presents the story of a run-away, and unfaithful slave, who found the way of restoration through the very spirit of Divine Grace. Paul besought Philemon "...for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds: Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me: Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels: Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel: But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly. For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever;" Phm. 1:10-15 Onesimus' journey follows the exact same pattern as that of Israel. They too were unfaithful and unprofitable, and "departed for a season," as Isaiah records some rather scathing indictments against them, such as "...ye sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the whore...children of transgression, a seed of falsehood, Enflaming yourselves with idols..." V. 3-5 However, like Onesimus, they too will find that God will indeed receive them "...for ever," for they will learn the path of contrition outlined in V. 15. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." They too, as Onesimus, will become "Not now as a servant, **but above a servant,**..." Phm. 1:16 God's Chosen Nation will one day enjoy this glorious exalted place, but as seen repeatedly throughout the Word of God, and at the beginning of this chapter, many prophetic things will come to pass before that hope is ultimately realized.

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"The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come." V. 1 These assertions might well refer to a number of groups, which will be taken away before Israel finally occupies her place of glory in the Millennium. "The righteous..." could surely apply to the "bride of The Lamb," which will be transported to glory before the tribulation starts or is, "...taken away from the evil to come." It is almost a surety, since Jesus will come for her "as a thief in the night," that many

will not even be aware that she is gone for there are "...none considering that the righteous is taken away...." The term could also describe the 144,000, who will endure much persecution and difficulty before being taken to heaven as "the man child," of Rev. 12. The two witnesses, could also be identified as one of these groups, being aptly described as "...merciful men...the righteous...taken away from the evil to come," signifying that they will be martyred, after having finished their own 1260 day ministry. Their bodies will then lie in the street of Jerusalem three and a half days, (Rev. 11:11) before being raised up to glory, just prior to the horrendous "...evil to come," known as the time of Jacob's trouble, which takes place in the latter 1260 days of the tribulation. All three of these groups, known as "the righteous," shall most assuredly experience their own designated rest as stated in the following text.

128 "He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness." V. 2 The first rank of the Church, known as the Bride of Christ, and symbolized by the four living ones, and twenty four elders of Rev. 4,5, will begin their "rest" before the tribulation even begins. The 144,000, "...shall enter into peace:..." just before the middle of the week, while the departure of the two witnesses marks the exact midpoint of the tribulation week, when they too will enter into their "rest." "Rest," for the entire nation of Israel, will surely follow. However, the little word "But,..." introducing the next portion of this text, is very significant, for it describes the "issues" which must be addressed **before** these particular "...righteous...shall enter into his peace..."

"But draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the whore." "...draw near hither..." cries the prophet indicating that God must get Israel's attention before there can be any change for them. They must also acknowledge the fact that they are indeed guilty of extreme satanic sorcery, and whoredom, whereby they have substituted other gods for Jehovah. Ezekiel gives a detailed account of these same transgressions, of which both Judah and Israel are guilty. "Son of man, there were two women, the daughters of one mother: And they committed whoredoms in Egypt; they committed whoredoms in their youth: there were their breasts pressed, and there they bruised the teats of their virginity. And the names of them were Aholah the elder,

and Aholibah her sister: and they were mine, and they bare sons and daughters. Thus were their names; Samaria is Aholah, and Jerusalem Aholibah. And Aholah played the harlot when she was mine; and she doted on her lovers, on the Assyrians her neighbours,” Ezek. 23:2-5 Moses likewise unveiled Israel’s idolatry shortly after they crossed the Red Sea, citing words out of their own mouths. “...These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.” Ex. 32:4 The “gods” here, is the golden calf, fashioned by Aaron, and given credit for their miraculous exodus out of Egypt. It is such atrocities as these, which prompt God’s questions, “Against whom do ye sport yourselves? against whom make ye a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue? are ye not children of transgression, a seed of falsehood, Enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree, slaying the children in the valleys under the cliffs of the rocks?” V. 4-5 There is an absolute host of accusations against Israel in this next section. The word “sport” literally means “to be soft or pliable,” but that surely does not reflect their attitude toward The Lord. Rather, these “sons of the sorceress” seem to have a very soft touch toward those idolatrous elements which have replaced Jehovah. They also make a “wide mouth and draw out the tongue...” meaning that they are very vocal in their idolatry, as they transgress against The Very God Who Redeemed them, in vehemently pursuing false gods. Their passion in this matter is described by the term “Enflaming,” which literally means to “get heat, or wax hot.” It is reminiscent of the prophets of Baal, after Elijah had challenged them to a test which would prove, “...if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him.” I Kings 18:21 Those same prophets then literally flew into a frenzy “... and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon,... leaped upon the altar which was made...And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.” I Kings 18:26-28 Their god did not answer them, and Elijah then cried out, “Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God,...Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.” I Kings 18:37-38

This tremendous display of God’s power brought forth somewhat of a “revival,” among the people but it was rather short

lived, for as noted in our current text, Isaiah accuses them of “Enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree, slaying the children in the valleys under the cliffs of the rocks?” The last portion of this verse may reflect one the most blatant acts, of Israel’s idolatry, for it seems to be an account of human sacrifice. God had specifically warned them against such a practice in Lev. 18:21. “And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD.” Many of the kings of Israel were guilty of this idolatrous atrocity, causing their sons and daughters to “... pass through the fire to Molech...” Scripture is very plain that “...Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another;...” II Kings 21:16 Some commentators have indicated that such blood included that of innocent children who were forced to go through the fire in sacrifice to Molech, and it was this very sin which God would not pardon, thus bringing forth Judah’s captivity to Babylon. II Kings. 24:4

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Isaiah concludes this rather long list of accusations against Israel with another question. “Among the smooth stones of the stream is thy portion; they, they are thy lot: even to them hast thou poured a drink offering, thou hast offered a meat offering. Should I receive comfort in these?” V. 6 It is quite evident that Israel has gone to great lengths in pouring forth their offerings unto all these idols, and God simply asks the question, “should I be greatly impressed by all this energy against Me? He then levels a great number of idolatrous charges against them, apparently not asking them for any immediate response, for these things are stated as unequivocal fact. “Upon a lofty and high mountain hast thou set thy bed: even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice. Behind the doors also and the posts hast thou set up thy remembrance: for thou hast discovered thyself to another than me, and art gone up; thou hast enlarged thy bed, and made thee a covenant with them; thou lovedst their bed where thou sawest it. And thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst send thy messengers far off, and didst debase thyself even unto hell. Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way; yet saidst thou not, There is no hope: thou hast found the life of thine hand; therefore thou wast not grieved.” V. 7-10 All of these things seem to be likened unto a woman pursuing other lovers, an analogy

which God has used repeatedly in describing Israel's unfaithfulness to Him. Her idolatrous "bed," supposedly in secret "Behind the door,..." has been set upon a "high and lofty mountain," or kingdom, as she has "...discovered thyself to another than me,..." She has "...made thee a covenant with them..." rather than keeping the covenant she had already made with The God Who had repeatedly delivered her. She poured out her gifts of "ointment," along with fragrant perfumes, of worship and adoration, unto kings, sending "...messengers far off,..." literally trying to "buy their favor," rather than give such devotion unto The LORD. Such overtures, to the "lovers," did "...debase thyself unto hell,..." and "Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way,..." yet, after all this, she still will not admit that "...There is no hope..." She still clings to the myth that "...thou has found the life of thine hand; therefore thou was not grieved." This seems to be true of this rebellious nation even today. They apparently, and genuinely, believe, that the nations hold the answers to all their problems and that they can indeed find real life outside of turning to The LORD, thus there is no grief, no remorse, or repentance before Him, which now does evoke the following questions.

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"And of whom hast thou been afraid or feared, that thou hast lied, and hast not remembered me, nor laid it to thy heart? have not I held my peace even of old, and thou fearest me not?" V. 11 Now, God does demand an account, for it is quite evident, from these words, that this people certainly does fear the nations more than they fear Him. He has proven Himself, over and over again, yet they do not remember Him, and up to this time, "...I have held my peace, even of old,..." meaning that He has been so very longsuffering with them, down through the ages, and has not brought forth reprisal for their idolatrous actions. That pattern, however, is about to change for "I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works; for they shall not profit thee." V. 12 God must reveal the fact that their "...righteousnesses are as filthy rags;..." (Isa. 64:6) and they must needs, learn by experience, that all their confidence in the nations must vanish. That will only happen when they cry out to them for deliverance and all those efforts will miserably fail.

“When thou criest, let thy companies deliver thee; but the wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall take them: but he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain;” V. 13 All this will come to pass in the great tribulation when Israel is reduced to nothingness. Just as Onesimus was cast into prison with Paul, so will this nation be found within the prison bars of Jacob’s trouble, where they too will finally hear the message of true salvation. It is here, where they too will finally learn that deliverance comes only by God’s restoration through Divine Grace. When all else has failed, this unfaithful people shall know, without doubt; “...he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain;” Today, the whole world seems to be clamoring for a piece of this choice city, but it belongs to God, Who calls it “my holy mountain...” and He will bequeath it to Israel. He will rise up and fight for His Own, once they have forsaken their ways of idolatry and surrendered their hearts completely to Him. He will then say emphatically to the entirety of the nations, “...Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumblingblock out of the way of my people,” thus reducing any kind of hindrance to their taking possession of that which rightfully belongs to them.

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Israel, as a nation, will eventually be, “...he that putteth his trust in me...” but they must first discover the path of contrition, outlined in V. 15. “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, **with him** also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” Only the fires of tribulation will produce this required humility so that God can pour out His Marvelous grace upon Israel. This manifold grace is beautifully shown forth as The Very God Of All Grace declares; “For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.” V. 16 He was “wroth,” and rightfully so, but the wrath of the tribulation will not last indefinitely for if it did, “...the spirit should fail before me,...” and Israel, along with all “...the souls which I have made,...” would be annihilated. Jesus declared that same possibility in Matt. 24:22 announcing that “...except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved:” The cause

of such intense desolation is the covetousness of Israel. “For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.” V. 17 Just as the “he” who would finally trust in The Lord is a reference to Israel, so also is this nation the subject here. God has been wroth with His People throughout the ages, because of the repeated unbelief and idolatry outlined above, and God did “hide” Himself from them during this entire Church Age. Israel has also gone “...on forwardly in the way of his heart,” even while she has been set aside, as “...God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.” Acts 15:14 But this Church Age is very quickly drawing to a close, and God will once again restore His intimate dealings with Israel, for “I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners.” V. 18 “I have seen his ways...” seems to include the idolatrous ways found in V. 3-11, along with the froward “...way of his heart...” of V. 17, but they must also, of necessity, be a reference to the ways of humility and repentance for which He searched in V. 15 These latter ways surely must be seen before God can bring forth the His Healing Power, “...and restore comforts to him and his mourners. Furthermore, “I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him.” V. 19 Israel, along with the entire world, has longed for this “...fruit of the lips...” which would proclaim “Peace...far off... and near...” Only God can create such a reality, and Israel, along with these other nations, must soon learn it. They must also acknowledge the fact that men will never find peace on their own, because “...the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.” V. 20-21 If men persist in their wickedness, even during the Age of Peace, called the Millennium, God’s Word is very plain that they will not find the tranquility for which they have long searched. Peace, comes only through The LORD, The Prince Of Peace, The Messiah, Whom Israel will have found by this time. He Alone, will be the Subject of their message, to the world, as they, like Onesimus, will be received into His Presence, “...for ever...”

ISAIAH 58 ~ HEBREWS

“Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.” V. 1

This chapter forms a direct correlation with Hebrews where Paul desperately tries to persuade his own people, the Jews, to turn from the types and shadows of the O.T. to the realities, which are found in Christ. The first four verses, of our present text, indicate that Israel was simply “going through the motions,” of walking in righteousness. Their view is that they “...forsook not the ordinance,...” as in verse two, and put great stock in fasting as proclaimed by the third verse, but such a fast was not God’ fast. “Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness,...” V. 6 They were also obsessed with the Sabbath, calling it “...a delight...,” but were still “...doing thy pleasure on my holy day;...” V. 13

The Hebrews likewise engaged in following rigid decrees demanded by the law, in order to achieve righteousness, but they had not a clue as to the Real Substance found only in Christ Jesus, including the truth of The Sabbath. They did not know that real rest is the result of simply believing God. “For we which have **believed** do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world...There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God... For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.” Heb 4:3,9,10

Thus, Isaiah cries out vehemently in this opening verse “Cry aloud, spare not,...shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.” They continued in those sins and transgressions, despite the fact that they tried to pursue righteousness through the decrees of the law. They, like the Hebrew Christians, did not know the reality of God’s Redemption in Christ Jesus, Who also chided the Jews of His Day for trying to find righteousness by focusing their attention on the most **insignificant**, and often mundane, demands of the law. “But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of **herbs**, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.” Luke 11:42

Jesus also addressed this problem of applying an exaggerated eye of scrutiny to the least important elements of the law, while completely ignoring the weighty matters of spirituality, accusing the religious leaders of being "...blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess." Matt. 23:24-25 Isaiah continues his barrage against such hypocrisy, and emphasis on outward appearance, with these words.

"Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God." V. 2 God says "you act like a people that are seeking my face, appearing as a nation engaged in righteousness, and as one that did not go away from the ordinances of God," but then this same nation accuses God, saying "Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and **thou seest not?** wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and **thou takest no knowledge?** Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours." V. 3 This seems to be the very essence of a law keeper's attitude. They want to be rewarded for their efforts, but God declares that such a fast is not really for His benefit, but for their own. "Behold, in the day of **your** fast ye find pleasure,..." Furthermore, "Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high." They were fasting, but for the wrong reasons, and were found to be wicked, even in the midst of it. Thus the day will come that "ye shall not fast as ye do this day....." One day, they must discover the fast which God has chosen, but their present manner is not acceptable in His sight. "Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?" Jesus chided the scribes and Pharisees for this same attitude in Matt. 6:16. "Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward."

Such is the result of law keeping. Men do it to be seen, and approved, of men, but all must eventually realize that it is

only God's opinion that counts, as is illustrated by His definition of fasting. "Is not this the fast that **I have chosen?** to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?" V. 6 God's Fast brings freedom, but the entire law genders only bondage. Peter described it as tempting God, and putting "...a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" Acts 15:10 God's Fast, defines the very essence of Divine Grace, which is total deliverance from bondage. Paul loudly declared that "... the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God." Heb. 7:19 That better hope was ushered in on the wings of the glorious covenant of Divine Grace, which is guaranteed by Christ Jesus. Not only does it remove the bondage of law, but it also enriches, those who claim its benefits, with "...a better hope..." which will draw us "...nigh unto God..." rather than separating us from Him.

Isaiah likewise continues with the glorious benefits of God's Fast. "Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?" All these are simply traits of the new creation, which emanate from the new birth, and will minister to the needs of others, rather than concentrating on self, as does "sabbath-keeping." When such a life is claimed, "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward." V. 8 The "light...and righteousness..." here are none other than the Light and Righteousness of Christ, and the rewards for exhibiting such a life, in practical every day experience, are legion. Health and the "glory of the LORD..." are among them and will bring the direct response from the Lord, which this people had sought unsuccessfully, in V. 3. Such a blessing is a magnificent part of the "rereward," or gathering" produced by "...the glory of the LORD..." "Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday:"

V. 9-10 All these are still benefits of observing God's Fast, but such blessings are conditional. They must cease their own selfish ways, loose those "...bands of wickedness,... and the heavy burdens of the oppressed..." Their cry unto the Lord must be genuine, whereby "...he shall say, Here am I..." Not only so, but they must be willing to "...take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger,...speaking vanity;...draw out thy soul to the hungry,...satisfy the afflicted soul;...." Removing the yoke is, once again, a reference to the severe bondage of the law, inflicted by religious leaders, but the expression "...putting forth the finger..." is rather interesting. It has the connotation of "grasping or seizing" something for self, rather than dispensing to others as they are instructed to do in V. 7. If they will abide by these requirements, the lavish reward will be forthcoming.

"And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." V. 11 This same glorious pattern is also found in Hebrews where these marvelous blessings are described as "rest." "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world." Heb 4:1-3 Paul also exhorted: "And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Heb 6:11-12 That "full assurance of hope" is a reference to the fullness of all the glorious blessings promised by authority of God's Word. Such promises are most assuredly meant for those who will bow to the aforementioned conditions of entering into "God's Fast," and Isaiah's prophecy reaches well into the future as he describes a nation that will one day claim these promises and be the great blessing, even to the nations, which God intended. "And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell

in.” V. 12 This prophecy well applies to Israel’s role among the nations in the millennium, but it is conditional on learning, by experience, the glorious truth of the Sabbath as will be clearly seen in V. 13.

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Israel will have a glorious heritage, even among the Gentiles, as “...they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places:...” Those “...that shall be of thee...” does not just refer to Jews, but also to the millennial nations which will be “evangelized” by Israel after Christ sets up His New Kingdom. This fledgling nation, that will be born in one day, shall surely “...raise up the foundations of many generations;...” even generations of the Gentiles, and those same peoples shall indeed call Israel “...The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.” Israel will lead the way in repairing the breach of fellowship with God, literally teaching them the paths of God, as they minister to “...all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:...” Matt. 28:19-20 Israel will be God’s Witness in this world, but first they must travel the path of restoration for themselves. “If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:” V. 13 These words indicate that Israel must stop violating the Sabbath, if they are to enjoy the glorious benefits outlined above. They must “...turn away thy foot from the Sabbath,...” meaning they must cease walking in their own ways and discover the true Rest In Christ. Isaiah personifies the Sabbath in this glorious statement, and that Person is Jesus! It is Christ in Whom they must “...delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable and shalt honour **him**...” The Jews never did understand Jesus’ declaration that “...The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath:” Mk. 2:27 They failed to grasp the fact that God gave the Sabbath as a benefit of Rest, not a cold hard decree which must be rigorously kept, thereby plunging men into bondage. They never did realize that Jesus Himself, was The Sabbath of Rest, and “...the holy of the LORD,...” Who must be honored. When they do discover that glorious truth, “Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed

thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it." V. 14 Oh what a glorious day when this Chosen People shall finally "...delight thyself in the LORD;..." When they do, they will literally "ride upon the high places of the earth,..." for they will be the head and not the tail of all the nations. They will enjoy all the glorious blessings couched in "...the heritage of Jacob..." for they will finally experience the fullness of the Abrahamic Covenant. Despite all the unbelief, rebellion, and violations of God's decrees, throughout the ages, Israel will, at last, be fully restored because "...the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it!"

The Hand Unseen

He held the lamp of truth that day
So low that none could miss the way,
And yet so high to bring in sight
That picture fair, the world's great light.
And gazing up the lamp between,
The hand that held it scarce was seen.

He held the pitcher, stooping low
To lift the little ones below;
Then raised it to the weary saint,
And bade him drink when sick and faint.
They drank, the pitcher thus between,
The hand that held it scarce was seen.

He blew the trumpet soft and clear
That trembling sinners need not fear,
And then with loudest note and bold
To raise the walls of faith untold.
The trumpet coming thus between
The hand that held it scarce was seen.

But when the Captain says, "Well done
Thou good and faithful servant, come,
Lay down the pitcher and the lamp,
Lay down the trumpet--leave the camp."
The weary hand will then be seen
Clasped in those pierced ones, naught between.

Selected

ISAIAH 59 ~ JAMES

“Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated.....” V. 1

This chapter, which contains a great deal of rather harsh language, corresponds with the book of James where the writer also becomes rather passionate, using some very strong and pointed expressions, to warn men against their worldly attitudes, and conduct, insisting that they put their faith into living practice. He also accuses them of greed, and such strong indictments are issued in context with the latter days. “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Jas. 4:4

“But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?” Jas. 2:20

“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” Jas. 2:26

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“Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.” Jas. 5:1-3

Isaiah, likewise, continues to assail men for their wickedness insisting that “...your hands are defiled with blood...your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.” V. 3 James also calls men in question for their misguided use of the tongue: “But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.” Jas. 3:8-10 James here informs us of the two creations, wherein the same mouth is capable of sending forth both “...blessing and cursing...” but quickly adding “...these things ought not so to be.” Isaiah proclaims this same exhortation. “...My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of

thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever." V. 21

Thus Isaiah begins his entreaty announcing the glorious, and emphatic, promise "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: **But...**" That "but," indicates that all God's Resources and His Response to them is available, but, their unbelief and wicked ways, have literally tied His Hands. Isaiah insists that "...your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." James also indicates that God would "...not hear," because "Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." Jas 4:2-3 The text here in Isaiah is also equivalent to the same "enmity with God," of which James wrote, and he continues his onslaught with these very scathing accusations.

"For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness. None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity." V. 3-4 Such words could very well be written of national Israel today, for they are not crying out for God's Justice, in that which is right or moral, and they are, in no wise, pleading "...for truth,..." which is found only in Jesus "...the way, the truth, and the life." John 14:6 They rather "...trust in vanity and speak lies..." and then "They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave the spider's web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper." V. 5 These constitute very severe judgments against this people. It is said by some, that this matter of "hatching cockatrice' eggs is in reference to the Pagan religious ceremonies which were practiced in Israel. A cockatrice is a deadly serpent, an adder, and extremely dangerous. They not only hatched the eggs of this deadly reptile, but they would also "...weave the spider's web,..." an indication that they were caught in their own trap. The results of such activities is death to "...he that eateth of their eggs,..." and "...that which is crushed..." by such practices "...breaketh out into a viper." In other words, the one who practices such

Pagan ceremonies actually **becomes** a viper or serpent. They are indeed the very tool of Satan himself, even as Jesus declared of the Pharisees, "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Matt. 12:34

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"Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands." V. 6 These "webs" are Isaiah's poetic reference to the previous verse, wherein he declared that they were simply "traps." Now he asserts that those same webs would not become garments whereby they might cover themselves with works, for those works are wicked and violent. Not only so, but "Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths. The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace." V. 7-8 Paul quotes from these verses in Rom. 3:15-17, asserting that they apply to all men, both Jew and Gentile. Isaiah declares that their works are evil, but he also indicates that the cause of such actions goes much deeper for "...their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity... The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment..." This latter word means "verdict, or decision," and these individuals simply do not make good and righteous ones. They have rather "...made them crooked paths..." which will result in no peace at all, for they have, in fact, rejected the Prince of Peace.

The Prophet next declares that Israel has apparently recognized the error of their ways for they now declare "Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness." V. 9 This self assessment is obviously the result of Israel facing the view of them which God set forth in verses 2-8. The wrong "judgments," which they have made, have not produced the desired result and therefore real "justice," or that which is "right, moral, or cleansed," has not overtaken them. Light has eluded them, having been obscured to the point of darkness. Now they simply "...grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noonday as

in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men.” V. 10 It seems that they are very much cognizant of their plight but they do nothing about it, even as James declares “Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.” Jas. 4:2-3 Paul uncovers the mystery of such blindness with this explanation. “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that **blindness in part** is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.” Rom. 11:25-27

Israel will, one day, look upon Him Whom they have pierced, and will “see the glorious light” which has eluded them throughout this entire Church Age, but at the present time they still “...roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: “...we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far off from us.” V. 11 “We roar...” or “rage and clamor” as a bear, and “...mourn sore...” like unto the “mourning dove,” but salvation, “...is far off from us.” All of this energy, spent in raging and mourning, is simply worthless, because they are not seeking salvation in Jesus! Their “confession” continues, exclaiming that “...our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them;” V. 12 They do recognize that their “... transgressions are multiplied before **thee**,...” that is, God Himself has been offended, and it seems they are finally coming to the place of genuine repentance, for specific sins are named. “In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.” V. 13-14 All these, are infractions reflecting the tremendous spiritual deficit in their own lives. They also recognize that the values of “truth,” which has been completely rejected “... is fallen in the street.” Jesus emphatically declared: “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” John 8:32 When that truth is rejected,

there is most assuredly no equity or "integrity and uprightness." The emphasis on truth is repeated as Isaiah further asserts, "Yea, truth faileth;..." but then, he concludes this assessment with a very strange statement. "... and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey:..." This is actually a record of Israel beginning to turn their hearts toward The LORD. It follows the same pattern experienced by many in our day, when they begin to submit their lives unto Him, thus becoming a prey of the enemy, who would thwart that attempt. Satan will be there when Israel shows the first sign of turning their hearts toward their Messiah, and we note that V. 15 closes with the fact that "... the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment." The next verse enlarges on this dilemma. "And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor,..." meaning that not a spiritual man in Israel could be found to plead their cause. However, God is never at a loss in such apparent hopeless conditions and "...therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him." Thus when Israel does begin to show signs of forsaking their rebellious and belligerent attitude toward Him, The Strong Arm of Salvation, found in their Messiah will literally spring to their help. It is at this point that the repentant Jew discovers, by experience; "...Salvation is of the LORD." Jonah 2:9 This same repentant nation will finally claim "...his righteousness,..." which is, in fact, the sustaining righteousness of Christ. Furthermore, "... he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke." V. 17 All these now become glorious benefits for repentant Israel. They will discover their defensive armor of "...righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation..." but they will also be clothed with "... garments of vengeance..." and a cloke of zeal as they march forth triumphantly against their enemies.

"According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompence." V. 17 God says "it is time for payback," and this people, which has suffered such oppression and humility at the hands of the nations, will finally be able to strike back, as they wield the righteousness of God against their adversaries. Then comes the positive response from these same nations.

“So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.” V. 19 These same nations will now “... fear the name of the LORD,...” and it also appears that they will discover the glorious benefits of such respect because “...the spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard...” against the enemy in their behalf, even as He has done for Israel.

This chapter closes with glorious promises to Israel. It began with a host of indictments against them, but God has promised that this Chosen Nation shall now be sovereign because “...the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.” V. 20 We have noted repeatedly that the nations are literally clamoring for a piece of Zion, or Jerusalem, but it belongs to God, and He has elected give it to Israel. Furthermore, “...As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.” V. 21 According to Jesus, “...of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.” Luke 6:45 God declared “...my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth,...” signifies that Israel has been given a new heart. James also reveals that “... the tongue can no man tame;... Therewith bless we God,... Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing.... Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?... so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh. Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.” Jas. 3:8-13 Isaiah’s message also shows forth Israel as a new creation, and their new message, even to the nations round about them will most assuredly be one of edification, righteousness, and blessing “... from henceforth and for ever.”

ISAIAH 60 ~ I PETER

“**A**rise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.” V. 1 Our previous chapter closed with a reference to Israel as a new creation. This one continues with that same theme, and corresponds with I Peter, as this Hebrew Apostle likewise testifies of a restored Israel. “Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” I Pet. 1:5 Isaiah further proclaims these new creation traits asserting that “...thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.” V. 18 Peter also exclaims, “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found **unto praise** and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:” I Pet. 1:7 He further announces God’s long-time purpose for them declaring that “... ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:” I Pet. 2:9

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Both of these records emphatically guarantee the restoration of Israel, declaring His salvation and shouting His praise, when they turn to the The LORD. However, as seen repeatedly in Isaiah and other portions of scripture, Israel must endure some horrendous times of darkness before this glorious state is attained.

A new day will indeed dawn for this very select people, and this Chosen Nation shall “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.” However, the next verse assures us that such light will emerge from gross darkness. “For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.” V. 2 We would note here that Peter well describes this same pattern in his second epistle to the Hebrews. “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:” II Pet. 1:19

The darkness, to which both these men allude, refers to the tremendous difficulty of the great tribulation, and most especially the all encompassing darkness which will ensue during the 1260

day reign of the antichrist. It is out of that most difficult time that "... the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee." Not only will He deliver them, but they will become luminaries in that gross darkness of tribulation. Such darkness is said to "... cover the earth,..." but it is "... **gross darkness...**" which envelopes "... the people..." or Israel. This is where they begin to emerge, and take the place of leadership which God ordained those many years ago for "... the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." V. 3 The "... light..." which they now emit is none other than The Light of their Messiah, Jesus, Who has now become "... thy light..." in practical experience! This is the Light which is now so very prominent throughout the whole world and thus all these nations are exhorted to "Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side." V. 4

Scripture is very plain that Israel will be God's "evangelists" throughout the millennium, but the latter part of verse four seems to indicate that the faithful remnant will lead that charge as "... thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side." This small company, which is gathered from the far reaches of the earth, will spark the return and restoration of the entire nation, as demonstrated in the following text. "Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee." V. 5 The "... sea ..." which shall "... be converted unto thee,..." describes the Gentiles which shall follow the path charted by New Creation Israel. The heart of the Jew has finally learned to "... fear..." The Lord and bow in submission. When that happens, they shall all "... flow together,..." that is, "without restraint or difficulty." The great ministerial success that Israel will enjoy as they are "... enlarged,..." is primarily because Satan will be bound a thousand years thus eliminating the great obstacle which has confronted the Church throughout this entire age.

This millennial atmosphere continues, declaring the fact that Israel will be enriched by the nations. "The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the LORD." Nations

which once “took” from Israel, now return, bringing these choice goods with them as a present “to” this now very privileged people. It is also evident that some of these treasures are brought for the express purpose of worship or to “... shew forth the praises of the LORD,” and the next verse indicates a change of heart on their part. “All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee,...” Kedar means “darkness,” an indication of what these peoples were, yet now they too are “... gathered unto thee...” Likewise “... the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee:...” Nebaioth means “heights,” expressing the attitudes of pride and arrogance which had, in time past, been so prevalent in these nations both toward Israel and The LORD. That spirit has been changed as “... they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory.” V. 7 The references to the “... flocks...” of Kedar and the “... rams...” of Nebaioth, are also significant, bespeaking the fact that these Gentile nations have now become “sheep,” and are offering themselves as “a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service,” even as we do today. They are also gathering to “... the house of my glory,” which is in Jerusalem, and their entourage seems to be rather spectacular as Isaiah very poetically describes them as clouds.

“Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?” V. 8 Large numbers of people are often described as clouds, as seen in Heb. 12:2 by “... so great a cloud of witnesses,...” Glorified humanity is, undoubtedly, also seen when “... a cloud received him out of their sight,” as Jesus ascended into heaven after the resurrection. Such clouds must also be meant when men “... see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.” Mk. 13:26 This text in Isaiah reflects the nations clamoring to descend upon Jerusalem, and the following verses portray countries whose intent is to bring blessing to Israel.

“Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the LORD thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee.” V. 9 These “isles” who now “... wait for me...” tell of a “coast, an island:-- country” and seem to indicate even very small nations who will also wait for The LORD, and bring “...their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the LORD thy God, and to the Holy One of

Israel, because he hath glorified thee.” The message in this verse is that these nations will return “... thy sons from far,” indeed from whence they have been scattered into the four corners of the earth, bringing their riches to Israel directly because God “... hath glorified thee,” that is, Israel. This nation becomes a world symbol of God’s Power and Might, demonstrating feats which only He could accomplish. God then promises that “... the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee.” V. 10 God smote them in the tribulation, but His Mercy issued the final command, and now blessing upon blessing will prevail for them, even through the very nations which once oppressed them. Those “... sons of strangers ...” will restore their walls, and the leaders will now “... minister ...” to them and seek their welfare rather than their destruction.

“Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought.” V. 11 What a contrast to “modern – day Jerusalem!” Sometimes it seems almost in “lock-down,” in order to defend and protect it, but in that day, the gates of this beloved city shall open her gates in welcome to all these Gentile nations which would today seek their own purposes for her. Isaiah is also very quick to add that judgment will be swift for anyone who will not comply with this “new world order.” “For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.” V. 12

“The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious.” V. 13 All these trees are enduring precious woods and are to “... beautify the place of my sanctuary;...” Does this mean that God will use these nations to supply such valued resources for the Millennial Temple? We have heard much in recent years about plans to re-build the temple at Jerusalem, matching the same pattern, and demensions, as that of Solomon. However, the Millennial Temple will be God’s Project and, according to some students of prophecy, will be constructed more on the order of that which was built after the captivity where some who had seen the glory of Solomon’s Temple were reprimanded, after the

foundation was laid. “Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?” Hag 2:3 Zechariah likewise asks “For who hath despised the day of small things?” Zec 4:10 Haggai then proclaims this prophecy, which can only be fulfilled in the millennium, and agrees perfectly with our text in Isaiah. “And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.” Hag. 2:7

Isaiah also informs us that “... I will make the place of my feet glorious.” This would refer to the foot portion of the Body of Christ, which is mainly the faithful remnant, who will be centered around the “sanctuary,” and will form the spiritual nucleus of God’s Kingdom on earth.

150 Glorious things surely await both Israel and the nations who will benefit from their ministry, but severe reprisals are seen in the following words addressed to the nations who have survived the tribulation. “The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.” V. 14 Israel will one day claim the distinction of being the head of the nations, as “The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee;...” There are nations in these last days, such as Iran, Syria, and The Palestinians, along with a multitude of terrorist groups, whose reason for existing is to destroy Israel. These nations and factions will not survive the tribulation, but other powers, who could be termed “friendly,” will bow down in total submission to this people whom they once despised and afflicted. Such affliction is defined in the following portion.

“Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee,...” reflects the policy of many forces today, Every political leader on earth must, at some point, consider how they will “handle” Israel in relation to their own governments, and many openly disdain them, trying desperately to simply avoid them so that “...no man went through thee.” However, It is God Who will have the last word concerning this Chosen People and He promises that “... I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.” V. 15 These are eternal millennia blessings, in direct contrast to the treatment previously inflicted

by national powers. Not only so, but “Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings: and thou shalt know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.” V. 16 These same nations, which once pursued Israel, just to use them for their own advantage, now become a source of supply for this now exalted nation, so Israel may know “...that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer,...” This scenario follows exactly the same pattern as when Solomon, typical of Christ, was greatly enriched by the Queen of Sheba. “And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices ... and precious stones:... And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees, and precious stones. I Kings 10:10-11

This choice nation will most assuredly be enriched by these nations, but God Himself will provide treasures, far beyond that, figuratively replacing lesser metals with that which is superior. “For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron:...” The Israel of the Millennium, will be astoundingly rich in material wealth, but they will also have spiritual riches without measure. This same verse also promises that “... I will also make thy officers peace, and thine extractors righteousness.” V. 17 What a contrast this will be to the Israeli “officers” or leaders today, wherein peace is so very elusive, but there is also another great miracle couched here. The “... extractors...” or taskmasters and tyrants who had harassed them, are now made “... righteousness,” meaning that they too have discovered the righteousness that comes only through Christ Jesus. This would seem only a myth today, but peace and righteousness will reign supreme as is evident from the following passage.

“Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.” V. 18 This same atmosphere, of salvation and praise, is proclaimed in I Peter, as noted earlier, and will come to fruition in the Millennium, but the remaining verses of this chapter seemingly give way eternity. “The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more

go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.” V. 19-20 John beheld this same phenomenon, after The Great White Throne Judgment, and after Satan and all the wicked had been cast into the lake of fire in Rev. 20.

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven,…” Rev. 21:1-2

“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” Rev. 21:23

“And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.” Rev. 22:5

This is a description of the New Heavenly Jerusalem, and John saw this spectacular view “... coming down from God out of heaven,…” meaning that the heavenly Jerusalem will descend to some point, probably in close proximity, above the earthly City. Thus, the same “sunless” Light, which will illuminate the heavenly city, will also “... be thine everlasting light,…” upon the earth, as Isaiah proclaimed. Israel’s eternal spiritual state is also addressed as “Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.” V. 21 God’s long standing plan of redemption for Israel will finally come to pass in its entirety, and “... the work of my hands,…” will be shown forth as an eternal victory.

Finally, “A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the LORD will hasten it in his time.” V. 22 This has been the pattern for Israel since they were born as a nation. This little insignificant one has become a strong, robust nation, and this final state will come only when God “... will hasten it in his time.”

ISAIAH 61 ~ II PETER

“**T**he Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;” V. 1-2

This current chapter of Isaiah primarily proclaims great blessing for Israel, but also announces the above mentioned “... day of vengeance of our God:...” in the midst of it. Peter’s second epistle to his Hebrew brethren corresponds with it, and follows the same pattern wherein he too proclaims those same momentous days of judgment, along with the glorious deliverance and restoration awaiting this chosen nation. “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell,... And spared not the old world, but saved Noah... a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;... turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes... And delivered just Lot,... (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:” II Pet. 2:4-9 Peter further describes God’s onslaught against wickedness, and subsequent blessing, with this account. “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” II Pet 3:10-13

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There will be tremendous devastation during this “...day of vengeance of our God...” but Isaiah primarily concentrates on the deliverance and restoration, of which Peter also proclaimed. Scripture is very clear that the “... new heavens and a new

earth..." will not fully come to pass until after the millennium, but the glorious atmosphere of peace and utopia, which will prevail during Christ's thousand year reign, will begin when Jesus sets up His Kingdom following the devastation of the tribulation period.

Thus Isaiah begins this chapter shouting "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek;..." We immediately recognize these words as the text which Jesus read when He began His earthly ministry in Luke 4:18-21, following His "anointing" on the banks of the river Jordan, and His subsequent temptation in the wilderness. It presents an outline of what He would accomplish, beginning at the time then present, for "... he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Luke 4:21 The fullness of these provisions, however, will not be completely consummated until the millennium.

His first priority is to "... preach good tidings (gospel) unto the meek..." emphasizing the fact that God's Word must also be pre-eminent in ministry today. David exclaimed "I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for **thy truth**: for thou hast **magnified thy**
154 **word above all thy name.**" Psa. 138:2 God's Word is responsible for all the glorious blessings outlined in this proclamation. It is a message that will meet the need of the "...meek..." or needy one, and it will "... bind up the brokenhearted,..." Jesus was also sent "... to proclaim liberty to the captives,..." and He would implement such freedom, as He demonstrated the power of God's Word among them. He would also set the captive free from any bondage by "... the opening of the prison to them that are bound;..."

The next facet of His ministry surely reaches down to our day and includes the aforementioned prophecy of Peter, for Jesus was sent "... To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,..." This will be a time of great devastation for some, but as Peter declares, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:" II Pet. 2:9 He also plainly instructs us that, "... the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night;... Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,... Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God,..." II Pet.

3:10-12 We are looking for that glorious day of deliverance, but Isaiah make is very clear that, "... the day of vengeance of our God;..." will most assuredly come pass. It is rather interesting, and significant, that Jesus omitted these final two "promises," in His announcement that "...This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Such a reference to judgment would have been out of place at the beginning of an age wherein the fullness of divine grace must prevail.

This brings us to the final strain of this verse, which seems to introduce the tremendous blessings encapsulated in the rest of the chapter, for Jesus was sent "... to comfort all that mourn;" He did that at His first advent, but He will especially render such comfort during the days of tribulation after Israel has accepted Him as their Messiah! Israel will be preserved during the awful 1260 day reign of antichrist, but such devastation will give way to "... beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified." V. 3 This small fledgling nation will be reduced to ashes, but will also experience glorious beauty which will be found only in Christ. The joyous oil of the Holy Ghost, which was so prominent in the early days of The Church Age, will also prevail when Jesus establishes His Kingdom in the Millennium. This will follow the tremendous state of mourning, and heaviness which became a way of life during the tribulation. Not only so, but this entire nation will become an extremely strong nation "... called the trees of righteousness,..." indeed a nation that has been eternally "planted," by The Lord, and one which will truly glorify Him for eternity.

Isaiah continues to describe Israel's marvelous restoration proclaiming that "... they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations." V. 4 Who can even begin to imagine the devastation that will be caused by the nuclear holocaust coming upon this world? However, Isaiah informs us that the repair shall include "... the desolations of many generations." Israel will be at the very epicenter of all the destruction which will be caused by the nuclear holocaust prophesied in Revelation, but much of the damage which requires the massive rebuilding program described in this verse, is blamed

on the unbelief, and rebellion, of past generations. That is, the tribulation is actually an expression of God's displeasure with Israel from ages past. However, when Israel as a nation, accepts their Messiah, those infractions will be cast behind God's Back, as far as the East is from the West, and the way will be paved for the glorious restoration herein recorded. There must be a time of re-building, but according to the following text, it will be much more than that of cities.

“And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers.” V. 5 Israel has been the doormat for countless nations, throughout their history, but now there is a decided change, even as noted in our previous chapter. “For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.” Isa. 60:12 Not only will the land and cities of this Chosen People be restored, but they will hold a major place of prestige throughout the entire world. Nations who once forced them into servitude will now “... feed your flocks... be your plowmen and ... vinedressers.” Israel will truly be the head of the nations, “... and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath;...” the reason being that they have finally hearkened “...unto the commandments of the LORD thy God,...” Deut. 28:13

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That fact also brings forth the next advantage enjoyed by restored National Israel. “But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.” V.6 God's purpose for this people, as outlined in Ex. 19:6, will finally be brought to fruition: “And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation...” The Gentiles were never an “afterthought,” insofar as God's purposes are concerned. He always intended that, all men should be given the opportunity for salvation, even as Peter declared: “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, ...but is longsuffering... not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” II Pe 3:9 He has also ordained that Israel, as a nation, should be His world-wide evangelists, “... the Priests of the LORD:...” and indeed “...Ministers of our God:...” to the Gentiles. Therefore they shall “... eat the riches of the Gentiles,...” even as God's ministers today are to be nourished by those whom they serve.

The results of such a ministry will most assuredly become a matter of boasting for Israel and, as is indicated by the following verse, it is “payback” time for Israel.

“For your shame ye shall have double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them.” V. 7 Israel has been repeatedly humiliated by these same nations, but for that; they are to be rewarded double, and “... everlasting joy shall be unto them,” even through these Gentile Nations. Israel shall dwell safely in their own land, and none shall take it from them as is the case today. God says here that, “... they shall possess the double,...” an indication that they will finally possess all the land promised by the Abrahamic Covenant.

“For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.” V. 8 One of the very reasons for Israel’s newfound prosperity is that the LORD loves “judgment,” a reference to His justice and righteousness in punishing the nations which have so bitterly opposed His Chosen People. He also declares that “... I hate robbery for burnt offering...” Israel was supposed to have been such a burnt offering unto the LORD, but these same nations robbed Him of that, due to their severe maltreatment of a nation committed to their care during the times of the Gentiles. God’s new order will now change that. He will direct Israel’s “... work in truth and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.” That covenant must include the provisions of both the Abrahamic, and Davidic Covenants, and both are assured in Christ because Israel, as a nation, is now a new creation as the next portion of our text gloriously proclaims.

“And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the LORD hath blessed.” The Apostle Paul beautifully defines, “... the seed which the LORD hath blessed,” in Gal. 3:16. “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” Thus Israel will discover and experience the reality of this “Seed,” when they too become a new creation in Christ Jesus! Then follows their glorious paean of victory! “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath

clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.”

V. 10 National Israel will rejoice only in the Lord, knowing that He alone hath gloriously delivered them. They will have finally learned that true righteousness in Christ is their clothing, rather than struggling with the tenets of the law to produce it, and the reference to the bridegroom and the bride undoubtedly refers to the fact that Israel will finally become the wife of Jehovah.

“For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.” V. 11 This chapter of restoration closes with the assertion that God will finally receive His Own bountiful harvest of righteousness. It follows the same pattern as that which Paul described for the Church. “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.” I Cor. 3:6 Israel as a nation, will spring forth in righteousness and praise for the Lord, and will then be a mighty witness of His Power and Might, before all nations of the earth.

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BENEATH HIS WINGS

Beneath His wings I am secure;
In Him I ever shall endure
He is the Rock on which I stand;
He leads me by His guiding hand.

The signs abound in earth and sky:
I know His coming draweth nigh.
Just any day I'll hear Him say,
“Arise my love and come away.”

--Beula Clark

ISAIAH 62 ~ I JOHN

“...and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name... Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken;... And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.” V. 2,4,12

The above verses somewhat summarize the eternal benefits of redemption which Israel will experience after they accept their Messiah, and are “... called by a new name,...” thereby making them a new creation in Christ Jesus. Thus, this sixty second chapter of Isaiah corresponds beautifully with I John where the beloved apostle enlarges on the glorious blessings and attributes of eternal life. “(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” I John 1:2-3 “I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.” I John 2:12 “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” I John 3:1-2

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One day Israel, as a collective nation, will enjoy the same glorious benefits of eternal life, which are common to believers during this Church Age. They will, in their day of restoration, realize the fullness of God's love and fellowship, and they will revel in the fact that their sins are forgiven thus opening the path for their own exaltation as the sons of God. It is that redemption in Christ Jesus which provides the array of blessing which Isaiah describes throughout the rest of this chapter.

“For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.” God has promised both righteousness and salvation to this beloved city. Neither peace nor righteousness prevail within its walls today, but that will all change when this nation finally

experiences the new birth in Christ. Isaiah asserts that God "... will not rest,..." until He has brought this great miracle to pass, and scripture is very plain that the only righteousness acceptable in His Eyes, is found in Christ. Israel will discover that glorious treasure and become "... as a light that burneth." She will be that beacon of direction, "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name." V. 2 That new name is exactly the same as we enjoy today, for Israel will become a new creation. They will display the very righteousness of Christ as they lead all the nations in such paths during the millennium. They shall also be greatly exalted, reigning as sons of God, for "Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God." This nation will finally display the fact that they are God's crowning work on this earth, and it is in direct contrast to the dire straits displayed during the tribulation.

160 "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married." V. 4 Such desolation will run rampant during the devastating time of Jacob's trouble, and it will be necessary to bring them to total dependence on The LORD. Isaiah had previously declared that, "In that time shall the present be brought unto the LORD of hosts of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, the mount Zion." Isa. 18:7 That time will arrive during this awful week of tribulation wherein they will be left completely forsaken and desolate, but all that will change for this entire nation shall be as a present "... brought unto the LORD of hosts... to... mount Zion." The day of desolation will fade into distant memory, and they will be known as both Hephzibah, and Beulah. Hephzibah means "my delight is in her," while the word Beulah signifies "married." Both terms reflect the love of God upon this people, even as John declared, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God:..." That love and intimacy is further demonstrated by the reference to marriage, "For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so

shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.” V. 5 God long ago claimed Israel as the wife of Jehovah. That story, of both rejection and restoration is, “acted out” by Hosea whom God required to marry an harlot, who then committed adultery against him. After that, he had to literally “buy her back,” and bring her unto himself as a demonstration of God’s persistent pursuit of Israel. His overall purpose is, “... at that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call me Ishi; (Husband) and shalt call me no more Baali. (Master) ... And I will betroth thee unto me **for ever**; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD.” Hos. 2:16-20

That day has finally arrived, even after the great desolation portrayed by Hosea and a number of other prophets, and now Isaiah plainly declares that, “... as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.”

Furthermore, He is now able to assume His place as a Protector, asserting that, “I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.” V. 6-7 The fulfillment of these verses seems to begin while Israel is yet in the tribulation period. The watchmen are true intercessors for Israel like unto the two witnesses, who will minister for the first 1260 days of the tribulation period, “... which shall never hold their peace day nor night:... And give him no rest,...” Theirs’ is a ministry of intercession before God, and that intercession will be effective, for even though the same two witnesses are killed in the midst of the week, yet “... to the woman (the faithful remnant) were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.” Rev. 12:14 This same woman is indeed protected throughout the full 1260 day reign of the antichrist wherein Satan would try to destroy her. However, our present text clearly affirms that the “watchmen” should cry out “And give him no rest till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.” That cry will be effective, for this same fledgling nation will eventually come forth in glory, as the aforementioned

bride of Jehovah!

“The LORD hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength, Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies; and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured:” V. 8 The record is quite clear, both in history and the scripture, that the nations have literally fed themselves from the bounty of this chosen nation. That pattern will now change dramatically for “... his right hand,...” that is Christ and all His Majesty, will shortly introduce a new order whereby all nations of the earth must now bow down to Israel and serve them, even as previously declared in Ch. 61:5. “And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers.”

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“But they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the LORD; and they that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness.” V. 9 Israel will now enjoy the fruits of their own labors, and that which had been used for the satisfaction, and gratification, of the nations will now be brought into “... the courts of my holiness,” as a beautiful expression of worship toward God. Those same nations are also exhorted to “Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people.” V. 10 Rather than impede this chosen generation, all nations of the world will now be required to assist them, “...cast up the highway...” in order to lift up a “standard,” or banner of recognition for them. Israel must be recognized as God’s Chosen People, and the closing verses of this chapter give forth the reason.

“Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.” V. 11-12 All this proclamation will come to pass, “For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God....” II Cor. 1:20 Total deliverance or salvation will come to Israel, and they most assuredly shall receive God’s reward of being chief among the nations. They shall be a “holy people” simply because they have finally bowed to the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. They have also been “... Sought out, A city not forsaken.” What a great contrast to their former testimony,

for God has diligently sought them out and claimed them as His Own. They have now truly experienced: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God:..." I John 3:1

HE IS RISEN!

He is risen! He is risen
From the darkness of the tomb!
Though they set the seal upon it,
They have failed to seal His doom.
Jesus Christ, our King triumphant,
Hath defeated death's dark night -
Hath o'ercome the powers of darkness
By the power of His might.

He is risen! He is risen!
Oh, how joyous is the cry!
Praise Him, all ye hosts of heaven -
All ye that now dwell on high;
And ye saints of earth shout praises,
Let the song of triumph ring;
Earth and heaven join the chorus,
"Praise the Christ, the risen King!"

He is risen! He is risen!
And before now He has gone
To the right hand of the Father,
Who has welcomed home His Son.
He a mansion is preparing,
As He promised He would do,
For the faithful who will trust Him
And believe His promise true.

He is risen! He is risen
To the bright eternal land,
But will soon appear in glory
With the holy angel band;
All the ransomed then will praise Him
And in rapture gladly sing,
When they see Him in His beauty,
Jesus Christ the risen King.

William Burton McCafferty

ISAIAH 63 ~ II JOHN

I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, ... according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, ... and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses. For he said, Surely they are my people, ... so he was their Saviour. In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: ... and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old. V. 7-9

Our current chapter forms a beautiful correlation with II John where two elect ladies are presented. "The elder unto the elect lady and her children, ... The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen." II John 1:1&13. The designation of "... **the** elect lady..." of V. 1 should in fact be "**an**" elect lady, for John indeed makes reference to two distinct "elect" ladies in this little one chapter book. The first of these ladies is a reference to Israel who would be the "favorite:--chosen, elect," of God as the wife of Jehovah. "For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called." Isa. 54:5 John's second "elect lady," would be the Bride of Christ, who is taken out of the Church, most assuredly the "elect sister," of Israel.

Isaiah 63 is centered around John's first elect lady, as he enlarges on the same benefits to Israel found in II John. "And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it." II John 1:5 Isaiah's language in the aforementioned verses is almost verbatim, as he too sounds out the message of divine love concerning "... the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, ... the great goodness toward the house of Israel, ..." along with "...the multitude of his lovingkindnesses." Not only so, but just as John warns emphatically of "... many deceivers..." and "... antichrist,..." declaring: "... he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds," (V. 7-11) so also Isaiah begins this dissertation warning of judgment waiting for those who would dare come against Israel. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that

speak in righteousness, mighty to save.” V. 1 The term Edom is a reference to Esau, symbolic of the flesh and of the nations who will be gathered against Israel in the end time. The word “Bozrah” means “sheepfold,” suggesting the religious nature of such nations, and the very spirit of antichrist which is a virtual counterfeit of The Real Messiah, both for Israel and the world. Thus the next question enquires “Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?” V. 2 This is a graphic picture of Jesus, Who will pour out His righteous wrath against those nations who come against His People Israel. He then answers the question, in regard to His blood-stained apparel, declaring triumphantly, “I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.” V. 3 Verses such as these, are a direct reference to the Battle Of Armageddon wherein Jesus will fully pour out all His righteous indignation and fury against all that are antichrist, when “... the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.” Rev. 14:20 165 It most assuredly shows that, “... the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.” V. 4 Jesus will ensure severe punishment against all these nations, or Edom, but at the same time He will guarantee the redemption of His Chosen People.

“And I looked, and there was none to help;...” meaning that there was none to help Israel. This will be the case in the end time when all the “friends,” of Israel will forsake them and they will be forced to stand completely alone. Verse five continues with Jesus wonderment “... that there was none to uphold:...” We are surely persuaded that, The Lord knows full well none will be able to help Israel, but this nation must come to that realization, and when they do, This Majestic Messiah will be able to proclaim, “... therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me.” Israel must realize that their help cometh from none but The LORD before He is will finally be able to pour out His wrath upon their enemies and truly redeem them unto Himself with His “... own arm...” He Alone will be able to fight the battle and “And I will tread down the people (nations) in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring

down their strength to the earth.” V. 6

“I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.” V. 7 These words seem to have been spoken by Isaiah, acting as a spokesman, and indeed an intercessor for the rest of the nation, as he renders “...praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us.” This entire nation will one day know by glorious experience the tremendous manifestation of God’s love and multiple kindnesses toward themselves, and they will follow Isaiah’s same example of such praise after they have become a new creation in Christ Jesus by claiming His Promise in their behalf. “For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour.” V. 8 This is a far cry from the testimony of this unrighteous and deceitful people down through the ages, the difference being that “... they are my people...” They have now been born again, and have discovered the truth of which John wrote and thus their walk in truth and love show forth “...children that will not lie:...” because “...he was their Saviour.” The next portion of our text magnifies the glorious reason as to why all this change has been wrought!

“In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.” V. 9 This deep innermost sentiment of The Redeemer for His Own People, the Jews, is evidenced throughout the scripture, but none more poignant than the account in Luke 19 “... when he was come near, ... the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.” Matthew also expresses Jesus deep “affliction,” due to Israel’s complete lack of spirituality, along with their refusal to take the necessary steps for reconciliation. “Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, **and ye would not!**” Matt. 23:36-37 This same scenario was actually repeated

countless times throughout their history as God so graciously followed the pattern recorded in the latter part of this verse when He delivered them, again and again, from their enemies. "... the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old." God was gracious and merciful to them during all those "... days of old," but they simply did not respond and gather themselves together unto Him as Jesus intimated.

Isaiah records that same attitude of rejection and unbelief emphatically crying out: "But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them." V. 10 God did most assuredly become "... their enemy..." at times and He did fight against them, giving them over into the hands of various enemies, trying desperately to turn them to repentance. Scripture is very plain that God will employ those same tactics during the tribulation in an endeavor to bring Israel to their knees and bow before The Messiah. Once again the pattern here in our text will be implemented. "Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock? where is he that put his holy Spirit within him? That led them by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting name? That led them through the deep, as an horse in the wilderness, that they should not stumble? As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the LORD caused him to rest: so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name." V. 11-14 This is a record of how Israel did, at times, remember their beginning and recall the days when God's Presence was among them as He brought them across the Red Sea, and through the wilderness, eventually bringing them to their "rest" in Canaan. Now, Isaiah cries, "Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me? are they restrained?" V. 15 This is exactly the same path which Israel will follow during the devastating days of tribulation when all else has failed them. God will finally achieve exactly what He set out to do: turn the hearts of this rebellious nation back unto Himself. They will finally claim, and cling, to the fact that, "Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge

us not: thou, O LORD, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting.” V. 16 It is undoubtedly true that their fathers, Abraham and Israel, or Jacob, would not even recognize them, but their appeal goes far beyond natural blood lines. Israel, as a nation, will finally look to The LORD as their Father and Redeemer, magnifying His Name Alone, but at the same time apparently “blaming” Him for their plight. “O LORD, why hast **thou made us to err** from thy ways, and **hardened our heart** from thy fear?....” Their experience here is actually a scriptural principle, illustrating the fact that God does assume responsibility in this matter, because He has forced them to a decision. This is the same pattern evidenced in Ex. 10:1. “And the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: **for I have hardened his heart**, and the heart of his servants, that I might shew these my signs before him:” We know this does not mean that God sovereignly forced Pharaoh to rebel against Him, but rather that He forced him to decide, one way or the other, whether to let the people go as God had commanded, or not. When the Egyptian Monarch refused to comply with God’s Desire, He declared “... I have hardened his heart...” Likewise, God has, and most assuredly will, force Israel to choose His Way or continue in their ways of hardness and rebellion. The report in the latter part of this verse is encouraging, for they now cry out, “... Return for thy servants’ sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.” V. 17 This is exactly the path that the faithful remnant will follow during that awful time of Jacob’s trouble, and God will most assuredly be entreated of them as the tribes of this nation do become literally “... thine inheritance.”

Furthermore, “The people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary.” V. 18 The “it,” which these people have finally possessed, is His inheritance, and is a reference to the entire land of Israel, which has been trodden down by their adversaries throughout Gentile Times. The “sanctuary,” is especially emphasized here, and is a direct reference to Jerusalem, which is at the center of a great controversy in our day. There are multiple factions who try to lay claim to this city, but it belongs to God, as a part of His Inheritance, and none shall take it from Him, and indeed, “... the people (Israel) of thy holiness have possessed it.” The “people” then lay claim to the fact that “We are thine: thou

never barest rule over them; they were not called by thy name.”
V. 19 That fact is also gloriously borne out in scripture. God did not choose the rest of these nations, nor were they “... called by thy name.” That distinction belongs to Israel alone, as other writers also attest. “For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.” Zech. 2:8
Moses also declared that, “He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.” Deut. 32:10

This chapter thus closes with a glorious consummation for John’s “... elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;” II John 1.

WAIT TILL THE STORM IS O’ER

When the storm clouds arise
With no light in the skies
I will wait through the storm with Him.
Though the wild billows roll
He speaks to my soul,
“Just wait till the storm is o’er.”

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As I wait through the storm
I can feel His strong arm
And He speaks to me tenderly,
“Do not fear, precious one,
For above is the sun--
It is only hidden from view.”

Since I know He is there
There’s no need to despair:
He has promised to keep to the end.
Though the enemy rages
He’s my strong “Rock of Ages,”
And I’ll wait through the storm with Him.

--Beula Clark

CHAPTER SIXTY FOUR ~ III JOHN

But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities." V. 6-7

Isaiah 64 corresponds with III John where the beloved apostle also emphasizes "truth." This is the predominant theme of this little one chapter book wherein John uses the term six times, commending Gaius at the outset because "...thou walkest in the truth." V. 3 He further asserts: "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." V. 4

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The above text from Isaiah also emphasizes truth, as Israel must recognize their dreadful failure in this realm. John likewise assails "... Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church. Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God." III John 9-11

Isaiah follows this same pattern, first declaring failure, but immediately claiming the glorious truth of God's promise. "But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand. Be not wroth very sore, O LORD, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people. Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation." V. 8-10 This current condition of Israel is directly because they have forsaken God's Truth, but Isaiah begins this chapter, crying out to the Lord for His intervention in their plight. "Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence," V. 1 This plea is actually a cry for judgment because "... Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation," and the nations are responsible, as noted in V. 2. "As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that

the nations may tremble at thy presence!” Those “waters” of the nations are surely boiling today, and this upheaval will wax worse and worse as end time events unfold. God will “turn up the heat” dramatically in order that these nations “... may tremble at thy presence!” It seems that no national power around the world displays any kind of “trembling” before God at this present time, but that will soon change as He begins to pour out His Judgments upon them. Israel is well acquainted with such judgments as noted in the following verse. “When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence.” Those terrible things and mountains flowing down happened in Israel. Therefore this people well know the devastation which God can inflict upon a nation, for they are first-hand witnesses of it. Their own history reveals the Mighty Hand of God, and they apparently also know that they missed out on His purposes for themselves. “For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.” V. 4 These glorious provisions of God are always available, for “... him that waiteth for him...” but their own unbelief has prevented them from claiming such promises. Paul 171 uttered the words of this verse almost verbatim, when he wrote to the Corinthians. “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” I Cor. 2:9 The apostle continues this passage by announcing that “... God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” I Cor. 2:10 This is also the essence of Isaiah’s declaration in our current text. “Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou art wroth; for we have sinned: in those is continuance, and we shall be saved.” V. 5 This will one day be the testimony of national Israel. They will know by experience that “Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness,...” because they will have discovered that such righteousness comes only in Christ Jesus. This will follow the fact that they will know that His wrath, which has been poured out upon them in the great tribulation will have been well deserved “... for we have sinned.” However, once such repentance, along with remembering “... thee in thy ways:...” has been implemented in their own lives,

“continuance” of His work of righteousness will ensue and “... we shall be saved.” The following verse emphasizes the absolute priority of such national repentance.

“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” V. 6 Just as John emphasized truth, so also this nation must acknowledge the truth of their own condition. They have trusted multiple “righteousnesses” in time past such as that of the law, their own traditions, along with their boast of being the children of Abraham. All of these are now designated as “filthy rags,” a gross reference to the menstrual cycle of a woman. They further admit that “... we do fade as a leaf;...” which is a reference to fact that their outward testimony is now in shambles. It can be likened unto the fig leaf aprons of Adam and Eve, which in no wise hid their nakedness from God, and had the same result of expelling from God’s fellowship, for “... our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”

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“And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.” V. 7 This verse seems to indicate that the aforementioned broken relationship and separation from God, has been even further exacerbated, and that is most assuredly the case. God did set Israel aside during this entire Church Age, and there is no record of national Israel calling “... upon thy name...” nor any “...that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee:...” Israel has been “... consumed because of our iniquities,...” and that trend will continue well into the tribulation period. However, hope springs eternal, and it will for this battered nation as Isaiah announces the onset of a drastic and dramatic change: “**But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.**” V. 8 “But now,...” is a reference to the **time** when this nation will call upon the Name of The LORD, which is in direct contrast to their former attitude. This represents a collective cry which now claims The LORD as their Father, and that they are willing to be submissive pliable vessels in His Hand. Thus their plea will reach the very Heart of God as they appeal to His Matchless Grace, crying out “Be not wroth very sore, O LORD, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech thee,

we are all thy people.” V. 9 The wrath of which they speak, will be fully manifest in the tribulation. The words of their appeal indicate that Israel does recognize the fact that their own iniquity evoked the wrath of God, but now they have learned the way of redemption. They finally understand the glorious benefit found in Isa. 43:25. “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.” Psalm 103:12 will likewise find a true home in the very heart of national Israel. “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.” The plea “...neither remember iniquity for ever:...” will also fulfill the promise of Jer. 31:34. “And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” All these are the glorious testimony of National New Creation Israel, as God will now remember both they and their land.

“Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.” V. 10 There will come the day when Israel, as well as the whole world, will recognize that these are “Thy holy cities...” Not only does God honor the claim that Israel belongs to Him, but all the land too. The devastation described here is that which will be inflicted by the horrors of war during the great tribulation. The idea is to destroy Israel, but that will not come to pass. Jerusalem will be decimated, but it still belongs to God, a fact that is not, in any wise, regarded by the nations today. The temple is also singled out as being a distant memory due to the horrendous results of war. “Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste.” V. 11 This will be the stark reality at that time, but it will also be a time when Israel know where to turn, and thus they ask, “Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O LORD? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?” V. 12 The answer to those questions is a resounding NO! God will not punish them forever. Quite the contrary! This nation shall be exalted, as will be seen in the last two chapters of this book where her millennial state is clearly defined.

CHAPTER SIXTY FIVE ~ JUDE

“I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, ... A people that provoketh me to anger ... Which remain among the graves,... Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou....” V. 2-5

Isaiah begins this chapter with reference to the tremendous unbelief and wickedness displayed by Israel, prior to their glorious restoration, thus corresponding with Jude who follows the same pattern. “I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.” Jude 5 Jude also lists a number of other examples showing forth rebellion both in heaven and earth. These include “... the angels which kept not their first estate,... Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh,... these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion,... these speak evil of those things which they know not:... brute beasts, ... Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.” V. 6-11

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Jude then announces the great victories which will be brought forth by Jesus glorious second coming. “But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time,... But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith,... Keep yourselves in the love of God,... And of some have compassion,... Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless... To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.” V. 17-25

Isaiah sixty five likewise closes with the great promise of copious blessing for Israel. “For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth:... be ye glad and rejoice for ever ... I will rejoice in Jerusalem, ... There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days:... they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.... my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.... The wolf and the lamb shall

feed together,... They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain,..." V. 17-25

Great blessing is most assuredly coming for Israel, but the first two verses of this chapter reveal God's plans during this present Church Age. "I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name. I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts;" V. 1,2

The Apostle Paul quotes these same verses in Romans 10, declaring that verse one would be addressed to the Gentiles, while verse two clearly refers to Israel. "But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. **But to Israel** he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." Rom. 10:20-21 These Gentiles are clearly designated as "... them that sought me not ... them that asked not after me..." along with Isaiah's declaration that that God spoke to "...a nation that was not called by my name,..." Contrariwise, the apostle specifically identifies Israel as "... a disobedient and gainsaying people." Scripture is quite clear that God has suspended His dealings with Israel in order to make known His Presence among the Gentiles for "... God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name." Acts 15:14

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Paul also informs us that God is literally using the Gentiles, as His instrument, to turn His Own People unto Himself. "I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you." He will take out of the Gentiles a people for His Name, but at the same time He will also take the aforementioned measures to correct the tremendous history of rebellion in Israel, described by the following verses.

"A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick;" V. 3 Scripture is very plain that Israel was guilty of very blatant idolatry, even from a time shortly after they took up residence in the land of Canaan. Elijah held out his hands, as it were, pleading with the people to turn from their wicked ways of bowing down to Baal, as he called down fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice, demonstrating God's tremendous power

right before their eyes. There was never a wholesale cessation of idolatry in Israel and Isaiah's further assessment is that they are among those "Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels;" V. 4 God's estimation of them is that they are occupied with death rather than the Life which would be found only in Christ. Not only so, but the very thing that would be abhorred under the law, such as eating "...swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things,..." seems to have become a way of life with them. God further accuses them of undoubtedly isolating themselves both from others, and from Himself. "Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day." V.5 Though God held out His Hands to them, they did push him away, and Jesus constantly upbraided them for their "... holier than thou..." attitude toward their own countrymen. Such traits of rebellion are repulsive to God's sensitive "... nose..." and it will result in "... a fire that burneth all the day."

176 "Behold, it is written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom," V. 6 This is God's promise to bring judgment upon Israel for the aforementioned rebellion and unbelief, even as depicted in Jude. It has indeed been "written before me,..." that is, recorded in Scripture down through the ages. The full recompense, due to their gross conduct, will be inflicted during the great tribulation for; "Your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the LORD, which have burned incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills: therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom." V. 7 God will be severe and meticulous in this judgment but mercy will prevail as indicated by V. 8 "Thus saith the LORD, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all." This is a clear indication that the restoration of this nation will be just as real as their judgment, and it is even at the door, just waiting for the revelation of Jesus!

"And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there." All God's blessings are supplied through this Glorious Seed, which is Jesus! Both Israel,

that is the ten tribes, and Judah, the two tribes, shall be gathered together in one, which will be known as "... mine elect..." They will truly be united once again, as one nation, and the day will come when all their rebellious acts, and wicked idolatrous ways shall be replaced by this tremendous Life, which the Church has experienced throughout this age. When that happens, then all these blessings shall flow uninhibited, literally saturating this chosen people with His Goodness, both naturally and spiritually. "And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me." V. 10 Sharon was a place, tremendously desired in Israel. The Shulamite described herself as the "rose of Sharon," (S.O.S. 2:1) emphasizing her own new found image which is quite a contrast to being "black but comely." S.O.S. 1:5 Sharon is also associated with Lebanon, which means "white" signifying purity, even the purity of Christ's righteousness, which by this time this entire nation will have embraced. Sharon shall be a "... fold of flocks..." a direct contrast to the "... valley of Achor..." which bears the connotation of judgment. Israel will finally discover that place of genuine rest, strictly because "... my people have sought me." Once again, however, the pattern is repeated. Blessing is on the horizon, but rebellion must still be addressed for "... ye are they that forsake the LORD, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop, and that furnish the drink offering unto that number." V. 11 The "troop," for which a table is prepared must undoubtedly refer to a troop of idolaters for whom they would "... furnish the drink offering..." They have also truly forgotten the very holiness for which His mountain, Jerusalem, stands. This is truly manifest in present – day Jerusalem, for there is no semblance of spirituality found there. "Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not." V. 12 The truth of these words has been fulfilled numerous times throughout Israel's history, such as that which is recounted by Ezra after the 70 year captivity. "And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments, Which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets, saying, The land, unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land with the filthiness of

the people of the lands, with their abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness. Now therefore give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, nor seek their peace or their wealth for ever: that ye may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children for ever. And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this;" Ezra 9:10-13

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This same repentant attitude will also be present in Israel after the "... sword... and ... slaughter..." of the tribulation has come to pass. There will be a winnowing at that time, wherein God will separate the false from the true. "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit. And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord GOD shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name:" V. 13-15 The distinction here is between "... my servants..." and those simply identified as "ye." The latter undoubtedly refer to the nations, but the term must also refer to those, even in Israel, who have not found the path through The Messiah, that they might be called His "... mine elect,..." or "... my chosen:..." Severe judgment shall fall upon them as they are indeed cursed before Him.

There will be a different story written for his chosen servants, as noted by the following: "That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes." V. 16 This is glorious reward of true repentance before God reflecting the heart of one who "... shall bless himself in the God of truth." No longer is this one "...which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts;" V. 2 This one is said to "... in the earth..." indicating one who will indeed be an "earth dweller," rather than being transported to heaven. His will also be a spectacular life due to God's full plan of redemption, much of which will be implemented during the Millennium as outlined below.

“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.” V. 17 The fullness of this promise will not actually come to pass until after the thousand year reign of Christ is over, but there must of necessity be somewhat of a re-creation of the earth due to the tremendous devastation wrought by the great tribulation. Thus, “... be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.” V. 18 Life for this entire earth planet will center around Jerusalem, and the land of Israel, after Jesus sets up His Kingdom here on earth. What a contrast it will be to the great upheaval that is clearly manifest in the holy city today, as men clamor to claim their own piece of it. It will be recognized, in that day, as belonging to The Lord and God says, “... I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.” V. 19 The horrendous days which inflicted such weeping and crying during the time of Jacob’s trouble will be no more. They will be replaced by the glorious joy of millennial blessings and “There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.” V. 20 This is a record of life in the millennium. No “Christian,” will die during this time. Scripture plainly teaches two resurrections. The first is that of Christ and all believers who will be glorified with Him. The second is the resurrection of the wicked, and they occur one thousand years apart. Rev. 20:4-6 explain it thus: “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

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But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” Every believer will be raised at the beginning of this utopian period, for “...they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” However, “... the rest

of the dead..." can only refer to the wicked, and they will not be raised again until after the thousand years is over. We know from the remainder of Rev. 20 that they are raised up to appear before the "great white throne," where they shall be judged according to their wicked works before being cast into the lake of fire.

The text here in Isaiah gives reference to those who are alive upon this earth after the tribulation has ended. Satan will be bound that thousand years, and men will be free to make their own decisions without any outside influence. Thus, it will be very easy to be a "hypocrite," and many will not accept Jesus and be born again. Isaiah declares in the verse before us that "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days:..." meaning that there is a change coming for him at the age of 100. The rest of this text explains that "... the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed." Anyone under a hundred years old will be considered an infant or child, and will be counted as innocent like unto a babe who is not held accountable for his sin. However, at the age of 100, things change dramatically. This "child" is now considered "dead" in trespasses and sins, because
180 he does not have life in Jesus and when he sins outwardly as "... the sinner being an hundred years old..." he shall be judged accordingly and "... shall be accursed," meaning that he is cut off immediately. Ananias, and Sapphira are a prime example of such millennial judgment. They lied about the land they had sold and died immediately because of it, for those first seven years of the Church Age were just a foretaste of the coming Kingdom known as the Millennium.

Judgment will be swift to the transgressor during this glorious time of peace and prosperity, and that is exactly why wickedness will not be allowed to flourish. Instead, "... they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them." V. 22-24 All the abuse inflicted by the nations round about them up to, and including the tribulation, will be a thing of the past. Israel, at this time then present, will

be head of the nations. They truly will be "... my people... mine elect... the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and God will make it known universally that He will defend His Own.

"And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." V. 24 This verse has been true throughout the ages and many have claimed it, but the exact context of it is a direct reference to life for Israel during the Millennium. Isaiah has been very clear that all nations of the earth will be subdued before this Chosen People, and God will answer their cry speedily should any resistance arise from these national powers.

Finally, Isaiah closes this beautiful discourse exactly as did Jude, with reference to the "... majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." Jude 1:25 This ending verse reveals the fact that all creation will bow to Jesus, and even the animal kingdom will be at rest here upon this earth ball during His glorious millennial reign. "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD." V. 25 There must be a change in the very bodies of the animals in order to change their diets, but so it will be, and predators will be predators no more. The curse will be lifted from this earth, with one exception. The serpent will still eat dust, symbolic of the fact that Jesus won the victory over him at Calvary. He still must eat dust, and will not inflict harm upon any. This kingdom of total peace will surely reflect the superior majesty and dominion of Jesus for 1,000 years.

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HE LEADS ME

He leads me where The pasture's green
And quiet waters flow.

He leads me when The way is rough
And floods overwhelm my soul.

No matter where My steps shall go
Still He leads me on.

Content I'll be To know
That He Will lead me safely home.

Beula Clark

CHAPTER SIXTY SIX ~ REVELATION

“Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool:... For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.” Isa. 66:1 & 22

This is the first of three major ways in which this final chapter of Isaiah forms a beautiful correlation with Revelation, the final book of the Bible. God has always been the complete Master of the universe but these verses indicate that such a glorious truth will become even more prominent in the Millennium, which is simply a spring board to eternity. John declares this same dominion and power in Rev. 21:1. “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.”

182 Isaiah reveals The Judge in verses 15-16. “For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many.” John likewise, begins the book of Revelation with very specific detail of that same Judge. “And I turned to see the voice that spake with me... one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass,...and his voice as the sound of many waters.” Rev. 1:12-15

Finally, in verse 7, Isaiah prophecies the birth of the “man child.” “Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child.” John shows this same man child transported to glory, before the great pain of Jacob’s trouble ensues. “And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.” Rev. 12:5

Both Revelation and this final discourse of Isaiah cover a wide range of prophesied events, but the prophet begins his prophecy with a reference to the Millennial Temple. “Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?” V. 1 God’s glory and majesty are the subject here, as

noted above, and such power and might must actually be attributed to Christ, for He will reign as God during the Millennium. The questions, "...where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?" seem to catch us to the beginning of that period wherein the Millennial Temple will be built. God had asked these same questions of David when he wanted to build a temple. "Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in? Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt,... In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar?" II Sam.1 7:5-7 We wonder if this may also be a pattern for the next age. Even at this present time, there has been speculation that Jews, Christians, and Muslims would combine their efforts in an endeavor to restore Solomon's Temple. We would note in our present text however that only God will be responsible for this building. "For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD:..." V. 2 The ways of God are, in no wise, like unto the ways of men. When the temple was restored after the captivity, the dimensions were much smaller and the building far less elaborate than that erected by Solomon. That contrast was so apparent that "... many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice;..." Ezra 3:12 God was actually offended by that demonstration and His message through Haggai conveys that sentiment, adding some of the same elements contained here, in Isaiah's prophecy. "Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing? Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD;... and be strong, all ye people of the land,... According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not. For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and **I will fill this house with glory**, saith the LORD of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD

of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.” Hag 2:3-9 That house was undoubtedly symbolic of the coming Millennial Temple, wherein God will also supply the glory, and again we would wonder if it may be much smaller than that of Solomon, in order to draw attention to the glory of God rather than the accomplishments of men. Not only so, but it is quite apparent that Haggai’s prophecy bears witness of the Millennium when Jesus will usher in that glorious Utopia for which the world has long sought. He will bring forth the glory of His Temple, “...and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.”

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The latter part of this verse also puts emphasis on the way God does things, as opposed to the endeavors of men. “... but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.” V. 2 God has always been more interested in the allegiance and inner motivations of the heart, rather than the mighty accomplishments of man’s hands. He must have contrite and pliable hearts that “... trembleth at my word.” Any religious demonstration short of that would be deemed sacrilegious, for “He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog’s neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine’s blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.” V. 3 The offerings of the oxen and lambs, required under the Aaronic priesthood, have become totally obsolete with the advent of Jesus’ Priesthood after the order of Melchisidec. God now considers such offerings as an abomination akin to offering that which was strictly forbidden by the law. Paul wrote the entire book of Hebrews trying to turn the Jewish believers away from the types and shadows, so that they might embrace the True Substance which is in Christ Jesus and His Glorious Redemption. Isaiah likewise declares the fallacy of these offering asserting that “... they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in abominations.” The Millennium will bring forth a spiritual awakening in national Israel, wherein this Chosen People will delight only in Christ, but first they must forsake “...their own ways...” and learn to trust God’s Plan. Such a practical lesson will be taught only by the bitter experience of tribulation. “I also

will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not." V. 4 These are the indictments against Israel which will shortly manifest God's very stark disapproval. Rather than calling on the Lord, they will be deluded by the nations. Their ultimate delusion will be in making a covenant with the antichrist, and gross fear, misery, and destruction will most assuredly follow, because this people simply "... did not hear:..." when God called unto them. Now they are exhorted to rectify that situation.

"Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed." V. 5 This seems to be a reference to Jesus prophecy in Matt. 24:10. "And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another." John likewise chimes in with these words. "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." John 16:2 Such words began to be fulfilled in the early days of the Church Age, but they shall surely be magnified during the tribulation period, and it will be at that time when the glorious promises recorded here will especially come to fruition. "...but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed." Deliverance will arise for Israel and it will not be short lived as it may often have been in time past. Rather, there will be "A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the LORD that rendereth recompence to his enemies." V. 6 Deliverance for the entire world will begin at Jerusalem. She is, at the present time, under tremendous siege but all of that will change. King Jesus will most assuredly spring forth in victory and will render "... recompence to his enemies," and once again Israel's complete restoration will be at the very center of all God's purposes for the entire world.

"Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." V. 7-8 One must not assume that these two verses describe only one company of

people. "Before she travailed..." is the key here, because it means that a company known as "the man child," will be brought forth **before** the travail during the last half of the tribulation period produces the infant nation of Israel, which will rule during the Millennium. The man child, the 144,000 who are exclusively Jews, along with the five wise virgins of Matt. 25, all represent exactly the same company and actually form the third rank of the Church which will be transported to heaven at "midnight" or shortly before the middle of the tribulation week. We would note that the 144,000 were sealed with the Holy Ghost in Rev. 7, just as the five wise virgins had oil in their lamps, indicating that they were filled with the Spirit before they were called to glory. Isaiah firmly asserts that this heavenly company will be brought forth **before** the horrendous time of Jacob's trouble prophesied by Jeremiah. "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he (Jacob) shall be saved out of it." Jer. 30:7 This is a direct reference to the same unprecedented time of tribulation recorded in Matt. 24:21. "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." It is a direct
186 reference to the 1260 day reign of the antichrist, which will usher in the most horrific "travail" of that seven year period and will bring an end to the tribulation week. That is the travail which will produce the "nation born in one day," and we again emphasize that such intense "birth pangs, begin **after** the man child comes forth, for only then are the questions are asked, "Shall the earth (Israel) be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once?" That nation will be New Creation Israel, and they will remain on the earth. They will not be transported to heaven as was the man child. Not only so but the declaration is also put forth "...for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children," plural, as opposed to the singular man child which has already been removed from this earth. These "children" will be dominant and prosper in Jesus' Kingdom on earth, for the next thousand years.

This time of "travail" will be a most intense time of great pain and uncertainty for this nation. Some may even wonder if such a new birth will occur at all, but God is at the helm here and the certainty is that He will finish what He has started. "Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the LORD:

shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God.” V. 9 The answer would be an emphatic NO! for this nation shall be brought forth, and then all nations of the earth will be exhorted: “Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her:” V. 10 Next follows the result of such rejoicing including admonitions to these same nations.

“That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.” V. 11 They were first exhorted to rejoice and then to mourn over her, meaning that there will be somewhat of a remorse manifest because the nations were guilty of inflicting such pain and difficulty upon Jerusalem. Now, they will be dependent upon this Holy City, as they are instructed to “... suck and be satisfied...” with her breasts. All nations of the world must now draw the milk from her, meaning that Jerusalem will give forth even the milk of God’s Word. These same nations will also be forced to recognize and actually delight “... with the abundance of her glory,” for this coveted city will now be the very center of all God’s government upon this earth. He will be in charge of everything that emanates from her gates, “For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees.” V. 12 This message of Gentile dependence runs like a thread through all these verses, for all nations of this world must now come to Jerusalem for their sustenance, both naturally and spiritually. There will be a special affection between Jerusalem and the nations as they “...shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees.” She will also be “... like a river.... like a flowing stream...” of life for the entire world, and counted as “... the glory of the Gentiles...” wherein God Himself claims responsibility for such blessing. “As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I (The LORD) comfort you; (Gentiles) and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.” V. 13

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“And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the LORD shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies.” V. 14 This text seems to indicate two opposite extremes that will be present during the Millennium. It will be a

time of world-wide righteousness because Satan will be bound a thousand years, but the flesh will still be present as seen in Isaiah 65. A person will be counted as only an innocent little child until the age of 100, but we know that judgment will be poured out for open sin after that, because "... the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed." Isa. 65:20 This expresses "... his indignation toward his enemies." Untold blessing is promised for His servants, but judgment against ungodliness must be swift in order to maintain the promised over-all atmosphere of peace and tranquility. Thus, "... the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many." V. 15-16 Such displays of judgment will most assuredly will be used throughout the New Millennial Age, but these characteristics are clearly evident during the tribulation with the grand finale coming forth at the battle of Armageddon.

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We also marvel at Isaiah's warning against the hypocrisy couched in the following portion, given the current atmosphere of religiousness around the world. "They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD. For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory." Regardless of all their attempts at "religion," none of those tactics will prove to be an escape for them. They are all considered "abomination," and God says "... I know their works and their thoughts...." He continues with an invitation for all those nations to "... come and see my glory." John likewise records such an invitation to the glory of judgment which will be revealed at Armageddon. "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;" Rev. 19:17 Joel also prophesies of this same "invitation" to witness the glory of God. "I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land." Joel 3:2 God will subdue all the nations in behalf of Israel prior to the

Millennium. His judgment will be severe, but scripture is very clear that there will be “sheep nations,” which have befriended Israel to the best of their ability and they will not be annihilated by the aforementioned devastation.

Instead, God declares that “... I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles.” V. 19 God will get the attention of the entire world through the great feats of judgment displayed during the tribulation period, all of them reflecting His tremendous glory. The total submission of these nations is expressed in accounts such as Rev. 17:14. “These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.” Jesus, reigning as God, will force all these national powers into obedience and then dictate their actions, even in behalf of His brethren, The Jews. “And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD.” V. 20 Who could imagine such a thing! These same nations whereunto the Jews have been scattered, will return this people to Jerusalem, even as “... an offering in clean vessel into th house of the LORD.” He will then make them, as promised so long ago, “... a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation....” Ex. 19:6 “And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the LORD. For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.” V. 21-22 Israel will at last be that eternal nation of God, for they will have received The Seed, Christ Jesus and will remain forever, even as the new heaven and new earth which will be created after the Millennium is over.

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God’s demand for total and continue worship of Himself will finally be realized for “... it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.” V. 23

This must of necessity be a part of the eternal state, for even as wonderful as life will be on this earth during the Millennium, "all flesh" will not be converted and "... come to worship before me..." Thus this chapter seems to close with a possible reference to the battle of Gog and Magog, which will take place at the END of the Millennial Period. It will undoubtedly be an extremely short war, quite unlike the Battle of Armageddon which marks the end of the tribulation. This pattern does, however, show forth the fact that every dispensation ends with judgment. "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." V. 24 Scripture is very plain that Satan will be bound for a thousand years during the tribulation period. However, "... when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." Rev. 20:7 The millennium will provide fertile ground for hypocrisy because Satan has been confined to the bottomless pit. When he is loosed, he will go forth to do what he does best: "... deceive the nations...." He will stir up the flesh within the hearts of unregenerate men at that time just as he does today, and thus all wicked men will be gathered to this final battle. Hearts which have simply "faked it," and actually not believed upon Jesus during this 1000 year period will be quickly revealed and eternal judgment will quickly follow.

Thus closes this long book of Isaiah, even like unto the book of Revelation with the glorious promise of eternity looming, but the reality of judgment to all who would dare resist the Very Sovereign of the Universe.