The Book of Isaiah
The Prophecy of the Coming Messiah

Introduction

As we enter into the study of the book of Isaiah, we must gird our minds for spiritual action just as Peter says in 1 Peter 1:13,

> *"Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."*

These words are a perfect introduction to the book of Isaiah. For if there is one theme that runs through the book it is *"the revelation of Jesus Christ."* The prophet Isaiah says more about the Lord Jesus Christ than any other Old Testament book. There are more than 40 prophecies of His First Coming, and over 80 prophecies regarding His Second Coming and Kingdom. This is why Isaiah has been called "The Evangelist of the Old Testament," and his book has been referred to as "The Fifth Gospel."

Not only this, but the book of Isaiah is a concise summary of the teaching of the whole Bible. In this book we can find the foundational doctrines of:

1. The creation (Isa. 42:5; 45:18).
2. The fall of Satan (Isa. 14:12–21).
3. The sinful rebellion of mankind (Isa. 1:2–6).
4. The virgin birth of the Savior (Isa. 7:13–14).
5. His crucifixion and resurrection (Isa. 53:1–12).
6. The offer of eternal salvation by grace through faith (Isa. 1:18–20; 55:1–7).
7. The promise of a future eternal kingdom under Christ (Isa. 60:1–22; 65:17–25).
8. The creation of New Heavens and a New Earth (Isa. 65:17; 66:22–23).

Because of the vast scope of doctrinal themes in the book it has been called "The Romans of the Old Testament."

In addition, the very structure of the book parallels the entire Bible. In Chapters 1–39 we have the conviction of sin, call to repentance, and warning of judgment. This parallels the message of the 39 books of the Old Testament. Then, in Chapters 40–66 (the last 27 chapters), we see the message of the coming Savior and the offer of salvation, which encapsulates the message contained in the 27 books of the New Testament.

As if these facts were not amazing enough, the book is named after the author, the prophet Isaiah. His name means "The Salvation of Jehovah," and that is the very theme of the book!

Though critics have sought to deny the single authorship of the book, suggesting at least three authors, in John 12:37–41, he quotes from Isaiah 53:1 and 6:10, ascribing those quotes to Isaiah. In fact, the book of Isaiah is quoted more times in the New Testament than any other Old Testament book except the Psalms.

Types of Messianic Prophecies

I believe it was Pastor Bob Bolender from Austin Bible Church who pointed out that there are four types of Messianic Prophecy in the Book of Isaiah:

1. Prophecies of Jesus' First Coming (i.e., Isa. 7:14; 53:1–12).
2. Prophecies about His Second Coming (Isa. 2:1–4; 24:1–23; 32:1–4; 33:17–24; 35:1–10; 60:1–22).
3. Prophecies that combine the two comings (Isa. 9:6–7; 11:1–12).
4. Prophecies that give an overview of His redemptive works (Isa. 42:1–13; 61:1–11).

Style of Writing

Isaiah is one of the most brilliantly written books known to man. In Chapters 1–35, he writes in poetry. Chapters 36–39 are a historical narrative, so he writes in prose. Then, from Chapters 40–66, as he brings the theme of salvation to its climax, he reverts again to poetry. There are five songs in the book, beginning with the song of the unfruitful vineyard in Chapter 5. Isaiah's literary skill is astounding as he uses parables, similitudes, analogies, and prophecy to convey the message of man's sinfulness and of God's love and plan of redemption.

About the Author

Isaiah's name ("The Salvation of Jehovah") suggests that he was raised by godly, believing parents. He was raised in Jerusalem, and his family had access to the royal court. He was married and had two sons, whose names had prophetic significance (Isa. 7:3; 8:3). His ministry lasted at least 60 years, and tradition (Justin Martyr, 100–165 A.D.) says he was martyred under the reign of Manasseh by being sawed in two. It is believed that this is the historical reference for Hebrews 11:37. Isaiah's theological grasp is the broadest and deepest of any author in the Old Testament and is perhaps only surpassed by the Apostle Paul.

In the course of his book, Isaiah presents three methods—actually, three levels—of divine revelation. God reveals Himself to man through creation, through His inspired Word, and ultimately through the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Failure to respond to these manifestations of God's love and mercy can only result in eternal condemnation.

Outline of the Book

Again, the major break in the book is Chapters 1–39: condemnation of sin and call to repentance; and Chapters 40–66: the coming of the Savior and offer of salvation. However, for our study, we will further divide the book along its theme development.

I. The Problem of Sin and God's Plan of Redemption (Chapters 1–12).
II. The Sovereignty of God and His Judgment of the Nations (Chapters 13–35).
III. The Assyrian Invasion and the Deliverance by God (Chapters 36–39).
IV. The Revelation of the Savior and the Redemption of Mankind (Chapters 40–66).

The Challenge of Isaiah

As we work through this book, we will be repeatedly confronted with the necessity of making personal application of the message of the prophet to our personal lives. The danger is to study

Isaiah as a historical document without ever being spiritually touched by the fire of his words. His rebuke to Judah is a rebuke to present-day America. His call to repentance (self-examination, confession, correction) is a spiritual x-ray into each of our lives. The promise of grace, mercy, cleansing, and deliverance gives us hope and assurance, not just to say, "God hates the sin but loves the sinner," but rather to acknowledge the truth that while God loves the sinner, He loves us too much to leave us in our sinful condition.

As one author has pointed out here in the Church Age, "We stand precisely on (Isaiah) 56:1, looking back to the work of the Servant (now fulfilled in the person, life, death and resurrection, of the Lord Jesus) and looking forward to the coming of the Anointed Conqueror." (J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah,* p. 33, as quoted by Thomas Constable in his *Notes on Isaiah,* p. 15).

I. THE PROBLEM OF SIN AND GOD'S PLAN OF REDEMPTION (CHAPTERS 1–12)

CLASS ONE
Isaiah1:1–15

Isaiah Chapter One—The Condemnation of Judah and Call to Repentance.
This is the theme of Nehemiah, "How God turns cursing into blessing" (Neh. 13:2b). It is worth pointing out that Chapters 1–5, which reveal the degenerate spiritual condition of Judah and their need for salvation, precedes the call of Isaiah in Chapter 6. It is likely that Isaiah presented the depravity of the nation first to set the stage for his call and commission by God, as the antidote.

Isaiah 1:1
The Historical Setting

The prophet ministered under the four kings of Judah named here, whose combined reigns spanned the years from 792–686 B.C. Isaiah's call came to him *"in the year that King Uzziah died"* (Isa. 6:1), which was 740 B.C. Since he recorded the death of Sennacherib (Isa. 37:38), which occurred in 681 B.C., his ministry must have lasted at least 60 years. Isaiah's contemporaries were Amos and Hosea in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and Micah in Judah. During this time, Jonah also went to minister in Nineveh (2 Kings 14:25; Jonah 1:1).

Isaiah 1:2–15
God's Indictment Against Judah

This charge against Judah actually runs all the way to Chapter 12. It is mixed with warnings of judgment and promises of deliverance, if the people of Judah will repent and turn to the Lord. In this introductory section, we see seven graphic pictorial figures.

1:2 The creation called as a witness.
Here, we see the fulfillment of Moses' warning in Deuteronomy 30:19 and 32:1 that Heaven and Earth would one day be witness to Israel's spiritual defection. This figure presents a courtroom scene, in which God is the judge, bringing charges against His people.

The accusation is that God had been faithful to His people, as a Father to his children, but they had rebelled against Him.

1:3 <u>Judah became more insensitive than dumb beasts</u>.
It is not without significance that the picture in this verse foretells the scene in Bethlehem, where the promised King of Israel was laid in a manger/crib, among the beasts of burden, while the nation's leaders were ignorant of His coming.

The point is that when we rebel against God, our physical appetites increase, but our spiritual senses are dulled, until we are more brutish than even the beasts. This truth is clearly developed in Galatians 5:1–7 and Ephesians 4:17–19. Consistent with the message of Isaiah, the means of spiritual recovery is found in James 4:7–10.

1:4 <u>Rebellious children</u>.
In this verse, the indictments against Judah come fast and furious. Seven charges are brought by God in rapid fire order. The verse begins with *"Alas,"* which in Hebrew is *Hoi*, or "Woe." It was the typical lament at funerals (1 Kings 13:30; Jer. 22:18–19; Amos 5:16). It is also the seven-fold charge of Jesus against the religious leaders of His day (Matt. 23:13–36).

The charges are summarized in that *"They have provoked to anger The Holy One of Israel."* This title for God runs all through Isaiah, being used about 30 times, and is actually an Old Testament designation for the preincarnate Lord Jesus Christ, whom Isaiah sees in Isaiah 6:1. Isaiah's favorite term for God is *"Lord of hosts,"* which he uses over 60 times.

1:5–6 <u>The rebellious slave.</u>
Here, the picture is of a slave who refuses to obey his master. No amount of beating brings him into submission. His whole body, from head to foot, is wounds and bruises. As the discipline of God on the nation intensified, their rebellion only increased. Though God would gladly have brought healing treatment (v. 6b), the nation was unwilling to be restored.

1:7–8 <u>A deserted daughter</u>.
The prophets' illustrations move in a downward spiral, from a dumb beast (v. 3) to rebellious children (v. 4), to a rebellious slave (vv. 5–6), to the most pitiable of all, a beloved daughter, sitting in the ruins of a defeated city (vv. 7–8). This would ultimately be the fate of many of the "daughters of Jerusalem," when the city fell to the onslaught of Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C.

1:9–10 <u>Sodom and Gomorrah</u>.
This figure became a common symbol of Israel's sinfulness (Jer. 23:14; Ezek. 16:44–50; Matt. 10:15; Mark 6:11; Luke 10:12; Rev. 11:8).

1:11–15 <u>Unclean intruders into God's Temple</u>.
Here, Isaiah exposes their phony religious practices. As Jesus said to the Pharisees, their outward religion was like whitewashed tombs, but inwardly they were like graves full of dead corpses (Matt. 23:27). Their religion was ritual without reality.

Review—The Salvation of God Offered and Rejected

1. Isaiah opens his prophecies with a historical note, listing the four kings under whose reign he ministered. His ministry covered around 60 years (v. 1).
2. Using seven figures or analogies, he then indicts Israel for its spiritual apostacy (vv. 2–17).
3. As we move into vv. 16–31, we will see that God, in His matchless grace and mercy, yet offers salvation, both national (temporal) and personal (eternal) (vv. 16–20).
4. Tragically, as history has recorded, the offer of redemption was rejected, and in 721 B.C., Israel—the Northern Kingdom—went into slavery to Assyria.

CLASS TWO
Isaiah 1:16–31

It is difficult for those who know God by faith in Jesus Christ to comprehend the depths of depravity to which men will fall, and the incredible hardness of heart they will develop in their hatred of God.

The greatest example of this will be in the coming Millennial Kingdom. Multitudes born in this most blessed time of human history: with Jesus Christ Himself ruling the world, a world of perfect peace and prosperity, with perfect justice in government, will yet reject His offer of salvation, and seek to overthrow His throne (Rev. 20:7–10).

The Nation of Israel in the time of Isaiah is but one in the long line of history that illustrates over and over again that, *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"* (Jer. 17:9). See now their rejection of both salvation and the Savior.

Isaiah 1:16–20
The Divine Offer of Salvation

The righteousness of God demands that He offer salvation. The justice of God requires that those who reject it must suffer both the temporal and eternal consequences. What the righteousness of God demands, His justice must provide. The greatest example of this principle is the cross of Jesus Christ. This is why the Bible teaches that the foundation of the Throne of God is neither sovereignty nor love, but rather the combination of righteousness and justice, which we call "Holiness" (Isa. 6:3).

"Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne." Psalm 97:2

"Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; mercy
And truth go before Your face." Psalm 89:14

All of the other attributes of God (Sovereignty, Love, Eternal Life, Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Immutability, Veracity) act as guardians of His absolute Righteousness and Justice. For example, magnify Sovereignty over Righteousness and Justice, and you end up with a theology that says, "God is God, He can do whatever He likes." And yet, even Abraham knew that he could hold God accountable to the standard of Righteousness and Justice (Gen. 18:25).

It is worth noticing, in v. 21, that when the nation was right with God, it was full of justice and righteousness, the reflection of God by those who believed in and obeyed Him.

Isaiah now sets before sinful Judah the offer of divine deliverance in four charges:

1. Cleansing is available (v. 16).
2. Transformed lives are possible (v. 17).
3. Forgiveness is complete and total (v. 18).
4. But salvation must be volitional (vv. 19–20).

1:16 <u>Cleansing is available</u>.
The "washing" here speaks of the cleansing of salvation (Jer. 4:14; John 13:10; Eph. 5:26). This is logically followed by obedient living or *"fruits worthy of repentance"* (Luke 3:8). To attempt to renovate our lives apart from regeneration is hopeless (John 3:3, 7).

In Psalm 51, David shows us the cleansing available to the sinning believer through confession (1 John 1:9). Jesus reveals to Peter that salvation is like a once-for-all bath, while confession is like a daily foot-washing (John 10:13).

1:17 <u>Transformed lives are possible</u>.
The mantra of many in this darkened age is, "This is just the way I am," or "I just want to be me," or "Just learn to accept yourself as you are." It is taken for granted that genuine and lasting changes in our character and conduct are impossible. The other side of the coin finds many who are pretending to be what they are not, living in their own fantasy, which they see as a blockbuster movie. The truth is that each and every one of us needs to work on personal renovation throughout our lives. This is only made possible by the inner work of transforming regeneration (new birth) by faith in Jesus Christ, and by ongoing spiritual growth resulting in what the Bible calls sanctification, or conformity to Christ. Once one has become a child of God by faith, this personal renovation calls for life-long action. The indwelling Holy Spirit makes this possible. Even the great Apostle Paul, near the end of his life, declared that his spiritual renovation was a work in progress (Phil. 3:12–14).

1. <u>We must become a disciple of good over evil</u>.
   If we are to learn to do good, we must enter into the school of Jesus Christ. His life and teaching as recorded for us in the Gospels is the primer school for those who would learn the nature of goodness. We advance beyond the elementary of our education as we enter into the epistles, where the deep things of God are made known to us. To *"Learn to do good"* is a life-long pursuit of being transformed into the image of Christ by the *"renewing of your mind"* (Rom. 12:1–2).

2. <u>We need to seek after justice</u>.
   Micah tells us that the opposite of true justice is to love what is evil and to hate what is good (Micah 3:1–2). This is the default position of every fallen soul. Evil comes naturally, but good must be learned. True justice is to honor what is good and pure, and to hate and to fight against all that is evil. To seek justice is to pursue the mind of God through His Word. The Bible is our textbook, because it is *"the mind of Christ"*

(1 Cor. 2:16). Once we have come to understand justice in principle, we then need to make justice a way of life.

3. Then we need to engage the forces of evil.
   It takes boldness to stand against the crowd, but this is what we are called to do. We have to learn to *"rebuke ... defend ... plead"* as the occasion demands. While we may admit that "the pen is mightier than the sword," there are times when the *"word spoken in due season"* (Prov. 15:23) is mightiest of all. When Abraham Lincoln stood at the site of the Battle of Gettysburg, in which there were over 51,000 casualties on both sides, he made this statement. *"The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here."* His speech was only 271 words and ten sentences long and lasted about two minutes. Yet today, over 160 years later, it is his words that are remembered around the world.

   I was in a remote village in Africa teaching pastors some years ago. During a conversation with them afterward, something brought up the topic of the American Civil War. One of the young men then gave an impromptu recital of the Gettysburg Address, which he had memorized many years before. Words have power. The right words at the time can change a life. We can all think of times we wish we had spoken out but were not courageous enough to. What a difference our words might have made in the life of one being unfairly judged, or mocked, or shamed! Let us determine to speak the *"word fitly spoken* [which is] *like apples of gold in settings of silver"* (Prov. 25:11)

1:18 Forgiveness is complete and total.
The word *"reason"* is used not in the sense of any negotiation, but rather of God restoring them to sound reason. The issue of sin can only be settled by the new birth. Scarlet was the dye made from the purple grub worm. It was very rare and was indelible. If you got this dye on a garment, it would never come out. But God is able to cleanse us of sins that to us are "permanent." How amazing then that in Psalm 22:6, the Psalm Jesus quoted while on the cross, the Messiah is compared to a *"worm,"* the very worm from which the purple dye was made. And in Mark 15:17 and Luke 23:11, Jesus was mocked by the soldiers by putting on Him a purple robe. This was the robe designated for royalty and was also the color of the veil in the Temple (Exod. 26:1, 31, 36; Dan. 5:7, 16). Just as Jesus bore the stain of our sins on the cross, so we who believe will one day reign with Him in His kingdom (Rev. 20:6; 22:5).

1:19–20 But salvation must be volitional.
The key word in these two verses is the little word "**if**." This word implies several things:

1. Potential
   It is possible for them to be *"willing and obedient."* It is also an option for them to *"refuse and rebel."* Two distinct ways are set before them. They must choose the right or the left path. To the left is the path of self-will and self-indulgence. Its end is destruction. To the right is the way of self-denial and self-surrender. This path can have only a good ending. As Moses said to Israel in the very beginning of the nation, *"See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil ... I call heaven and earth as*

witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life …" (Deut. 30:15, 19–20).

2. Responsibility
   These verses are set up on a protasis/apodosis basis. This is nothing more than a conditional sentence, with the words *"If … then"* either spoken or implied. The *"If"* protasis states the condition, followed by the *"then,"* either stated or implied, which gives the result. It is impossible for such a construction to be a part of the language of God unless men have true "response-ability," meaning the ability to respond one way or the other.

   Joshua challenged his generation with these words, *"Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve … But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"* (Josh. 24:15).

3. Volitional capacity
   Based on the principles of point two, there must be volitional capacity, or the ability to make free decisions and choices. To present an option to one who is unable to make a choice would be neither right nor fair. In other words, it would violate the concept of "righteousness and justice," which is the foundation of the Throne of God. Consider the logic of C.S. Lewis on this topic:

   "If God's moral judgment differs from ours so that our "black" may be His "white," we can mean nothing by calling Him good; for to say, "God is good," while asserting that His goodness is wholly other than ours, is really only to say, "God is we know not what;" and an utterly unknown quality in God cannot give us moral grounds for loving or obeying Him. If He is not (in our sense) good, we shall obey if at all, only through fear—and should be equally ready to obey an omnipotent Fiend. The Doctrine of Total Depravity, when the consequence is drawn that, since we are totally depraved, our idea of good is worth simply nothing—may turn Christianity into a form of devil-worship." (*The Problem of Pain*, pp. 28–29, 1940)

   The same would be true if God sets before men choices, which they have no ability to choose! It makes a mockery of the word "justice."

4. Consequences
   In the moral rule of God, all choices have consequences. Good decisions bring good results, and bad choices lead to painful and unpleasant ends. I believe it was Thomas Carlyle who said, "He who chooses a path also chooses where it leads." This is a fundamental outworking of the rule of God in the universe (see Rom. 1:18–32).

CLASS THREE

Isaiah 1:21–31
When God's Grace is Rejected, Vengeance Follows

The greatest insult to God is to refuse to believe Him. God values faith above all other virtues. This is because humble faith acknowledges God's trustworthiness. To say that God is faithful is to declare Him to be the embodiment of Truth. When we say that a man is faithful, as the Scripture does of Moses (Heb. 3:1–2), is to say that he lives his life in accord with what God has said. Therefore, to be presented with the Word of God, which is from the very essence of truth (John 17:17), and to reject it, is to malign/blaspheme the very character of God Himself. This is why, in the economy of God, both eternal salvation and eternal damnation are dependent on either faith or unbelief (John 3:16–21).

1:21–23 God in His Omniscience sees them as they are.
The reason for God's rejection of their "worship" (vv. 10–15) is because it is all external. In these verses, God looks at the heart (1 Sam. 16:7: Mark 7:6; Psalm 26:2; Jer. 20:12; Acts 15:8; 1 Cor. 4:5; 1 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 2:23).

Note the spiritual contrasts in vv. 21–23, which reveal the path Judah had chosen:

1. The once faithful city had become a spiritual prostitute (unfaithful).
2. The place where justice and righteousness once lodged (Psalm 89:14; 97:2), was now a den of murderers. They killed the poor and weak by corrupt laws and judges.
3. The use of silver and wine illustrates what was once valuable is now corrupted.
4. The corruption of leaders in a nation by graft and bribery deprives the weak and helpless and destroys the nation. It is often said that "power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." The truth is that power appeals to the corrupt, who then corrupt the power they gain.

These descriptions of Judah in the eighth century before Christ are a perfect picture of what America has become in 2025. May God help us to repent and recover as a nation!

1:24–25 God in His Omnipotence declares what He will do.
God knows the end from the beginning (Isa. 46:10), because He is outside of time, and sees all time in one glance. What He says He will do in judging Judah will surely come to pass. The *"Lord of hosts"* means "Lord of Armies," and is Isaiah's favorite term for God, being used over 60 times in the book.

God is able to judge the wicked, and deliver the righteous, as He sifts a nation in judgment. From 605 to 586 B.C., under the conquest of Nebuchadnezzar, God delivered the faithful by carrying them into the Babylonian captivity. The rest were either slaughtered or left behind in poverty and confusion (read Jer. 24). Moses also prophesied about this judgment in detail (Deut. 28:47–68) at least 700 years earlier! All of this came about, roughly, 140 years after Isaiah prophesied, but the Word of God is sure, and cannot be broken.

1:26–31 <u>God in His Omnipresence anticipates their future</u>.
In these verses, we have prophecy that looks forward to the Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ. In Isaiah 11:11, we learn that this will come about after God recovers Israel from among the nations *"the second time."* The first restoration was from the Babylonian captivity in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. The second time began on May 14, 1948. Christians often become impatient, wondering when God will fulfill His promises to Israel, since they have been back in the land for over 70 years. We must always remember, that "God may wait, but He's never late." In His perfect timing, all that He has promised will come to pass.

<u>What God will soon do for Israel</u>:

1. He will restore righteousness and faithfulness in her leaders (v. 26).
2. He will redeem Zion, when she repents, with righteousness and justice (do you notice how much God mentions these attributes?) (v. 27).
3. Those who reject the grace of God will be totally consumed (v. 28).
4. The unbelieving will come to be ashamed of their unfaithfulness when they are convicted by the truth (vv. 29–30). The *"terebinth"* or oak groves were places of idol worship and sexual orgies called "worship." Always remember that at the final judgment (Rev. 20:11–15), the evidence of guilt will be so overwhelming that the unbelieving will bow before God and declare His judgment to be just (Isa. 45:23; Rom. 14:11; Phil. 2:10–11).
5. Those who considered themselves to be *"strong,"* along with all their "works," will be burned up, and there will be no escape. This anticipates the vision of John in the Revelation 20:11–15:

   "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books … And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."

<u>Isaiah Chapter One Summary</u>

1. This chapter anticipates the message of the entire book.
2. Again, we can divide the book into messages of condemnation (Chapters 1–39) and of consolation (Chapters 40–66).
3. As we will see, these two themes were memorialized by the names of the two sons of Isaiah: *"Shear-Jashub"* ("A remnant shall return," Isa. 7:3) and *"Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz"* ("Speed the spoil, hasten the prey," Isa. 8:1).
4. Isaiah illustrates for us that God always offers grace and deliverance before bringing judgment. We ought to very carefully consider what this means for America in this year of 2025. If God has offered deliverance from evil and corruption in our nation, and the population as a whole rejects it, there is nothing left but great destruction.
5. We who are believers must be like Isaiah and warn our nation of the danger of failing to exploit the political victory with the proclamation of the gospel message, to focus on winning the lost to Christ, and calling believers to obedience to God.

CLASS FOUR
Isaiah 2–4

This is a rather long segment to take in one bite, but the section breaks down into three closely related ideas:

1. The promise of national redemption (2:1–4),
2. The certainty of national judgment (2:5–4:1), and
3. The glory of the coming Redeemer (4:2–6).

The last section cited above is the first of many prophecies in the book directly relating to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is also the first of the six *"Branch"* prophecies in the Old Testament, which find their fulfillment in Matthew Chapter One.

Isaiah 2:1–4
The Promise of National Redemption

The Nation of Israel was created through Abraham and called into a covenant of faith with God (Gen. 12:1–3; 15:1–6). The unique election of this nation was to bring into the world both the written and the Living Word of God. The nation was then called on to obey the Word of God revealed to them, and to trust in the promised Savior. They were also warned that unbelief and rebellion against God would bring increasing national discipline (Leviticus 26) and ultimately national destruction (Deut. 11:22–28; Chapter 28). In the following section, Isaiah contrasts the promises of future blessing with the present degeneracy and decline of his nation.

Six Little Friends

I have six little friends
They taught me all I knew
Their names are what, and when, and where,
And why, and how, and who. – Longfellow

1. When? *"In the latter days."*
2. Where? *"The mountain of the Lord's house."*
3. What? *"Shall be exalted … all nations shall flow to it."*
4. Who? *"He will teach us His ways."*
5. Why? *"For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem."*
6. How? *"He shall judge between nations … They shall beat their swords into plowshares ... Neither shall they learn war anymore."*

Isaiah 2:5–4:1
The Certainty of National Judgment

2:5–22 Judgment for idolatry.

All throughout her long history, the greatest spiritual snare for Israel has been the sin of idolatry. It began shortly after her deliverance from Egypt (Exodus 32) with the golden calf.

2:5–9 The *first* appeal and the indictment.
God always gives the offer of grace before imposing judgment (v. 5). To *"walk in the light of the Lord"* is to live in obedience to His revealed Word (John 8:12; 1 John 1:7). If God's grace is rejected, then only judgment can follow (vv. 6–8).

> **Note:** When men turn from God they turn to idols of false prophets (v. 6), money (v. 7a), possessions (v. 7b), and false gods (vv. 8–9).

2:10–22 The Day of the Lord and final judgment.
The Day of the Lord begins with the Tribulation Period. Note 2:11b–12, *"in that day ... the Day of the Lord of hosts."* You will see the phrase *"in that day"* repeatedly through Isaiah. It always refers to the Tribulation followed by the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the establishment of His earthly kingdom (see 13:6, 9; Joel 1:15; 2:2:1, 11; 3:14; Amos 5:18; Obad. 1;15; Zeph. 1:7–8; 2:2–3; Zec. 14:1).

> **Note:** It is critical to distinguish between the *"Day of Christ"* (the Rapture—1 Cor. 1:8; 5:5; 2 Cor. 1;14; Eph. 4:30; Phil. 1:6; 2:16) and the *"Day of the Lord"* (Tribulation and Second Coming, 1 Thess. 5:2–4).

The effect of this judgment will be the breaking of the proud and the humbling of all men, and the destruction of all idols (Isa. 2:11–18). The ministry of John the Baptist also had this goal in mind (Isa. 40:3–8; Luke 3:4–5).

In the end, men will seek to hide from the Lord in the caves of the mountains (Isa. 2:10, 19, 22). John pictures this in Revelation 6:15–17. How interesting is it that many of the wealthy of our time are building huge underground bunkers in the hope of escaping doomsday!

3:1–3 Judgment on the leaders of the nation.
Eleven classes of men are mentioned to whom the people look to for leadership. All of them will be brought down as God brings famine on the nation.

3:4–15 Judgment by the children.
Rebellion against God has specific inevitable consequences. When man revolts against his Master, nature revolts against man (Gen. 3:17–19). Next, children revolt against their parents (3:4–15) and the wife revolts against her husband (4:16–4:1).

> **vv. 10–11 A *second* appeal**.
> God is able to protect faithful believers in a time of national judgment. However, for those who are resolutely wicked, there will be no escape. Our generation is ripe for many of the haughty to be brought down, and for the corrupt to be exposed and judged!

3:16–4:1 <u>Judgment on the women</u>.
Here, we have an indictment of the self-absorbed and narcissistic women of Israel. The prophet Amos, and early contemporary of Isaiah, likened them to *"cows of Bashan"* (Amos. 4:1) because of their selfish and self-indulgent ways. Bashan was a place of lush grass and fat cows. Unfortunately, it was also a center of demonic worship and activity (Psalm 22:12–13).

In contrast to their arrogant and seductive ways (3:16), God will strip away all their wealth and carry them away in slavery. This came about when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Judah and destroyed Jerusalem (c. 586 B.C.), and the wealthy women were reduced to begging to be claimed by any man (4:1).

<u>Isaiah 4:2–6</u>
The Glory of the Coming Redeemer

Here, Isaiah introduces us to *"The Branch of the Lord."* Three Old Testament prophets speak of the Lord Jesus Christ using this figure, with slightly different emphasis.

1. The *"Branch of the LORD"* (Isa. 4:2).
2. The "Branch from David's roots" (Isa. 11:1).
3. The *"Branch of Righteousness"* (Jer. 23:5; 33:15–16).
4. God's "servant Branch" (Zech. 3:8).
5. *"The Man … the BRANCH"* (Zech. 6:12).

That these prophecies are fulfilled in Jesus Christ is declared by Matthew (2:23), *"And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene."* The root word for both "branch" and "Nazareth" is the Hebrew word *netzer*!

The phrase *"in that day"* (Isa. 4:2; 3:7, 18) refers back to *"The Day of the Lord"* (Isa. 2:12). Once the Tribulation ends with the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (see Rev. 19:11–16), His kingdom will be established, and blessing and prosperity will prevail. As in the days of the Exodus (Exod. 13:21–22; 14:19–24), the Shekinah Glory (the glory of His presence) will shine above Jerusalem.

<u>Summary</u>
In these chapters, Isaiah has set before us promises of grace and glory in contrast to warnings of shame and judgment. While his message was originally given to Israel, every promise and warning is valid to us today, living in these United States of America. God has graciously given us, in this present hour, a chance to repent and reclaim His blessings on our nation. However, with such unmerited grace and mercy comes a warning: If this nation fails to turn back to God and His Word, and to repudiate the vile wickedness that has come to dominate this country for so long, then all the warnings of national collapse and enslavement will surely come to pass. A nation is made up of individuals. Each and every one of us must choose our path. *"Come and let us walk in the light of the Lord* (Isa. 2:5) *… Say to the righteous that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings"* (Isa. 3:10). Let this be the path we choose for ourselves and urge others to take as well!

CLASS FIVE
Isaiah 5

The Song of the Vineyard
This parable in song is similar to Nathan's parable to David (2 Sam. 12:1–5), in that it calls on the listeners for their judgment. Jesus used this very format in His Parable of the Vineyard (Matt. 21:33–46). The listeners do not realize they are pronouncing judgment on themselves (Matt. 7:1–5)! The principle is repeated throughout the Book of Isaiah: If we reject the grace and mercy of God, His righteous judgment is inescapable.

This is the first of five songs Isaiah sings in the Book of Isaiah (Isa. 12, 26, 35, 54). He was not only a richly gifted prophet but was also a literary genius and folk singer.

Isaiah 5:1–7
The Song/Parable of the Vineyard

This song begins like a joyful wedding song and ends as a funeral dirge. It reveals the rich blessings God had bestowed on His people, and their failure to bear good spiritual fruit. God had planted His choice vine, Israel, in a fertile land. He had removed the "stones" of foreign nations and placed His watchtower over her. He had prepared for a rich harvest, but the vine produced only worthless grapes.

We who live in this present Church Age ought never to read this without being reminded of Jesus' teaching in John 15 about Himself as the *"true vine,"* with His Father as the vine-keeper. We who have believed in Him are the branches, and His purpose for us is to bear, not only good fruit, but much fruit. The first question for us is, "Am I abiding in the vine?" Is my life one of close fellowship with my Lord and Savior? Secondly, what is the fruit of my life? And is it increasing? These are questions we ought to daily consider and prayerfully answer. If we find we are falling short in our lives, it is time to get back to the basics of the daily disciplines of the Christian life. If there is no fruit, it is because we are not abiding in Him. If we abide in Him, the fruit (Gal. 5:22–23) is a natural consequence.

Six Daily Disciplines
The following are six things we do daily for our physical body. Should we not much more do them for our soul?

1. **Wash—**When we believe in Jesus Christ, we are spiritually washed once for all by the new birth (Titus 3:5; John 13:10; Heb. 10:10). As we grow in grace and truth, we are daily being washed by the water of the Word (Eph. 5:26; 1 John 1:7). When we sin, we need the cleansing that comes from confession of our sins (Psalm 32:3–5; 51:1–2; 1 John 1:9).

2. **Dress—**When we confess our sins, the result is that we *"put on the Lord Jesus Christ"* (Rom. 13:14; Eph. 4:20–24). Like the returning prodigal in Luke 15, when we return to our heavenly Father, He clothes us in the robes of His own righteousness.

3. **Eat—**The soul needs nourishment even more than the body (Job 23:12). Jesus said that our souls only thrive *"by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God"* (Matt. 4:4). We need to daily feed on the Word of God if we are to keep our spirit strong.

4. **Walk—**All of us, unless we have some disability, walk somewhere daily. But in the plan of God the demand is to walk in the light of the Spirit and the truth (John 8:12; Gal. 5:16; I John 1:7). The figure of walking is common in the Bible for the Christian life (Eph. 2:10; 4:1; 5:1–2, 8, 15). The upward path of the Christian life is the opposite of the downward path of the world (Eph. 4:17–19).

5. **Work—**God has a work for each of us to accomplish (Matt. 25:15; Mark 13:34), to each his own task, according to his ability. While our salvation is "By grace, through faith, without works" (Rom. 4:3–5; Eph. 2:8–9), once we are a child of God, we are to enter into His works (Eph. 2:10; Titus 2:11–14).

6. **Rest—**At the end of the day, the activities and works are done, and it is time to rest. To the Jews of the Old Covenant, this was a perpetual reminder through the many Sabbaths. For us, it is a moment-by-moment rest of the Spirit as we trust God in all our circumstances. In Matthew 11:28–30, Jesus offers to the world two kinds of rest. First, for the weary and world-worn, He offers the rest of salvation. Note that He gives this rest as a gift. To those who receive eternal life through Him, He offers a second rest, that which comes as we take up His yoke. This rest for the soul comes through faith and labor (Heb. 4:1, 9–11).

5:3–4 <u>The critical question</u>.
God calls on His people to pass judgment: **"What more could I have done?"** Let us pray and labor so that this question is not asked of us when we stand at the Judgment/Bema Seat of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 5:11–15; 2 Cor. 5:10)!

5:5–6 <u>The condemnation</u>.
There are essentially three things that the Lord will cause to happen: Removal of protection, cessation of fruit/harvests, and the withholding of rain, drought and famine. The prophet Haggai saw the fulfillment of these things as a result of the captivity (Hag. 1:1–6).

5:7 <u>The interpretation</u>.
Here, Isaiah is instructed to give the lesson first—from agriculture. Then, he gives the spiritual interpretation: Israel is the *"vineyard,"* God is the Beloved who owns the vineyard, and the men of Judah are the choice vine. Note that God looked for Justice and Righteousness (His character—Psalm 84:14; 97:2) but instead found only oppression and the cry for deliverance.

<u>Application</u>:
In Isaiah 1:19–20, we saw the all-important word, *"If."* This word implies both the Sovereignty of God and the free-will of man.

"If you are willing and obedient [see Rom. 1:5 = obedience begins with faith]*, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."*

This *"if"* was set before Israel very early by Moses (Lev. 26:3, 14). This *"if"* applies to us as well, as we see in Romans 8:12–17, Colossians 1:21–23, and Hebrews 3:7–15.

History is the record of human decisions: the good are blessed by God, and the evil are over-ruled by His Sovereignty.

"Truly, this only have I found; that God made man upright, But they have sought out many schemes." Ecclesiastes 7:29

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah 53:6

God's ultimate over-ruling act was to bring Jesus Christ into the world, to take upon Himself the sins of us all, that we might freely choose to believe in Him for eternal life (2 Cor. 5:14–21).

Isaiah 5:8–25
The Six Woes and the Judgments

This section basically covers the divine implementation of the five cycles of discipline that Moses warned of in Leviticus 26

The word *"Woe"* occurs seven times, but in vv. 22–23, it is used twice to relate to the same thing. This section is also reflected in the eight "Woes" Jesus announced upon Israel, particularly of the Pharisees and Sadducees of His day (Matt. 23:13–36). The "Woes" of Isaiah were followed by both the Assyrian and the Babylonian captivities. The "Woes" of Jesus were followed by the complete eradication of the Nation of Israel by the Romans (70–73 A.D.).

The word "Woe" is a word that expressed both grief and warning. Woe is the opposite of the word *"blessed"* (Matt. 5:1–12). It implies the death of someone precious to the speaker. Here, Isaiah announces the death of the Northern Kingdom by Assyria (721 B.C.), and over a hundred years later, the death of the Kingdom of Judah (606–586 B.C.). In all, Isaiah pronounces 20 woes against Israel in this book!

The **six woes** (vv. 22–23 is one woe) identify the sins of Israel for which she will be judged (see Amos 5:18; 6:1; Rev. 8:13; 9:12). The four "Therefores" (vv. 13–14, 24–25) announce the judgments that will fall because of them.

The six "woes" are answers to the *"why"* of verse 4. Following are six reasons why God's people fail to bring forth fruit:

1. The blight of insatiable greed (vv. 8–10).
2. The blight of self-gratification (vv. 11–12).

Note: The first "therefore" section (vv. 13–17).

3. The blight of hardened hearts and deliberate challenge to God (vv. 18–19).
4. The blight of spiritual perversion/inversion, (v. 20).
5. The blight of conceit and arrogance (v. 21).
6. The blight of exalting what is abased (v. 22–23).
   Note: The second "therefore" section (vv. 24–25).

Note: These six woes roughly parallel the six things God hates, recorded in Proverbs 6:16–19.

Isaiah 5:26–30
The Ultimate Judgment—National Destruction

Up to this point, the judgments have followed the five cycles of discipline outlined in Leviticus Chapter 26. What follows is something far worse: the dissolution of the nation. This judgment was finally administered in 721 B.C. on the Northern Kingdom of Israel (Assyrian captivity), and later in 606 B.C. on the Southern Kingdom of Judah (Babylonian captivity).

In response to the mocking taunt of unbelieving Israel (vv. 19–20, i.e. "Show us a sign that we may believe," John 6:30), God will bring the armies of Assyria to destroy Israel.

1. God will *"lift up a banner,"* and *"whistle"* for them to come (v. 26).
2. They will answer the call "swiftly and relentlessly, with no delay" (vv. 26b–27).
3. Their weapons and armaments are "sharp, hardened, and swift" (v. 28).
4. They will "roar like a lion seizing its prey," and the land will be overwhelmed by *"darkness and sorrow"* (vv. 29–30).

Application:
1. God's appeals and warnings to ancient Israel are just as valid to us today.
2. Every day we face the "if" of obedience or disobedience, of blessing or of woe.
3. The fact that we are *"not under the law but under grace"* (Rom. 6:14) only increases our accountability, because *"to whom much is given ... much will be required"* (Luke 12:48).
4. Compare the three "ifs" of Hebrews 3:7–15 with the warning of three levels of increasing discipline in Hebrews 12:5–6:
   a. First comes "rebuke." This is correction from God's Word (2 Tim. 3:16–17).
   b. Next comes "chastening." The word here is *paideuo*, which means "child training.". This is the use of the rod, in painful reinforcement of the rebuke.
   c. Third, we have "scourging." The word *mastigoi* means "to skin alive." This is severe and extreme physical and emotional pain and sorrow. Think of the scourging of Jesus as an example.
   d. The believer who persists in open defiance and rebellion against God and His Word will face the ultimate form of discipline—premature death (1 John 6:16; Acts 5:5, 10; 1 Cor. 5:1–5).

> *"Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you ...*
> *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up."* James 4:7, 10

CLASS SIX
Isaiah 6

The Revelation of God and the Call of the Prophet
In the first five chapters, the whole theme of the book has been introduced. The nation is likened to Sodom and Gomorrah in their sinfulness (1:10–11). Still, God in His matchless grace holds out to them the offer of cleansing and salvation (1:16–19). The promise of the Messianic kingdom is set before them (Chapter 2), yet they continue on their path of spiritual self-destruction (Chapters 3–5). It is at this point that Isaiah records his vision of the Lord, and of his own confession, resulting in cleansing and commission as a prophet of God.

Isaiah 6:1–4
God's Glory Revealed

God's timing is always perfect. This vision came *"In the year that King Uzziah died"* (740 B.C.). Uzziah (also called Amaziah) had been a good king for over 50 years (2 Kings 15:1–5; 2 Chron. 26:1–5). Tragically, in his later years he tried, in his arrogance, to act as a priest and was judged by God with leprosy (2 Chron. 26:16–21). He had been the best king since the time of Solomon, and his death signaled the permanent decline of the nation. In only about 15 more years, Rome would be founded, which, like its predecessors of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Greece, would dominate Israel in the time of Christ.

But with the loss of the earthly king, Isaiah was given the vision of the heavenly King who rules forever. The Apostle John speaks of this vision when he wrote, *"These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him."* (John 12:41). The *"Him"* John refers to is Jesus, and so we have the inspired declaration of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The temple that is spoken of is probably the heavenly temple, though some suggest that this vision took place in the temple in Jerusalem, which is entirely possible. Above the throne were two rows of *Seraphim*, a form of angel mentioned only here. The name comes from the Hebrew, *saraph*, which means "to burn." It is used in Numbers 21:6 of the fiery serpents. It may also be related to the Arabic *Sharafa*, which means "high, exalted." They cover their face and feet as an expression of humility and submission. Their chorus is directed back and forth, as they cry to one another.

These angels appear to have two functions, which are revealed in this passage. The first is the unceasing praise of God, in the refrain, *"Holy, Holy, Holy"* (v. 3). In the Hebrew, a double repetition emphasizes perfection or completeness. Here, the triple designation would imply an infinite degree of holiness. God's holiness is the sum total of His essence and makes Him separate from all created things. The second function is in the assurance of the sinner that confession brings complete and total cleansing.

In Hebrews 1:7 and 14 we read, *"And of His angels He says: who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire ... Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?"* These verses seem to imply that it is the Seraphim that are our guardian angels!

Yet, linked to this exaltation of His glory is the truth that *"The whole earth is full of His glory."* In fact, as we are told by both David and Paul, His glory is revealed to us through His creation (Psalm 19:1–6; Rom. 1:18–23). Though He is infinitely above us in His holiness, yet He is near us, and reveals Himself to us, through His creation (Matt. 6:26–30).

The chorus of the Seraphim was accompanied with violent shaking of the door posts and the smoke that filled the Temple could represent both the altar of sacrifice—a picture of the cross of Christ (John 1:29)—or the altar of incense, which represents the prayers of God's people (Rev. 5:8; 8:4).

Isaiah 6:5–7
God's Grace Applied

While the glory of God comes by revelation, the grace of God is seen by the work of purification. Nothing can make a soul aware of its own sinfulness like a vision of the glory of God. Compared to other people, we may find cause to boast. But even a small insight into the holiness of God causes us to condemn ourselves as sinful and unclean. It is the plea of the unclean, not the boast of the upright, that calls to the heart of God.

The Vision of God

1. Job staunchly defended his own righteousness until he had a vision of God. Then he repented in dust and ashes (Job 27:6; 29:14; 42:1–6).
2. Daniel is called by God a *"man greatly beloved,"* yet, even a limited vision of God's holiness caused him to "faint as a dead man" (Dan. 10:4–11).
3. Even the beloved disciple John fainted in the presence of the resurrected Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:9–17).

It is not self-commendation that God approves of, but the confession of sinfulness that finds His mercy and grace.

In the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:9–14), we see the great contrast in perspectives. The Pharisee compares himself to others and concludes that he is better than most. I have met countless men in prisons who will do the same (Prov. 21:2). They will say something like, "I may be a thief, but I have never murdered anyone."

On the other hand, we see the tax collector, who humbly stands before God, ashamed to even raise his eyes to Heaven, beating his chest and saying, *"God, be merciful to me a sinner"* (Luke 18:13). It was this man, confessing his sinfulness, who Jesus said was justified. Only the humble cry for mercy gives to God the glory He is worthy of!
Isaiah's cry, *"Woe is me, for I am undone!"* is now seen in light of the seven "woes" of Chapter 5, which were directed to his sinful nation. In a simple sentence, he declares himself to be as guilty as the rest. By confessing his unclean lips, he has acknowledged that he has an unclean heart (Matt. 12:34–37; Psalm 14:1; Prov. 4:23; 10:11; Luke 6:45; Rom. 3:13–14; James 3:5–12).

Amazingly, in response to Isaiah's confession, one of the Seraphs leaves his ranks in praising God and takes a coal from the altar of sacrifice. The coal speaks of sacrifice completed. It is a picture of the work of Christ on the cross, when He declared, *"It is finished"* (John 19:30). It is only by

the finished sacrifice of Christ that any sinner can be made pure and acceptable in the presence of God. By the application of the fire of judgment, Jesus endured for us the Seraph declares, *"Your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged"* (v. 7b).

When God declares one to be clean, the only fitting response is to first believe and rest in His work of grace (1 John 5:10–13), and then to submit in service to Him. This is the essence of the two calls of Jesus in Matthew 11:28–30, and of Paul's dissertation on the love of God in 2 Corinthians 5:14–21.

Isaiah 6:8–13
God's Call Answered

There is no doubt that the *"Us"* of verse 8 matches the three-fold *"Holy"* of verse 3. The trinity of Father, Son, and Spirit is anticipated throughout the Old Testament. For example, in Psalm 2:7–12 and Proverbs 30:4, the Son is mentioned, and of course throughout the Old Testament the Spirit is mentioned. Wherever the Spirit is, there is the presence of God (Psalm 139:7).

Isaiah, now cleansed, volunteers for service, *"Here am I! Send me."* His calling was not to be an easy one. Like every commission God gives to men, the success is not measured in the response, but rather in the faithfulness to proclaim the message!

The effect of his message would be the further hardening of the nation (vv. 9–10). When men reject what light they have, the effect of more light is greater blindness. In response to his question, *"how long?"* he was told that it would be until the nation ceased to exist (vv. 11–13).

The Light and the Darkness

1. Jesus Christ is the light of the world. To reject Him is to choose to enter greater darkness (John 1:4–5; 8:12).
2. Anyone who rejects the offer of salvation through faith in Christ in effect declares that they love darkness and hate the light (John 3:16–19).
3. The more one hears and rejects the truth, the greater their spiritual blindness and hardness of heart becomes (Matt. 13:14–15; Eph. 4:17–19).
4. There comes a point, when one persists in hardening their own heart, that God will "give them over" to their desire, and seal them in their hardness (John 12:37–41; Rom. 1:24–32). This is called Judicial Hardening—God's judgment on continued unbelief.
5. Pharoah is the classic example of this judgment. Pharoah was fully conscious and willful in hardening his own heart (Exod. 7:13–14, 22; 8:15, 19, 32; 9:34–35). The result of his persistent unbelief was that God sealed him in his hardened condition (Exod. 10:1, 20, 27; 11:1; 14:8).
6. In Romans 9:18, Paul says, *"Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens."* This must be seen in the context of Scripture, which tells us that God desires to show mercy to the humble and that He will judge the proud (Matt. 5:3–10; 1 Pet. 5:5–6; James 4:10).
7. The simple word *"if"* in Scripture declares that mankind has only two options: we can choose the light by faith or remain in darkness by unbelief (Isa. 1:19–20; John 7:37–39).

CLASS SEVEN
Isaiah 7

The Promise of Immanuel
God always offers grace before judgment. In fact, judgment is called God's *"strange act"* (KJV).

> *"For the Lord will rise up as at Mount Perazim* [See 2 Sam. 5:20]*, He will be angry as in the Valley of Gibeon* [See Josh. 10:10–12]*—That He may do His work, His awesome work, and bring to pass His act, His unusual* [strange] *act."*
> Isaiah 28:21

In this passage, in the face of unprecedented judgment on Israel, God sends the promise of the coming of His Son, *"Immanuel"* (v. 14), as the focus of faith for all who would choose to be delivered. But this promise is linked to a warning: that without faith there is no hope (v. 9, see 2 Chron. 20:20). Jesus made the warning even more clear:

> *"If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."* John 8:24

Isaiah 7:1–9
Believe or Perish

After the death of King Uzziah, his son Jotham reigned for sixteen years. He was a good and faithful king, according to 2 Kings 15:32–34. He was then followed by his son Ahaz, who was a very wicked and evil king (2 Kings 16:3–4). He sacrificed his own son to Molech and was deeply involved in the demonism of idol worship (1 Cor. 10:20). God will give him one more chance to repent of his evil and come to saving faith.

In vv. 1–2, the king of Syria and the king of Israel (the Northern Kingdom) joined forces against Judah and Jerusalem. The purpose of this threat was to force King Ahaz to join forces with them against the encroaching forces of Assyria. We learn from 2 Kings 16:7–9 that Ahaz made a secret pact with Assyria, in which he plundered the treasury of the Temple to give as tribute to Tiglath-Pileser, the king of Assyria.

Where there is no faith, fear will always dominate. The threat of the combined forces of Syria and Israel created such a disturbance in Jerusalem that it was like a mighty wind thrashing the trees in a forest. David knew the power of faith to conquer fear, when he wrote, *"Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You"* (Psalm 56:3).

Later, in Isaiah 41:10, the prophet will comfort the hearts of the believers with these words, *"Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."*

Then, in vv. 3–9, God tells Isaiah to meet Ahaz in a specific place, with a specific message. Part of the message is in the name of Isaiah's son, *Shear-Jashub*, which means "a remnant will return," anticipating the return from the exile (Ezra/Nehemiah). The place is the water source for Jerusalem, as well as the place where the women did the laundry. It is suggestive that when we come to Jesus

Christ, who is the Living Water (John 7:37–39), we are cleansed of our sins and given eternal life. Also, this is the very ground on which Rabshakeh, the commander of the forces of Assyria would later hurl insults against Hezekiah (Isa. 36:1–2). Then God would deliver them with a mighty supernatural victory.

In v. 4, the first command *"Take heed,"* is a *niphal* imperative, meaning, "receive protection." *"Be quiet"* is a *hiphil* imperative, meaning, "be caused to rest." Security must be received from the Lord. The result is the exhortation *"do not fear."*

Verses 5–9 record God's promise through Isaiah that the looming threat will not succeed, adding the prophecy that within sixty-five years those forces will be destroyed. Isaiah's prophecy here was given in 735 B.C. Within just 13 years, the Northern Kingdom was conquered, and within 62 years, foreign settlers were moved in, creating what we see in the New Testament as the Samaritans (2 Kings 17:24; 2 Chron. 33:11; Ezra 4:2, 10).

Verse 9 gives the only hope of the Southern Kingdom, *"If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established."* The *hiphil* imperfect of the verb *Amen* literally means, "be caused to believe." The immediate cause of faith is always the Word of God (Rom. 10:17).

Isaiah 7:10–16
The Sign of Immanuel

Here, we see in Ahaz the beginning of the fulfillment of God's warning of the unbelief that Isaiah would meet in his ministry (6:9–10). On being told to ask God for a sign, he responds with phony piety, saying he would not put God to the test. Let's be clear, to test God out of unbelief is evil (Deut. 6:16; John 2:18–19; Heb. 3:7–15). However, to fail to believe when God offers a sign is far greater evil.

Thus, God presents the sign of His choosing (v. 14). This passage is quoted in Matthew 1:21–23, where the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ is seen to be its ultimate fulfillment. However, as we have seen, God's prophecies often have both a near and a far fulfillment.

Many have commented that the word *"virgin"* is *alma*, which generally means "a young unmarried woman." The Hebrew word *bethula* is the normal word for virgin. However, in Genesis 24:43, the word *"virgin"* is *alma,* which is later identified as Rebekah. The reason for this usage is probably to signify its dual fulfillment; first through Isaiah's second son, and then through the Lord Jesus Christ. This will become more clarified in Chapter 8.

"Immanuel," of course, means "God with us," and is a promise of divine protection still surrounding the City of Jerusalem. In the near fulfillment of the prophecy, a child will soon be born, who prior to reaching the age of accountability, will see the destruction of the Northern Kings threatening Jerusalem (see 8:4).

Isaiah 7:17–25
The Consequences of Unbelief

In this section, God warns that He is bringing a far worse threat to Judah and Jerusalem than the two Northern kings. He will soon call for both Assyria and Egypt, the world's two superpowers at the time. Egypt was known for its flies, and the Assyrians for their beekeeping. So, God would *"whistle"* for them to come, and they would *"shave"* Jerusalem with a *"razor"* (vv. 18, 20). In those days, slaves were completely shaved of all hair—a symbol of shame and utter defeat.

Verses 21–25 declare that the result will be the loss of livestock (vv. 21–22), reducing the population to eating the food of the poorest of peasants. The rich farmland (vv. 23–25) would be left idle and become thickets of thorns and briars—a place for hunting or grazing but no longer fit for farming.

The Call to Faith

1. It is most crucial to see that long before God calls for Assyria and Egypt to invade Judah, He calls on all those of *"The House of David"* to turn to Him in faith.
2. The phrase "House of David" reminds us of the Messianic promise given to David about 300 years earlier, *"When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever"* (2 Sam. 7:12–13).
3. All throughout history, God has been calling men to come to Him in humble faith. The story of the coming Seed of the Woman is echoed down through the pages of Old Testament history.
4. In Genesis 5, we have the preview of the whole Gospel story:
   a. *Adam*— "Man"
   b. *Seth*— "Appointed"
   c. *Enosh*— "Mortal"
   d. *Kenan*— "Sorrow"
   e. *Mahalel*— "The Blessed God"
   f. *Jared*— "Shall come down"
   g. *Enoch*— "teaching"
   h. *Methuselah*— "His death shall bring"
   i. *Lamech*— "The despairing ones"
   j. *Noah*— "Rest"
5. In Isaiah 55:1 and 3, the prophet anticipates the call of the Lord Jesus Christ:

   "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters ... incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul will live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you— The sure mercies of David."

6. In John 7:37–39, Jesus echoed Isaiah's call to come to the source of living water:

   "On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the

Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

CLASS EIGHT
Isaiah 8

Sign of Judgment; A Promise of Deliverance
It is worth remembering that the book of Isaiah echoes the structure of the Bible: Chapters 1–39 reflecting the prophecy of Jesus coming, and of God's judgment on the nation; Chapters 40–66 being a preview of the New Testament, promising comfort and deliverance through the Messiah.

Also, Chapters 1–12 are directed toward Judah and Israel, with warning of judgment and promises of deliverances to those who trust in the Lord. From Chapter 13 on, Isaiah will direct his warnings to the surrounding nations of coming judgment from God.]

As in Chapter 7, we have a child, a name, and a sign to the nation. Actually, we have three names given to children, the question is whether two of these names refer to the same child:

1. *Shear-Jashub* (7:3), meaning, "A remnant shall return." This anticipates the return of the captives from Babylon nearly two centuries yet future.
2. *Immanuel* (7:14), "God with us." This name is obviously prophetic of Jesus coming (Matt. 1:23) but also referred to a child born in that day (Isa. 7:15–17).
3. *Maher-Shalal- Hash-Baz* (8:1–3), "Speed the plunder, hasten the *prey*." This name was a warning of the coming judgment by Assyria (under divine direction) on Syria and Israel (Northern Kingdom).

"Here am I and the children whom the LORD has given me! We are for signs and wonders in Israel …" Isaiah 8:18

This verse not only summarizes Isaiah's message from 7:10 through 9:7, but the Messianic significance of this verse is brought out in Hebrews 2:11–13:

"For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying ... 'Here am I and the children whom Godhas given Me.'"

In Chapter 8, we have the son (vv. 1–4), the sin (vv. 6–10), the Stone (vv. 11–18), and the search (vv. 19–22).

Isaiah 8:1–4
The Son—A Sign of Judgment on Israel

In v. 1, Isaiah is told to make a poster bearing the name *"Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz."* The name translates into a battle cry, such as "Quick to the plunder, hurry to the prey." The word translated

"scroll" in Hebrew literally means "a large flat surface or sign." As in 7:14, the name is given before the child is even conceived.

Two witnesses were chosen in v. 2 (see Deut. 19:15; 2 Cor. 13:1): *"Uriah* ["Yahweh is Light"] *the priest,"* and *"Zechariah* ["Yahweh remembers"]*."* They would testify to the name being chosen before the child was even conceived. The reason this is important becomes clear in v. 3.

"Then I went in to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son." The phrase used here for sexual intercourse is most often used for the first relations between a man and his wife. Many Bible scholars believe that after bearing his first son, *"Shear-Jashub"* (7:3), the first wife of Isaiah died. Thus, the prophet took a second wife, who was the *"virgin"* mentioned in 7:14, and the *"Immanuel"* and *Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz* were one and the same child. Compare the message related to Immanuel (*"the Child,"* 7:16–17) with the message related to Maher (8:6–10).

Verses 7:16 and 8:4 predict the Assyrian conquest of both Syria and Israel (the Northern Kingdom) before the child is of speaking and discerning age.

Question: If both prophecies (*"Immanuel"* and *"Maher")* refer to the same child, why the double names? Some suggest that his mother named him *Immanuel* (she is called a *"prophetess"* v. 3), and Isaiah named him *Maher* in obedience to the Lord's command.

Consider the greater fulfillment of these prophecies, in the Lord Jesus. Joseph is told to name the virgin-born Son, "Jesus" (The Salvation of God), yet Matthew, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit says, *"'Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,' which is translated, 'God with us'"* (Matt. 1:23). One name is the family name; the other is known only to those who by faith know his true identity.

In the same way, to the people of Isaiah's day, the name *Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz* was a name signifying coming military conquest over all of the Northern Kingdom and most of Judah. But for those who quietly trusted in the Lord, they would see the message as "Immanuel—God is with us." This very point is made by Isaiah in vv. 8–10!

Isaiah 8:5–10
The Sin—The Peace of God Rejected

In vv. 6–7, the key to understanding the message is the contrast drawn between two streams of water, *"Shiloah"* (v. 6) and the "mighty River" (v. 7). *Shiloah* means "peace," and was the stream that carried water from the Gihon Spring outside the wall and into the city. It was a modest little stream, representing the seeming smallness and insignificance of faith in the Lord. By contrast, *"the River"* speaks of the mighty Euphrates, which in times of flood overflowed all its banks, washing away everything in its path.

The phrase *"these people"* seems to refer to the people of the Northern Kingdom, as well as many in Judah, who had rejected Isaiah's call to trust in the Lord. Though the *"king of Assyria"* was mighty and seemed unstoppable, *"the Lord"* in His faithfulness to His people, like the humble Shiloah stream, would not fail them. Those who trusted in Him would be delivered (Isa. 40:28–31).

"Rezin" (v. 6) was the king of Syria, and *"Remaliah's son," Pekah*, was king of the Northern Kingdom (7:1).

Here (vv. 8–10), the overwhelming victory of Assyria is predicted, and the land is called *"O, Immanuel."* Although God is about to judge His people severely, He still calls them by His name—reminding them that while they have forsaken Him, He is still with those who will trust in Him.

The devastating onslaught of the seemingly unstoppable Assyrian forces would overwhelm all opposition, he would even *"reach up to the neck"* (v. 8), meaning that he would come to the gates of Jerusalem before being miraculously turned back by God's mighty warrior Angel, the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus Christ (Isa. 37:36).

The reason given by Isaiah for this limitation on Assyria's power is the Sovereign God who was still, in spite of their endless rebellion, *"God with us"* (v. 10). Over one hundred years later, in 606 B.C., the prophet Jeremiah, on the very eve of the Babylonian captivity, spoke to Jerusalem of the unending faithfulness of God. After he had already predicted the 70 years captivity, the prophet spoke these words to the people of Jerusalem:

> *"'For it shall come to pass in that day,' says the Lord of hosts, 'that I will break his yoke from your neck, and will burst your bonds; foreigners shall no more enslave them. But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up for them. Therefore do not fear, O My servant Jacob,' says the Lord, 'Nor be dismayed, O Israel; for behold, I will save you from afar, and your seed from the land of their captivity. Jacob shall return, have rest and be quiet, and no one shall make him afraid. For I am with you,' says the Lord, 'to save you; through I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, and will not let you go altogether unpunished.'"*
>
> Jeremiah 30:8–11

These prophecies and promises take on great significance as we gather today (13 June 2025), in light of the Israeli attacks on Iran in the past 24 hours. Who can tell what the final outcome of these events will be? But of one thing we can be sure, God promised through Isaiah that when He gathered back His people from captivity and dispersion *"the second time"* (Isa. 11:11), that He would ultimately lead them back to faith and victory with the coming of His King. How we ought to pray that Jesus Christ be proclaimed, and the Gospel made known throughout the world, before the dark and perilous days of the coming Tribulation Period!

Historical Note: June 19 was a significant day in history. It is the 23rd of *Sivan* in the Hebrew calendar. In the Book of Esther, it was the day that Haman's decree to annihilate the Jews in Persia (Iran) was to take place. Because of the faith of Esther, the new decree gave the Jews the right to defend themselves, resulting in one of the greatest military victories of the Jewish people in history (Read Esther 8). [Information taken from the Fellowship of Israel Related Ministries.]

CLASSES NINE and TEN
Isaiah 8

Isaiah 8:11–18
The Stone—A Stumbling Stone and Rock of Offense

The image of the "Stone," or in some cases the "Rock," is one of the great pictures of the Messiah and His dual work of redemption and of judgment. In this section, we have a call to trust in the Lord, who is the "Rock of salvation" to all who **believe** (Psalm 61:2; 62:2, 6, 7), but who is also *"a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense"* (v. 14) to those who will not believe in Him. Isaiah and his children stood as witnesses to both the promise of salvation, and the warning of judgment in this section.

8:11–13 A call to separation
Isaiah is called to be separate from the unbelieving masses (v. 11). The *"strong hand"* behind the message implies a sure sense of God's inspiration in the message. The essence of Isaiah's separation was that instead of focusing on the *"conspiracy"* of the two northern kings (Isa. 7:1; 8:4b), he was to place his trust and fear in *"The LORD of hosts"* (v. 13). In essence, the prophet is called to conquer natural fear by supernatural faith.

> *"This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God ..."* Ephesians 4:17–18a

8:14–15 The Stone of Stumbling
The very Lord who was *"a sanctuary"* to those who would believe became to the unbelieving *"a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense"* (v. 14, Matt. 21:44; Luke 2:34; Rom. 9:33; 1 Pet. 2:8). As a result of their rejection of faith in the Lord, the people would ultimately *"be snared and taken"* as captives (v. 15). The Northern Kingdom went into Assyrian captivity in 721 B.C., and the Southern Kingdom then fell to Babylon in 606 B.C.

> *"Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame ... The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone."* 1 Peter 2:6–7

8:16–18 The Word and the witnesses
The written testimony of Isaiah, having been rejected by King Ahaz (Isa. 7:1–12), and by the people at large (Isa. 8:11–12), is now sealed and kept among the disciples of Isaiah. Meanwhile, Isaiah declares that though God had hidden His face from unbelieving Judah, the prophet would *"wait"* and *"hope in Him"* (v. 17). Both these verbs are in the *Piel* intensive stem, indicating a continuous trust in the Lord (Psa. 40:1; Isa. 40:31). There is an interesting relationship between God waiting to bless us, and our waiting by faith on Him.

> *"Therefore the Lord will **wait**, that He may be gracious to you; and therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who **wait** for Him."* [emphasis added] Isaiah 30:18

*"But those who **wait** on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."* [emphasis added] Isaiah 40:31

In v. 18, Isaiah declares that he and his children *"are for signs and wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts."* In their names are found a witness and confirmation to the *"testimony* [document]" of v. 16. *Isaiah* means "God saves" or "Yahweh is salvation." *Shear-Jashub* means "A remnant shall return." And *Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz* means "Speed the spoil, hasten the prey." Put together, they mean that God's judgment is coming on His unbelieving people, but God is still willing and able to save, and because of this, many would return from the exile into Assyria and Babylon.

The Doctrine of the Stone

1. Throughout the Scriptures, the God is represented as a mighty rock or stone. This symbol speaks of immoveable strength and stability and, for believers, a place of security (Deut. 32:4; 2 Sam. 22:2–3, 32, 47; Psalm 18:2, 31, 46; 28:1; 31:3; 42:9; 61:2).
2. For the believer, the specific meaning of God as our rock is that He is the source of our security in salvation (Psalm 62:2, 6; 71:3; 78:5; 89:26; 95:1).
3. Since salvation is often pictured as "living water" (Isa. 55:1; John 4:14), the symbol of water coming from the rock is representative of Jesus Christ as the only source of eternal life (Exod. 17:17:6; Num. 20:8; Isa. 48:21; 1 Cor. 10:4).
4. But the Rock of our salvation is also the *"stone of stumbling and rock of offense"* to the unbelieving world (Isa. 8:14; Rom. 9:33; 1 Pet. 2:8).
5. Jesus Christ is the stone rejected by the builders of this world's religions, but He is, in fact, the very *"cornerstone"* of the house of faith (Isa. 28:16; Matt. 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; 1 Pet. 2:7)
6. Jesus Christ Himself is the "Rock" on which the Church—the household of all who believe—is built (Matt. 16:18).
7. As an eternal reward signifying one's conformity to Christ, Jesus promises to give a *"white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it"* (Rev. 2:17).
8. As the Judge of all the Earth, the Lord Jesus is pictured as *"the stone cut without hands,"* which will shatter all the kingdoms of this world (Dan. 2:34–35).

Isaiah 8:19–22
The Search—For Light in the Darkness

The Apostle John makes it clear that the vast majority of men prefer the darkness of unbelief to the light of salvation.

"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it." John 1:4–5

"And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." John 3:19

Rejecting the Light, Embracing the Darkness

Isaiah's call to separation also included a warning to those who practiced occult arts. When people were in doubt, instead of turning to the Lord and His Word, they would resort to *"mediums and wizards"* (v. 19). This was strictly forbidden in the Word of God (Lev. 19:31; 20:6; Deut. 18:11). These mediums supposedly called on the dead for greater wisdom (1 Sam. 28:1–19; Isa. 29:4; 65:3–5). Of course, with the exception of Saul's experience, where God intervened to actually bring up Samuel from Abraham's bosom or Paradise, the ones speaking to the mediums are actually demons.

The phrase *"who whisper and mutter"* is *"speech ... out of the dust"* (Isa. 29:4), coming from a demon called *Obh* in Hebrew (Lev. 20:27; 1 Sam. 28:7–8, called "a familiar spirit") or *Engastromuthos* in the Greek Septuagint. This is a demon that takes control of the vocal cords of the medium, so as to convey its message. In Acts 16:16, the Greek calls it a "spirit of a python."

The two great contrasting questions of v. 19 (*"Should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living?"*) emphasize the foolishness of a people who would rather seek answers from the dead than from their God. They have been given *"the law and ... the testimony"* (vv. 16, 20) directly from God by the prophet Isaiah. Yet, they depart from its truth *"because there is no light in them."* Again, true faith is drawn to the light of God's Word, but unbelief will always gravitate to spiritual darkness (Eph. 4:17–19; 6:12; Col. 1:13).

The picture that is painted in vv. 21–22 is grim indeed. Due to their persistent unbelief, they would face increasing famine. Still, instead of turning to God in humility, they would curse both the king and God Himself (see Rev. 16:10–11, 21). All around them, all they can see is *"trouble and darkness, gloom of anguish"* by which they will be driven into ever greater darkness. What a horrifying picture of the life of the unbeliever!

The Doctrine of Spiritual Darkness

1. In the Scriptures, darkness is indicative of that which is without God, or which is opposite from God.

> *"This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all."* 1 John 1:5

2. In the creation story (Gen. 1:1–5), God is said to create light, but He did not create darkness—it was already there, perhaps indicating the effects of Satan's rebellion.
3. In the story of the Exodus, one of the most severe judgments was a supernatural darkness over the land that was painful (Exod. 10:21–22; see also Rev. 16:10–11).
4. Those who reject the light of the Word of God are doomed to sink into ever greater spiritual darkness (Psalm 69:23; Eph. 4:17–19).
5. Both the kingdom and the power of Satan are found in spiritual darkness (Luke 22:53; Eph. 6:12; Col. 1:13).
6. Believers have been delivered out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light (Col. 1:12–13; 1 Thess 5:4–10).
7. The doom of every unbeliever is to be cast into outer darkness forever (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30).

"Rather, [I say] *that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons."*
1 Corinthians 10:20–21

"Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? ... Therefore, 'Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. [And] *I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.'"*
2 Corinthians 6:14–18

The ideas in the above passages come from Isaiah 52:11, Jeremiah 51:45, and Ezekiel 20:34, and are echoed in Revelation 18:4, showing that the principle is perennial and applies in every age.

The call to separation from the world is confusing to many believers. Paul clarifies it somewhat in 1 Corinthians 5:9–13. The command to separate from the *"sexually immoral ... covetous ... extortioners ... idolaters"* is explicitly directed toward those who are believers who do these things. If it was directed to the unbelieving world, Paul says *"then you would need to go out of the world"* (v. 10b).

Our separation from sinful believers is to be a rebuke to them and to lead them back to fellowship with the Lord (1 Cor. 5:3–5; 2 Thess. 3:6). Yet, we are not to treat a sinning believer as an enemy, but rather as a beloved brother (2 Thess. 3:14–5). The ultimate goal is always to restore them to faith, obedience, and fellowship (2 Cor. 2:5–8). This is an area in which churches consistently go wrong and destroy the faith and lives of many. The key to Christian separation is the filling ministry of the Spirit (Gal. 5:16; Eph. 5:18), obedience to God's Word (Eph. 4:1; 5:1–2, 8; 1 John 1:7), and love toward fellow believers (John 13:34–35; Rom. 12:9; 13:8–10; 1 John 3:16–17; 4:7).

CLASS 11
Isaiah 9

The Light Shining in the Darkness
Though the history of the world is very dark, there is a light that shines through it all—for those who will see. That light is the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 9:1–7
Jesus, the Light of the World

"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."
John 1:4–5

"I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."
John 8:12

9:1–2 <u>The dawning of the Light</u>
These verses are quoted in part in Matthew 4:15–16. This shows the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, in that Jesus, the Light of the world, first began His public ministry in *"Galilee of the Gentiles."* This area "was the first region in Israel to feel the lash of the Assyrian invaders" (*Constable's Notes* on Isaiah 9:1). It was on the highway from Egypt to the North and was inhabited by a mixed multitude of both Jews and Gentiles.

Surely, this seemingly insignificant fact shows that, from the beginning, it was the plan of God for the gospel message to go out *"for the Jew first and also for the Greek* [Gentile]*"* (Rom. 1:16b). We also learn that the severe judgments of God on a people or an individual will often lead to humility, repentance, faith, and ultimate blessing.

In v. 2, Isaiah speaks of future events as if they were already historical fact. This is the assurance of the prophet, the certainty of God's Word, and the hope of all who claim the promises of God. For it is God alone who *"gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did"* (Rom. 4:17). In prophecy, we see the creative power of God, who is able to call into being things that do not yet exist.

The present *"gloom"* (8:22; 9:1) of the Assyrian invasion would—in God's time—give way to the light of the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a valuable lesson to us, when we go through times of *"the valley of the shadow of death"* (Psalm 23:4), that as surely as we humble ourselves and submit to the will of God, we will soon see the sunrise of His mercy.

9:3–5 <u>The victory of the Light</u>
What God accomplishes in a nation over centuries, He is able to do in our lives in a matter of years. These verses describe the joy that follows God's disciplinary work. The repetition of the words *"joy ... rejoice"* (v. 3) anticipate the liberation of those once held captive. This joyous celebration is compared to the feasting at harvest time, or the dividing of spoils after a great victory.

Three figures of oppression, *"the yoke ... the staff ... the rod"* (v. 4), have been removed. The phrase, *"as in the day of Midian"* is a reference to the great victory of Gideon and his few followers (Judges 7) over the vast hordes of the Midianites. Thus, the Savior who was born into poverty and lived in obscurity would conquer all the kingdoms of the world. In the end, the garments of the enemy (sandals and clothing) would be but "fuel for the fire."

To get a full sense of the victory of this passage, it is helpful to read Lamentations 3:16–26. Here, the prophet Jeremiah surveys the destruction of Jerusalem (586 B.C.) and gives hope to those who were taken captive to Babylon. It is often in nations and in our lives that the greatest darkness, when met with humility and faith, gives way to the times of greatest blessing and joy!

9:6–7 <u>The identity of the Light</u>
All of the hope and expectation of the previous verses leads to one great truth: All spiritual hope of deliverance, victory, and rejoicing, depends on the coming of the Son of God—the Lord Jesus Christ—into the world. In these two verses, the prophet gives us three great marks of the Messiah:

1. <u>He is the "Only Begotten" of the Father</u>.
   The "Child born" refers to His humanity via the virgin birth. The "Son given" speaks of His deity and eternal nature. Theologically, this is what we call the "hypostatic union" of Jesus Christ—of one who is fully God and fully man in one person. This is the essence of what *"only begotten"* (see John 3:16) means; in other words, "uniquely born."

2. <u>He alone in all of history is worthy to rule the world</u>.
   The titles given to Him in four couplets are what were known in the ancient world as "throne names." They were to be descriptive not only of the king but of his rule:
   a. *"Wonderful Counselor"* speaks of His wisdom to guide men and nations;
   b. *"Mighty God"* suggests His unparalleled military might ;
   c. *"Everlasting Father"* evokes His eternal care of His people, and
   d. *"Prince of Peace"* as the only One who can bring peace between man and God, and between man and man.

3. <u>His government will bless the world with peace and justice</u>.
   Here, the government of the Messiah is described in three ways:
   a. First, it will be an expanding rule of peace that will never end.
   b. Second, it will be upon the throne of David, a fulfillment of 2 Samuel 7:12–14a.
   c. Third, it will be a rule of perfect righteousness and justice (Psalm 89:14; 97:2).

We who are believers today have so much more revelation of that kingdom, and such a unique part to play within it. How this should challenge our lives to be more faithful!

"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and fear. For our God is a consuming fire."
Hebrews 12:28–29

<u>CLASS 12</u>
Isaiah 9:8–10:4

<u>Four Reasons for God's Wrath on Israel</u>
It is worth noticing that the book of Isaiah is made up of dire warnings of coming judgment on Israel and Judah, sprinkled with Messianic prophecies and appeals to turn back to the Lord in repentance and faith. We will see this pattern in the following four warnings. These warnings come in four stanzas or strophes, each ending with a warning and an appeal.

Isaiah 9:8–12
For Arrogant Rejection of Truth

The *"word"* or message sent to Israel (v. 8) was a call to repent, followed by warnings of impending judgment (Chapters 1–8). This is the *"testimony"* mentioned in 8:16 and 20. It was a message proclaimed to *"all the people"* (v. 9).

Yet, they responded to it *"in pride and arrogance of heart"* (v. 9b). Though much of their country had already been devastated, in their arrogance they declared *"we will rebuild ... we will replace"* with even better materials (v. 10). The result is that God will intensify the forces against them (vv. 11–12).

Verse 12 ends with both a warning of increased judgment, and an appeal to return in repentance. *"His anger is not turned away"* indicates continuing judgment. *"But His hand is stretched out still"* is the appeal to turn back to the Lord. The essence of this is found in Isaiah 65:2,

"I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people,
who walk in a way that is not good, according to their thoughts."

I can never read this verse without thinking how it applies to the Lord Jesus on the cross, with His arms stretched out as He died, praying for the forgiveness of those who crucified Him. The word *"anger"* in vv. 12 and 17 is *Aph*, and means "to snort in rage, to scoff at those who challenge." When God's anger is provoked (Heb. 3:7–15), it ultimately brings forth His *"wrath"* (v. 19).

Doctrine of Divine Discipline Reviewed/Summarized

1. In Leviticus 26, Moses outlined five cycles of increasing national discipline that Israel would suffer if they violated the covenant they made with God at Sinai. In Leviticus 26:1–13, he speaks of the blessings they will enjoy, *"If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments."* Then, Moses introduces each increasing phase of discipline with the phrases, *"But if you do not obey Me,"* and *"If you walk contrary to Me"* (vv. 14, 21). It is interesting that the Book of Hebrews has five warning sections, much like Leviticus 26.
2. In Romans 1:18–32, Paul applies this same principle to all nations, showing that all of God's judgments come for man's arrogant rebellion against known truth (vv. 18–23). Then, as spiritual wickedness increases, God gives men over (vv. 24, 26, 28) to His judgment by allowing them to reap what they have sown (Gal. 6:7–8). The implication is that sin brings forth its own judgment (James 1:13–15).
3. The law of blessing for obedience and cursing for rebellion is at work in us as well (Heb. 6:7–8). The fruitful Christian life will be blessed (John 15:1–10; Heb. 6:7), but the carnal Christian (1 Cor. 3:1–4; Heb. 6:8) can expect only being *"cursed,"* which means again reaping what has been sown.
4. In Hebrews 12:3–11, we see that God's discipline is motivated by His love, with the goal of delivering us from the destructive and degenerative effects of sin. When we continue in sin, discipline increases ("rebuke ... chastening ... scourging"), but when we repent and recover spiritually, it yields *"the peaceable fruit of righteousness"* in those who respond in faith and obedience.

5. In this present section of Isaiah, we see that the beginning of all spiritual decline is arrogance against the known truth. It is an axiom of the Scriptures that *"God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble"* (Prov. 3:34; James 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5).

Isaiah 9:13–17
For Failure to Repent Under Discipline

The intent of God's discipline is made clear in v. 13, to *"turn* [back] *to Him"* who administers the judgment. This is what repentance is all about. In this section, God lays much of the blame for the condition of the nation at the feet of *"the elder ... the prophet ... the leaders of this people"* (vv. 14–16). Corruption in a nation always begins at the top! When people see their leaders lying, stealing, disobeying the very laws they are sworn to uphold, the people will, in time, do the same. In the end, *"everyone is a hypocrite and an evildoer, and every mouth speaks folly"* (v. 17). In verse 18, the warning and the appeal is repeated.

An Example from Scripture and History

1. The book of Jonah is an example of both rebellion against God, and repentance in the face of warnings of judgment to come.
2. Amazingly, Jonah plays the role of the rebellious prophet, who is finally brought to repentance and obedience by successive waves of discipline.
3. The people of Nineveh are the example of how faith and repentance bring deliverance from impending judgment. David declared, *"A broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise"* (Psalm 51:17).
4. By the end of the book, we see the Ninevites under God's blessing, while Jonah, the rebellious prophet, is still angry, unrepentant, and far from fellowship and peace with God.
5. The amazing thing is that Jonah went to Nineveh around 862 B.C. Their repentance bought 120 years for Israel and Judah to follow their example. Though the most violent and warlike nation of the ancient world, their lust for overthrowing other nations was restrained by their repentance. Yet, from the time of Jonah down to the time of Isaiah, Israel as a whole only continued to decline spiritually.

Isaiah 9:18–21
For Increasing Insatiable Selfishness

When Isaiah declares that *"wickedness burns as the fire,"* he is not just using poetic imagery. He is stating a deep, spiritual truth. Just as fire devours everything that can burn, so evil in the hearts of men will always spread throughout the life and into the lives of others. It burns up "*the briers and thorns ... the thickets of the forest"* (v. 18).

This is the very imagery used by James (James 3:5–6) and Paul (Heb. 6:7–8) When any person or nation gives in to the downward cycle (Eph. 4:17–19) of wickedness (the word implies something twisted out of shape), the result is a total preoccupation with self. Concern and compassion for others dies, and self-indulgence prevails. Thus, *"No man shall spare his brother"* (v. 19b), and life becomes a dogfight for the scraps of this world.

"Manasseh ... Ephraim ... Judah," though fellow tribes among God's people, fight and devour one another. Again, Paul warns of this very behavior among members of Christ's Body (Gal. 5:15; 1 Cor. 3:3; 5:7–11).

The word *"wrath"* in v. 19 is an intensification of the *"anger"* of God mentioned in vv. 12, 17. Here, the word is *Ebvah*, and means "an outburst of rage, violent opposition." We must always remember that God hates sin because of what it does to the sinner and to others. It is destructive to all spiritual good and blessing. This is why when people give in to perpetual sinning, it turns them against everyone else, because we become our own idol, and there is no room for anyone else. All this is played out before our eyes in rampant divorce, broken families, hateful neighbors, and criminal activity. Just look at the hate-filled and self-serving political leaders, and you see vv. 18–21 being lived out in our day.

And yet, the grace of God warns and appeals to the people of Isaiah's day, and to ours, *"For all this His anger is not turned away, But His hand is outstretched still"* (v. 21b). God in grace offers His mercy, peace, and blessing to those who will turn to Him in faith.

Isaiah 10:1–4
For Corrupt Leaders Oppressing the Poor

The final warning begins with the word *"woe."* This was a cry of impending calamity. Remember that in Isaiah 5:8–23, the prophet pronounced seven "woes" on the nation.

These were again given by Jesus, in Matthew 23:13–29, the last warning to Israel before the destruction of the City of Jerusalem, and the dissolution of the nation between 70–73 A.D.

In this section, we see the corruption of the legislators and judges of the nation. They passed laws designed to plunder what little wealth the people had left. Whereas God promised special blessings for those who cared for widows, orphans, and the poor, there were also cursings on those who took advantage of them (Exod. 22:22; Deut. 27:19; Job 29:12; Psalm 82:3; Prov. 31:8–9; Zech. 7:10; 1 Tim. 5:3–16; James 1:27). How amazing is it that in Jesus' first public message, He quoted Isaiah and spoke of His mission to the most needy and vulnerable of this world.

> *"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."* Isaiah 61:1–2a

We cannot help but think of our own "leaders" who, within a few short years of entering office, are worth many millions of dollars, while their "constituents" get poorer and poorer. While the leaders make millions by insider trading, the same activities by the civilians bring criminal prosecution. While the public was mandated to dangerous vaccines and forbidden even family gatherings, our politicians were throwing huge parties, using tax-payer funds. This corruption at the top has resulted in two dangerous national trends: the people no longer respect their leaders, and worse yet, are imitating their criminality. Surely, America will soon reap what we have sown as a nation!

The final phase of judgment is national enslavement (vv. 3–4). Israel (the Northern Kingdom) was overthrown by Assyria in 721 B.C. Judah (the Southern Kingdom) was overthrown by Babylon between 606 and 586 B.C. God is truly longsuffering and merciful, but there is a limit to His patience. When the vintage of evil becomes ripe, He will give the command, and the judgment will fall!

Each and every one of us, as the children of God, can make a difference in history. We ought to first of all search our own lives and weed out all that is condemned in Scripture and contrary to the revealed will of God. We ought to be praying for our nation as never before, as judgment draws near. We have the answer, in the Gospel Message of forgiveness and salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. We have the Word of God, which we need to be proclaiming to family, friends, and neighbors.

Like Isaiah, and all the prophets, we need to declare the warning of judgment and hold out the offer of mercy and forgiveness. Our world is filled with broken people who still need to hear the Gospel of grace, and the promise of peace with God (Rom. 5:1–5).

> *"We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For He says, 'In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you.' Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."* 2 Corinthians 6:1–2

CLASS 13
Isaiah 10:5–34

The King of Assyria Judged; The Remnant of Israel Delivered
In this prophetic section, we see once again the principle of the dual application and fulfillment of prophecy. These prophecies of Assyria's judgment and of Israel's deliverance have a partial fulfillment in the Old Testament historical record, but an ultimate fulfillment in the coming Tribulation Period. These prophecies also point to the names Isaiah gave to his sons (Isa. 7:3; 8:1–3).

We first met the *"king of Assyria"* in Isaiah 7:17 and 20. As Zane Hodges points out in his book, *The Power to Make War*, this title is often used in the Old Testament as a prophetic term for the Antichrist in end-time prophecies. In the near fulfillment of our present passage, we will see the destruction of the Assyrian army and the deliverance of Israel in Isaiah 37:21–38. This is the near fulfilment. However, the far fulfillment of this present section will come in the closing moments of the Tribulation Period. Once again, we must remember that **Prophecy proves inspiration, and history proves prophecy.**

Isaiah 10:5–19
Judgment on the King of Assyria (A Tale of Two Sons)

In this section, we will see the fulfillment of the prophetic meaning of the name *Maher-Shalal-Hashbaz* ("Speed the spoil; Hasten the prey," Isa. 8:1–4). Take note of the main events here: The *"king of Assyria"* is judged (vv. 5–19), the remnant of Israel will be delivered (vv. 20–30), and the Messiah will be revealed (10:33–Chapter 11).

10:5–11 Assyria: The rod in the hand of God

The *"Woe"* that begins this section indicates the divine judgment that is coming. It will be final and complete. In this section, Assyria is pictured as a rod of discipline in the hand of the Lord. But the instrument boasts itself against the hand that wields it.

God sent Assyria against His people for their persistent sinfulness, *"To seize the spoil, to take the prey."* The prophetic name of *Maher-Shalal-Hashbaz* would be fulfilled in this action. Yet, God is the Sovereign Lord over all nations and demands submission from them all. The arrogance of Assyria would in the end bring them under the judgment of God.

It is of great interest to see in v. 11 that the *"idols"* of Jerusalem are mentioned. Ever since Israel went out of Egypt, they had persistently fallen to idol worship. Remember the incident of the golden calf (Exodus 32)? They practiced idolatry of one kind or another from that time forward (Amos 5:25–26; Acts 7:42–43). It was for all of these things that they were judged so harshly.

10:12–19 Assyria: Judged by the Lord of Hosts

The arrogance of the king of Assyria will result in him being judged by God. Under His sovereign control, God will use those who are more evil than His people to judge His own people (Habakkuk Chapter 1). Yet, in the end, He will also judge those He uses as the instruments of His discipline.

The Arrogance of Human Viewpoint (vv. 12–14)

Human viewpoint always exalts man at the expense of honoring God. Human viewpoint makes man the center of the universe. It is the foundation of humanistic philosophy, and as our text reveals, it is based on arrogance.

Verse 12: The coming judgment

Three vital facts about this coming judgment are given in this verse. First, the **when:** *"When the Lord has performed all His work."* This will be God's final act of purifying and refining Israel and judging all her enemies.

Second, the **where:** The future judgment will be *"on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem."* As this has not yet occurred, we know that this is yet future and puts us in a Second Coming scenario.

Third, the **what:** *"I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his haughty looks."* Again, Zane Hodges, in his book *The Power to Make War*, has pointed out that the title "the Assyrian" is often used in the Old Testament as a title for the Antichrist (see Isa. 10:12, 24; 14:25; Mic. 5:3–6). This passage is referring to the final victory over "the Assyrian," when the Messiah will restore the remnant of Israel (vv. 20–27).

Verses 13–14: The boast of the king of Assyria

Arrogance reeks from this passage. It reminds me of sports figures who boast of their greatness. Some MMA fighter wins a bout and acts like no one greater has ever come along. But as we watch, it is only a matter of time before they are soundly defeated, and then they fade from the scene.

His boasts are similar to those of the devil in Isaiah 14:13–14. This should not be surprising since arrogance (pride) is the sin of the devil (1 Tim. 3:6). His whole focus is what "I" have done. It is no wonder that the center of SIN is I!

Verses 15–19: The antithesis from divine viewpoint
The boasting of the king of Assyria is the equivalent of an ax, a saw, a rod, or a staff boasting against the hand that wields it. His arrogance will kindle a fire that will destroy him. This is exactly what Satan did by revolting against God (Matt. 25:41; Mark 3:29; Rev. 14:11).

Inscriptions from this time identify *Tiglath-Pileser* as "beloved of the gods, the light of his people and shepherd of mankind" (*Bible Background Commentary*), yet *"The Lord of hosts,"* who is *"the Light of Israel"* (see also John 8:12), and *"his Holy One"* (Mark 1:23–24) would be the *"fire"* that would destroy him (vv. 16–17). Like a forest fire, or a wasting disease, God would bring him down (vv. 18–19). All of the titles given to God in this section are Messianic titles for Jesus Christ!

The Power of Humility

1. Jesus declared that humility, or "poverty of spirit," is the key and the beginning of all blessing from God (Matt. 5:3). The word *"poor"* here speaks of the deepest form of need.
2. It is an axiom of Scripture that *"God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble"* (Prov. 3:34; 1 Pet. 5:5).
3. Scripture assures us that when the proud humble themselves, God will "in due time lift them up" (James 4:10; 1 Pet. 5:6).
4. God often uses testing and trials to teach His children humility (Deut. 8:2–3, 16; James 1:2–12; 1 Pet. 1:6–9; 3:14–17).
5. One of the great promises of Jesus to His followers is that *"Whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven"* (Matt. 18:4; see also Matt. 23:12).
6. The essence of the character and the mind of Christ is that of humility (Matt. 11:29; Phil. 2:5–9).

Isaiah 10:20–34,
Deliverance of the Remnant of Israel

In the following verses, we have a vivid step-by-step description of the Battle of Armageddon. This section also reveals to us the fulfillment of the name of Isaiah's first son, *Shear-Jashub* ("a remnant shall return," Isa. 7:3). This promise takes us ultimately to the end of the Tribulation Period, when the surviving and believing remnant (one third of the nation) will be delivered by the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

10:20–27 Israel: The remnant will return

"For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the

fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them [i.e., New Covenant, Jer. 31:31–34; Ezek. 36:22–29] *when I take away their sins."* Romans 11:25–27

Verses 20–23 <u>The return of the remnant</u>
The phrase *"in that day"* is commonly used in the Old Testament to refer to "the Day of the Lord." The remnant of Israel will equal one-third of the nation (Zech. 13:8), who will be refined through the Tribulation (Mal. 3:2–3). That the *"remnant will return"* is the fulfillment of the name *Shear-Jashub*, Isaiah's first son (Isa. 7:3).

The *"return"* spoken of here implies a spiritual repentance, and a turning back to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in faith. This is what Paul calls *"a remnant according to the election of grace"* (Rom. 11:5).

10:24–33 <u>The deliverance of Israel by the Messiah</u>
It is worth adding here a quote from J. Vernon McGee, in His *Through the Bible* commentary.

"This is a remarkable section of prophecy. It gives certain geographical locations, all of them north of Jerusalem, and it shows the route taken by Assyria and of the future invader from the north, who I think will be Russia. The invader comes from the land of Magog (see Ezek. 38–39) ... 'Migron' ... is the pass where Jonathan got a victory over the Philistines (1 Sam. 14). I understand that General Allenby secured a victory over Turkey in the same place ... 'Anathoth' was ... the home of the prophet Jeremiah."

10:28–34 <u>Israel: Delivered by the "Mighty One"</u>
This deliverance will not take place until the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The last place mentioned is *"Nob,"* on the very north of the city of Jerusalem, identified today as Mount Scopus. The prophet shows the advancing forces just on the verge of taking the city, when *"The Lord of hosts ... the Mighty One"* comes to the rescue of the remnant of Israel. That *"Mighty One"* is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. If you want to see just how "mighty" He is, read Isaiah 37:36–38. This slaughter took place in 701 B.C. and shattered the forces of Assyria, from which they never fully recovered.

<u>Conclusion</u>

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."
Isaiah 41:10

All of us fight many battles in life. There are times when it seems that dark clouds hide the sun, and the condition of our life is cold and dark. But if we learn to lay hold of verses like the one above and realize that it was written not only for the people of Isaiah's day, but also for us, if we claim it in faith, the light of God's grace and faithfulness will shine through. We can be assured that what He would do for those who were of national Israel, He will much more do for we who

are "in Christ." Whatever your burdens, trials, temptations, failures may be in the present moment, claim the truth of the above promise, and turn to God in confession of your doubts and fears, rise up by the power of His Spirit within you, and turn to Him in faith and surrender. You will find, as always, that God honors His Word, that He will never forsake you (Heb. 13:5), and that He is faithful to keep His promises to us (2 Cor. 1:20). When we let Him fight our battles we can be assured of victory (Rom. 8:37)!

CLASS 14
Isaiah 11–12

With this study, we bring to a close the first major section of the book of Isaiah: **I. THE PROBLEM OF SIN AND GOD'S PLAN OF REDEMPTION**. Our next section (Chapters 13–35) will deal with the sovereignty of God and His judgment of the nations.

Isaiah Chapter 11—The Rod of Jesse and the Remnant of Israel
Following the prophecy of God's judgment on rebellious Israel (Isa. 9:8–10:4) and arrogant Assyria (10:5–34), we now have the revelation of the Messiah (11:1–10) and the regathering of Israel (11:11–16). If we simply take these events in the order presented, we have *"the time of Jacob's trouble"* (Jer. 30:7), or the Tribulation, ending with the judgment of Assyria/Babylon (Revelation 17 and 18), followed by the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (Revelation 19), and the regathering and restoration of believing Israel into the Millennial Kingdom (Matt. 24:29–31; Rev. 20:1-6).

Isaiah 11:1–10
The Rod, That Is Also the Root

This is a fascinating prophecy that proclaims both the humanity and the deity of the Messiah—the Lord Jesus Christ. He both comes from the lineage of Jesse and is also the author of that lineage. Four great truths about the Messiah are presented here.

11:1–2 Messiah, the God-Man
Beginning in Isaiah 7:14, we have seen a number of Messianic prophecies, which are closed out here for a time by Chapter 12. He is *"Immanuel"* (7:14), the "Child born" and the "Son given" (9:6) and here, the *"Branch"* of Jesse.

The term "rod" refers to the shepherd's club (Psalm 23:4b), which was both an instrument of defense and of discipline (2 Sam. 7:14; Job 9:34; Psalm 2:9; 89:32; Prov. 10:13; 22:15; 23:13; Isa. 11:4; 14:29; Ezek. 20:37; Rev. 2:27; 12:5; 19:15).

"Branch" is from *netzer,* and is a special prophetic designation for the Messiah in Isaiah 4:2, Jeremiah 23:5, 33:15, Zechariah 3:8, and 6:12. The root of Nazareth is also *netzer*, which gives rise to Matthew's assertion in Matthew 2:23 that the prophets (plural) spoke of Messiah as being a *"Nazarene."*

In stating that this branch comes from Jesse, and not David, it speaks of Jesus' humble origins, with His royalty not yet recognized. Yet, His life would be dominated by the Spirit of God. The

seven designations here most likely referred to in Revelation 1:4, 3:1, 4:5, and 5:6, as the *"seven Spirits of God."*

The one designation, *"The Spirit of the LORD,"* followed by three couplets, brings to mind the Menorah, the lampstand of one stem, with three branches on each side. The image of light, or of divine illumination, is implied in these qualities (John 8:12).

11:3–5 His righteous reign

"His delight" is the personification of Psalm 37:4, *"Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart."*

His righteous judgment will bring both doom to the wicked and blessing to the meek. The *"belt"* speaks of that which holds all else in place, and this will be His *"righteousness ... and faithfulness,"* chief qualities of God Himself (Psalm 40:10; 89:14; 97:2; 119:75, 142, 144; Isa. 5:16; 65:16; Zech. 8:8; Rev. 19:11). The meek and the humble will be blessed (Matt. 5:3, 5), while the unbelieving *"wicked"* will be judged. True humility will always turn to faith (James 4:10; 1 Pet. 5:5), while the true essence of wickedness is the spirit of unbelief (Rev. 21:8; John 3:18–19).

11:6–9 His transformation of creation

In the coming Millennial Kingdom, there will be a transformation in the whole realm of nature. Here, the animals that are hunters, and the prey animals, will reside together in perfect peace. Three references are made to children, who will have no fear of any of these creatures. This is the condition for which Paul says *"the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God ... for we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together* [with us] *until now."* (Rom. 8:19, 22).

The reason for this transformation is given in v. 9, *"For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord."* This can only show that our present state in this world, with all the violence and suffering and death, is due to the lack of knowing Jesus Christ. The Earth will return to her initial condition of paradise (Gen. 1:28– 30; 1 Cor. 15:25–28; Heb. 2:5–9).

11:10 His gathering of the Gentiles

The phrase *"in that day"* (vv. 10–11) speaks of "the day of the Lord," which includes the time preceding, and the time following, the return of Jesus Christ (i.e. Tribulation and Millennium). It is the unique time in history when God takes direct control of events on the Earth and brings about His final plan for mankind.

The *"Rod ... of Jesse"* in v. 1 is here called *"a Root of Jesse."* He is both the source, and the offspring, of the Davidic house. This could be true only of the God-Man. He, the Lord Jesus Christ, will be the banner to which the Gentiles will gather.

Doctrine of the Hypostatic Union

1. This theological term refers to the dual nature of Jesus Christ, being undiminished deity and perfect humanity, united together forever by means of the virgin birth.

2. The Apostle Paul presents the case for this doctrine in Philippians 2:5–9. In v. 6, the phrase *"being in the form of God"* refers to His eternal existence within the Godhead: Father, Son, and Spirit.
3. By means of the virgin conception and birth, Jesus was *"taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men"* (v. 7).
4. It is important to note that in taking the form of men, Jesus did not lose the form of God. The word *"form"* here is *morphe*, and according to *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, *morphe* is therefore properly the nature or essence, not in the abstract, but as actually subsisting in the individual, and retained as long as the individual itself exists ... Thus, in the passage before us, *morphe Theou* is the divine nature actually and inseparably subsisting in the Person of Christ.
5. This passage also makes clear that Jesus' incarnation demanded an attitude and an action on His part. In order to fulfill His earthly mission as a true man, Christ *"did not consider it robbery to be equal with God"* (v. 6). The word *"robbery"* is *harpagmon* and means "a prize to cling to." The point is that though He was co-equal with the Father and the Spirit, He was willing to step down into the world of men—as a man.
6. Though He never at any time ceased to be God, yet He *"humbled Himself,"* or "emptied Himself," the verb *kenoo* meaning to voluntarily relinquish the exercise of His divine powers, so as to experience life in the human realm as a true man.
7. Thus, when Jesus speaks in the Gospels, He sometimes speaks from the perspective of God (John 8:58, *"Before Abraham was, I Am."*), sometimes as a man (Matt. 24:36, *"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of he*aven, *but My Father only"* – KJV; some versions have "nor the Son"), and sometimes as the God-Man (John 10:30, *"I and My Father are one."*).

Isaiah 11:11–16
The Final Regathering of Israel

The first regathering was after the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. This took place under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. This *"second time"* (v. 11) will be the final time, as believing Israel will be gathered into the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Many commentators have considered the return of Jews to the modern state of Israel as this second gathering. It cannot be, as Isaiah explains, for this gathering will come when Messiah returns and establishes His kingdom on Earth. The key phrase is *"in that day"* (vv. 10–11), which is an Old Testament reference to *"the day of the Lord,"* including the Tribulation Period and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

11:11–12 The remnant regathered
Not only Israel but believing Gentiles as well! Read Matthew 24:14 (Tribulation time frame), Israel (v. 31), and Sheep and Goats (vv. 31–46) Gentile nations who help Israel, and those who ignore their plight.

Three End-Time Judgments
1. The Bema/Judgment Seat of Christ (Rom. 14:12; 1 Cor. 3:11–15; 2 Cor. 5:10–11)—Church Age believers only (in Heaven following the Rapture).

2. The Sheep and Goat nations (Matt. 25:31–46)—Unbelieving nations that survive the Tribulation, who either helped/aided Israel, or ignored their plight.
3. The Great White Throne Judgement (Rev. 20:11–15)—All unbelievers of all time.

11:13–14 A united Israel rules their enemies

The divided kingdom (North = Israel, South = Judah) will be reunited, all root causes of their division will be removed, specifically the envy of the North toward the South. The nations of Edom, Moab, and Ammon have been enemies of Israel throughout history, even to this day!

Envy—the Root of All Evil

1. The Philistines envied Isaac because of God's blessing on him and stopped up all the wells that Abraham had dug (Gen. 26:12–16).
2. Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery because of envy (Acts 7:9; Genesis 37).
3. Envy ultimately leads to murder (Job 5:2).
4. Envy is a rottenness of the soul that permeates the body (Prov. 14:30).
5. Wrath is cruel, but who can stand before envy? (It hides behind false goodwill, then destroys with sudden malice) (Prov. 27:4)
6. The Pharisees and priests delivered Jesus to be crucified because of their envy of Him (Matt. 27:18; Mark 15:10).
7. The Jewish leaders hated and resisted Paul's ministry because of envy (Acts 13:45; 17:5).
8. Envy is part of a "sin-cluster" that leads to hating and resisting God (Rom. 1:29–32).
9. Many preachers are motivated by their envy of others who are successful (Phil. 1:15).
10. Envy among believers always causes division and strife. Envy is promoted and enabled by demonic powers (Titus 3:3; 1 Cor. 3:3; James 3:14–16).

11:15–16 The highway of the Second Exodus

In the last days of the Tribulation, the Lord will dry up both the Euphrates River and the Red Sea, to make a highway for the remnant to return out of Assyria and Egypt, just as He did when He brought Israel out of Egypt (Exodus 14; Heb. 11:29).

Isaiah Chapter 12—The Psalm of Salvation: Israel's New Song

Could this be the *"new song"* of the 144,000 in Revelation 14:3? Probably not, as we are told, *"No one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth"* (Rev. 14:3). However, this song will surely be sung in the Millennial Kingdom by redeemed Israel!

Isaiah 12:1–3
The Salvation of Yahweh

Again, *"in that day"* is a reference to the "Day of the Lord" (Tribulation and Second Coming, note Isa. 2:20; 3:18; 4:1; 7:18, 20–21, 23). Israel will sing to the Lord, as they did after the Red Sea crossing (Exodus 15), as He is the Author of their salvation (Psalm 83:18; 118:14). In Revelation 14:3, the 144,000 will sing a new song that no one but they will know.

The figure of *"water"* as a symbol of salvation is found throughout the Bible (Exod. 15:22–27; 17:1–7; Num. 20:7–13; Isa. 55:1; John 4:10–14; 7:37–39; 1 Cor. 10:4). The idea is a never-ending supply of refreshment and life from the source of our eternal salvation. This is what Jesus meant when He said, *"Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life"* (John 4:14, see also John 7:37–39).

One evidence of that water having been received is spiritual joy (Gal. 5:22–23).

Isaiah 12:4–6
The Holy One of Israel

In that great day of Israel's deliverance, they will not only Praise the Lord, but they will also *"Declare His* [mighty] *deeds among the* [Gentiles]." Israel will become the missionary nation they were called to be from the first. The theme of their song will be, *"Great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst"* (v. 6). This is a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, who will be dwelling in their midst (Jer. 31:31–34; Ezek. 36:24–28; 37:24–28).

Conclusion

God will one day fulfill all His promises to Israel. Do not be deceived by the error of Replacement Theology, that teaches that the Church has replaced Israel in God's plan. Both Jesus (Matthew 24–25) and Paul (Romans 10–11) make it clear that this is not true.

To the contrary, however great is God's plan to redeem and restore Israel, His plan for the Church is far greater. We alone in Scripture are said to be "in Christ," and to share His throne (Eph. 2:4–6), and to share in His priesthood after the Order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4; Heb. 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:17; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9). This is why in Hebrews 11:40 Paul says:

> *"God having provided something better for us* [Church-Age believers], *that they* [Old Testament believers] *should not be made perfect apart from us."*

Paul reveals the meaning of this in Romans 10–11, by showing that the Church will provoke Israel to jealousy, and by being "grafted in" to the root of Israel (the Lord Jesus Christ) bringing life back to the tree.

We should never forget that one of our chief functions as priests is intercession, and we are to play a significant role in the awakening of Israel by our witness (Rom. 10:9–13, 14–15; 11:11–28), and by our prayers for them (Rom. 10:1). We have a vital part to play in the plan of God for this present hour. *"Therefore, let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober"* (1 Thess. 5:6).

II. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD AND HIS JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS (CHAPTERS 13–35)

This new section in our study is fascinating in that it begins in the time of Isaiah (c. 740 B.C.) and ends in the Millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a sweeping prophetic overview of the history of Israel and her ancient enemies. However, God does not spare sinful Israel, and she will be fully judged, until repentance and faith bring her once again under the shelter of the Most High God.

In Chapters 13–14, we begin with God's judgment on Babylon and her king. Ultimately, this will include Antichrist and his enabler, the devil. For the sake of simplicity, we will cover the next large section in three parts; 1) Chapters 15–23: God's judgment on Gentile nations, 2) Chapters 24–27: A Psalm of praise, and 3) Chapters 28–35: Judgment on Israel and deliverance on those who believe.

CLASS 15
Isaiah 13:1–14:27

The Doom of Babylon and the Fall of Lucifer
It is no accident that these two topics are linked closely together. As we will find by comparing several related prophecies, the devil is the instigator behind the scenes in much of what happens in world events.

Isaiah 13:1–22
The Prophecy of Babylon's Doom

We need to remember that most of the Old Testament prophecies have both a near and a far fulfillment. This will certainly be true for the judgment of Babylon.

13:1–5 This is a judgment that involves spiritual forces.
"My sanctified ones…My mighty ones" (v. 3)—this will be the army of *"The LORD of Hosts"* (v. 4).

13:6–10 The final judgment will occur in the day of the Lord.
The conditions described in v. 10 are repeated by Jesus (Matt. 24:29–31) as preceding the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Another repeated theme is that of the world in birth-pangs (Isa. 26:17–18; Mic. 5:3; Matt. 24:8; Rev. 12:1–5).

13:11–16 The final judgment of Babylon will involve the whole world.
This warning is repeated in Isaiah 26:20–21.

13:17–22 When God's judgment is complete, Babylon will never again be inhabited.
The Medes (Medo-Persia) under Cyrus conquered Babylon in 539 B.C. (Daniel 5). This was the "near" but not the final destruction foretold here. The *"owls* "and *"wild goats"* in v. 21 are actually references to demonic beings. When v. 19 describes Babylon as *"the glory of kingdoms,"* it was considered one of the wonders of the ancient world, with its hanging gardens, massive walls and towers, etc.

The Mysterious History of Babylon

1. Babylon was founded by Nimrod (Gen. 10:8–10) and was the site of the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1–4) and was founded as the center of defiance against God.
2. Nimrod and his wife Semiramus (identified by early church historian Eusebius) started a religion around their son, whom they claimed was virgin born, and was also raised from the dead. This began the worship of Tammuz (Ezek. 8:14). The symbol of the religion was the letter "T," which in the Chaldea looked like a cross. (*The Two Babylons*, Alexander Hislop, 1858).
3. To our knowledge, Babylon had only one believing king, Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4).
4. The reasons for her judgment were her hatred of Israel (Jer. 50:11–13, 17–20, 33–34), and her hatred of the Lord (Jer. 50:29–32; 51:24, 34– 35). When ultimately destroyed, she will never be rebuilt, like Sodom and Gomorrah (Isa. 13:19–20; Jer. 50:40; 51:26).
5. Babylon is described as a golden cup in the Lord's hand, which made the nations drunk (Jer. 51:7; Rev.17:4).
6. Babylon was still inhabited in the first century (1 Pet. 5:13).
7. Her final form or identity is as the "Mother of harlots" (Rev. 17:5).
8. Her final annihilation is seen in Revelation 18, and she will become the dwelling place of demons (v. 21, *"owls ... wild goats"* [see notes on vv. 17–22].

Isaiah 14:1–27
Israel's Deliverance and the Devil's Doom

14:1–8 God's mercy on Israel, and their taunt against Babylon.
The *"king of Babylon"* in v. 4 is a man, but behind him is the power of Lucifer (vv. 12–15).

14:9–21 The eternal doom of the king of Babylon.
The parallel passage to this is Ezekiel 28:12–19, which is also addressed to a man, *"the king of Tyre,"* but who is then spoken of a *"the anointed cherub."* What is said of this cherub could never be said of any human being.

> **Note:** Babylon was the center of false religion, and Tyre was the commercial/economic center. In Revelation 17 we see the end-time religious Babylon, and in Revelation 18, the end-time economic Babylon.

14:24–27 The related judgment of the Assyrian.
The near fulfillment of this is recorded in Isaiah 37:36–37, when the *"angel of the Lord"* slew 185,000 Assyrians. For another reference to *"the Assyrian"* see Micah 5:5–6. This designation is used of the Antichrist, as described by Zane Hodges in his book *The Power to Make War*.

The Five Falls of Satan:

1. From his original exalted position (Isa.14:12–15; Ezek. 28:12–19),
2. His fall as the "strong man of the house" (Luke 10:17–20; 11:20–23),
3. His defeat by Michael in mid-Tribulation (Revelation 12),
4. His imprisonment at the end of the Tribulation (Rev. 20:1–3), and
5. His final defeat and interment in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:7–10).

CLASS 16
Isaiah Chapters 15–23

We begin here with Chapter 15 and, combined with the next class, go through Chapter 35. Amazingly, Chapter 34 leads us up to the Tribulation, and the Battle of Armageddon, and Chapter 35 takes us into the Millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"In wrath remember mercy" Habakkuk 3:2b

The plea of Habakkuk will resonate through this following section on God's judgment.

We will pass quickly over these judgments on both Israel and her surrounding hostile nations. Our focus will highlight passages which reveal the compassion of God, as He offers mercy to all who will turn to Him in faith. Always remember that the grace of God is greater than all our sin (Rom. 5:20–21; 2 Cor. 5:21).

The Judgment of Moab
(Chapters 15–16)

You will remember that the Moabites were descendants of Lot through his eldest daughter (Gen. 19:30–37). In the days of David, it was a powerful kingdom, and they were implacable enemies of Israel. Yet, the story of Ruth shows that the grace of God was available to any believing Moabite and, through her, King David had Moabite blood!

Though God would destroy Moab, the prophet Isaiah expresses God's compassion for them (v. 5). In Chapter 16:1, Moab sends a peace offering to Israel! In vv. 3–5 we have a preview of Matthew 25:31–46, the judgment of the sheep and goat nations. In the future, Moab will be among those who will shelter the "outcasts" of Israel.

Yet, from the time of Isaiah's writing, Moab would be destroyed in three years (vv. 13–14). As always, it was the arrogance of man against his Maker that brought down the terrible judgment on Moab (v. 6).

The Judgment of Damascus and Ephraim
(Chapter 17)

Damascus was the capitol of Syria, with whom Ephraim (a designation of the ten northern tribes of Israel) was allied in the days of King Ahaz (Isa. 7:1–2). Therefore, they are judged together.

However, the day will come that they will turn again to *"the Holy One of Israel"* (vv. 7–8). They will repent of their idolatry (v. 8 with Hos. 4:16–17). The root cause of their judgment, which is primarily agricultural failure and famine, is that they *"Have forgotten the God of* [their] *salvation"* (v. 10). God's grace and mercy are always extended to those who will turn from evil and seek the Lord in faith (James 4:6–10).

The Judgment of Ethiopia
(Chapter 18)

The Ethiopia of Isaiah's day, *"beyond the rivers,"* was also called "Cush," and most likely referred to what we know as Sudan, and the Nubian kingdom. This land was considered the "end of the world" to the south of Israel. Thus, when God raised His banner of war, all the inhabitants of the world would know of it (v. 3).

But, lo and behold, the day would come when they would bring offerings to the Lord (v. 7), *"to the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, to Mount Zion"* (v. 7b). The point is that when the Lord of hosts brings the battle to a climax in the Tribulation Period, there will be multitudes of believers from every nation (Psalm 8:31; Zech. 14:16; Acts 8:26–36; Rev. 7:9–17).

The Judgment of Egypt
(Chapters 19–20)

Dr. J. Vernon McGee gave this chapter the title "From Gloom to Glory." The unique judgment here is that God would turn everyone in Egypt against their neighbor (vv. 1–2). Famous for their idols and mediums, they would consult them, but all would fail (vv. 3–4). The Nile River would dry up, and the crops would fail (vv. 5–10). The wise men would "stagger like drunken men" (vv. 11–15).

Yet, in the end, the Egyptians would speak Hebrew and cry out to the Savior, and He would deliver them (vv. 18–22). There will be an altar to the Lord in Egypt (v. 19). Though God would smite Egypt, He would also heal them (v. 22). In the end (the Millennial Reign of Christ), Assyria and Egypt will unite with Israel in the true worship of the Lord of hosts (vv. 23–25). How great is the mercy and saving power of our God through the Lord Jesus Christ!

> *"Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth. For I am God, and there is no other ... to Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall take an oath."* Isaiah 45:22–23.

Isaiah was commanded to become a "walking parable" (20:1–3) of the defeat of Egypt by Assyria. It is of interest that Sargon, the ruler of Assyria, is mentioned only here in the Bible. For years, historians used this to denigrate the Bible, saying that no such person existed. That is, until much archeological evidence was found for him, who was also known as Sharrukin. The whole point of this interlude on the defeat of Egypt was to show Israel how foolish they were to seek security by aligning with Egypt (Isa. 31:1).

The Judgment of Babylon, Edom, and Arabia
(Chapter 21)

Here, Isaiah uses language of spiritual accommodation for Babylon. He calls it *"the Wilderness of the Sea."* Strange language calls for careful attention. We know to whom he speaks, for in v. 9 he cries, *"Babylon is fallen, is fallen."* Remember that Babylon was built on the Euphrates River and was surrounded by many canals.

In Jeremiah 51:13, the prophet spoke of her as *"You who dwell by many waters, abundant in treasures."* In a desert land, a city built with water within and without was considered secure. Yet, the spiritual meaning is brought out in Revelation 17:1, of *"the great harlot who sits on many waters ... into the wilderness* [v. 3]*."* John then interprets for us in v. 15, *"The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues."*

Isaiah reacts to the awful judgment to come in vv. 3–4, again demonstrating the great compassion of God, even against His most ardent enemies (Rom. 5:6–10).

In vv. 5–9, we have the prophecy of exactly what happens historically in Daniel 5, when Cyrus (the Lion) diverted the waters of the Euphrates, and took Babylon "without a shot fired," while Belshazzar *"made a great feast"* (Dan. 5:1–4) and expressed his defiance of God by using the vessels from the Temple in Jerusalem for them all to get drunk with.

In vv. 11–12, *"Dumah"* refers to Edom, who along with Arabia (vv. 13–17), would fall within one year, *"according to the year of a hired man,"* that is, where every day seems long and unending. Phonetically, "Dumah" is "Edom" with the "E" removed. "Dumah" means "silence," and that is all that would be left after her judgment!

Arabia (v. 13ff) refers to the descendants of Ishmael, a reminder of the sin of Abraham in not trusting God and taking Hagar as a concubine. Every attempt of man to "help" God by works is doomed to failure.

The Judgment of Jerusalem
(Chapter 22)

Here, Jerusalem is poetically called *"the Valley of Vision,"* which is clear from vv. 4, 8, 9–10. Isaiah describes the siege of Jerusalem in Chapters 36–37. Prophetically, it is worth noting that the people go up on the housetops to see what is happening (vv. 1–3). In Matthew 24:16–17, in the final fulfillment of the prophecy, Jesus warns the people on the housetops to flee, without going into the house to grab any supplies, so great will the urgency be.

The siege preparations mentioned in vv. 8–11 are precisely what Hezekiah did to fortify the city (2 Chronicles 32). Though God called for the people to repent (vv. 12–13), they instead said, *"Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."*

In vv. 15–19, we have a historical insertion about *"Shebna,"* a crafty and corrupt official under Hezekiah. He would ultimately be replaced by faithful Eliakim (2 Kings 18:18; 19:2; Isa. 36:3; 37:2). It appears that Eliakim, whose name means "God will raise him up," stands as a type of Jesus Christ, who would have *"The key of the house of David"* (v. 22), and would be the *"peg"* on which the "glory of his father's house" would hang (vv. 23–25; see Rev. 3:7).

"In that day" (v. 20), as we have previously seen, is a reference to the Tribulation, or the "day of the Lord." Only faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the "secure peg," is sufficient to give us security in an uncertain world!

The Judgment of Tyre
(Chapter 23)

The city of Tyre represented the greatest commercial enterprise of the ancient world. This prophecy of Tyre is absolutely amazing! It begins with a call to the shipmasters to *"Wail ... for it is laid waste"* (v. 1). That is exactly the picture we see in Revelation 18:2, 11–19). Though identified with *"Babylon"* in Revelation, yet it refers to the final form of godless commercialism in the Tribulation Period.

The ships of Tyre were piloted by Phoenician sailors, who brought goods from as far away as Brittain and India. In Ezekiel 28:1–10, the king of Tyre, like the king of Babylon (Isaiah 14) is linked to the devil himself (see Ezek. 26:20–21). The original city of Tyre was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar (Ezekiel 26) and, later, Alexander the Great used the ruins of the old city to build a causeway to the new city of Tyre, which he conquered.

In Ezekiel 26:16–18, there is a funeral lament by the *"princes of the sea,"* the merchants, over Tyre, but it is interesting to see that there is no offer of pardon or mercy—only the cryptic statement, *"Then they shall know that I am the Lord"* (Ezek. 26:6). God declared that Tyre would never be rebuilt or remembered (Ezek. 26:14, 19–21).

Back to Isaiah 23, in vv. 15–17, the city is likened to a *"forgotten harlot,"* who is going about singing, so as to ply her trade. Though the city would never be rebuilt, commercial Tyre would exist in the last days. In the end, her *"pay will be set apart for the Lord"* (v. 18). In other words, all her former wealth will be given in tribute to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

Not only does Jesus Christ control history, but He is also the ruler of the nations. Though God in His infinite wisdom allows men to resist and oppose Him, in the end, all praise will be His. *"To Him ... be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen"* Jude 24–25 (see 1 Pet. 5:11; Rev. 1:6; 5:13).

CLASSES 17 and 18
Isaiah Chapters 24–27: The Victorious Interlude

An Interlude of God's Victory and Blessings for the Saints

In the midst of the long section on divine judgment on the nations (Chapters 15–35), the prophet Isaiah is given hope and encouragement, as he is shown that all of God's judgments will result in a time of worldwide justice and rich blessings for the saints who will enter into the Millennial Reign of the Lord Jesus Christ.

All those who deny dispensational truth, who allegorize end-time prophecies (this is called preterism, the idea that all end time prophecy was fulfilled in the judgments of 70 AD), can find no real joy in these prophecies.

Isaiah Chapter 24
The Judgment of God on the Whole Earth (the Tribulation)

24:1–6 The whole earth desolated because of sin
In the coming Tribulation, the population of Earth will be greatly diminished (Rev. 6:4, 8; 8:9, 11; 9:18). At a minimum, two-thirds of Earth's population will die. This will affect the rich and poor, great and small—without distinction.

The "mourning" of the Earth, along with the people (v. 4), reminds us that the curse of sin affects not only mankind, but creation itself (Gen. 3:17–19). Paul tells us that the creation itself is groaning, awaiting the deliverance of the new creation (Rom. 8:18–22). It is of interest in relation to this, that the "Shuman resonance," which is called Earth's heartbeat (electromagnetic pulse), on January 31, 2017, spiked from its norm of 7.83 Hz, to over 36 Hz. This level in neuroscience relating to the human brain is considered a condition of distress and severe agitation.

The evolutionary explanation for this is given by Dr. Joe Dispensa, who wrote about this spike in earth's pulse. "Perhaps we are on the verge of a great evolutionary jump. Another way to say it is we are going through an initiation, after all, isn't an initiation a rite of passage from one phase to another?" Paul's response to this thinking is relevant here, *"For when they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape"* (1 Thess. 5:3).

The reason for this vast judgment is that men have defiled and destroyed the Earth, in violation of the *"everlasting covenant"* (v. 5). God gave mankind dominion over the Earth (Gen. 1:26–31; Gen. 9:1–7), to care for it and to multiply upon it. After the fall of Adam and Eve, the promise and provision of salvation was included in this covenant (Gen. 3:15; 12:3; 22:15–18). The promise of a Savior and the plan of redemption would redeem not only mankind, but the Earth itself (2 Pet. 3:10–13; Rev. 21:1–4). Thus, God's covenant would be perpetuated to believers forever, through the blood of Christ (Heb. 13:20).

24:7–13 The end of all joy and prosperity
The absence of wine implies the failure of harvests, as well as the lack of all that cheers the spirit (Prov. 31:6–7). Contrast this with the scenes of joy in the millennial kingdom (25:6). So great will be God's judgment on the Earth, that there will be no cause for joy to be found. In v. 10, the word *"confusion"* is the same Hebrew word found in Genesis 1:2 for *"without form,"* indicating complete and total chaos. *"The shaking of an olive tree"* (v. 13) indicates a desperate attempt to find something that remains after total crop failure.

24:14–16 The contrast of joyful saints and the ruin of the unsaved.
In contrast to the gloom of the lost, we see the joyful singing of the saved. From *"the dawning light"* (the East), to *"the coastlands"* (the West), even from *"the ends of the earth"* (v. 10), there is the sound of joyful singing of those who are *"righteous"* by grace through faith. The prophet Isaiah, however, in v. 10b, cannot escape his indescribable grief over those who are lost!

24:17–23 The coming reign of Jesus Christ on Zion.

In the redemptive plan of God, the judgment of sin and evil on this Earth must precede the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. A warning is given to the *"inhabitant of the earth"* (v. 17). This phrase ties in with John's use of the term *"those who dwell on the earth"* (Rev. 3:10; 6:10; 11:10; 13:8, 12, 14; 14:6; 17:8). It suggests more than just living on Earth. Rather, it indicates being "at home" in a sinful and fallen world.

God is not only judging the world during the time of the Tribulation. In vv. 21–22, we are told He will also punish *"on high the host of exalted ones."* This is a reference to fallen angels, who have ruled over nations (Dan. 10:12–14, 20–21; Matt. 24:29; Eph. 6:12; Rev. 12:3–4, 7–9). These are under the control and command of the devil, pictured as *"Leviathan"* (27:1), who will be defeated last of all (Rev. 20:1–3; 7–10).

After the Tribulation is over, Christ will return and establish His kingdom on Earth, reigning from Jerusalem (v. 23). Note the connection here with the failure of the sun and moon to shine, just as Jesus foretold in Matthew 24:29–31, as the final sign before He returns. As sure as the Lord God Almighty reigns in Heaven, He will also come back (Second Advent), in the Person of the resurrected Son of God, to reign on this Earth for one thousand years (Rev. 20:2, 4–7).

Isaiah Chapter 25
A Hymn of Praise for God's Faithfulness

The prophet Isaiah breaks out into a hymn of praise to God as he considers His wonderful plan of redemption. Having been given a preview of Christ's Millennial Kingdom, he speaks of things to come as though already realized.

25:1–5 Isaiah's praise to God for His faithfulness and truth.
Isaiah praises God because His wonderful works are in keeping with His eternal counsel and His revealed Word. What God planned in eternity past, He has revealed through His prophets. And what He reveals will surely come to pass.

> *"So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."* Isaiah 55:11

25:6–8 The Millennial feast, a celebration of death vanquished.
The *"LORD of hosts"* is our Savior, victorious over all His enemies. In these verses, we have a preview of the feast that will inaugurate the Millennial Kingdom. We now know that this feast is the wedding supper of the Lord and His Bride, the Church, made up of all the saints from Pentecost to the Rapture.

The *"mountain"* here speaks of Mount Zion, but the word is often used simply for the seat of rulership. The Millennial Kingdom will fulfill God's promises in the Abrahamic (Gen. 12:1–3; 13:14; 22:17–18), Davidic (2 Sam. 7:12–16), and New covenants (Jer. 31:31–34; Ezek. 36:22–28), which God made with Israel.

It is important to distinguish between the Bride of the Lamb and the wedding guests. The Bride consists of Church-age believers. The guests are those who are invited to the feasts (Matt. 25:1–13; Rev. 19:9). Much false teaching has been done because of the failure to distinguish between the two, such as those who say that some believers will be cast out of the wedding feast. Jesus Christ does not divide His body, nor His Bride, as is clear from 1 Thessalonians 5:10, where both "awake" (spiritual) and "sleeping" (carnal) believers are raptured. To Jesus Christ, no member of the Body is insignificant (1 Cor. 12:14–19, 25–26).

What a promise we have here! Our Lord will *"swallow up death forever"* and *"wipe away tears from all faces"* (Rev. 7:17; 21:4). It has been said, "Earth has no hurt that heaven cannot heal!"

25: 9–12 <u>The song of all the saved of history.</u>
The One we have *"waited"* for is both our God and our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. The word for wait here is *qavah* in Hebrew, the strongest word for faith in the Old Testament.

> *"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."* Isaiah 40:31

Here, *"Moab"* represents all the nations who have resisted the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. He will sift them, as a swimmer does the water, anticipating the judgment of the nations at the end of the Tribulation (Matt. 25:31–46).

<u>Isaiah Chapters 26–27</u>
A Song of Millennial Blessings

Remember that Chapters 24–27 cover both the Tribulation judgments followed by Millennial blessings. This section encapsulates the whole book of Revelation. The phrase *"in that day"* is repeated at least seven times, a reference to the *"day of the Lord"* (Isa. 2:12, 17). This subject is the major topic of the minor prophets (Hos. 1:5; 2:18; Joel 1:15; 2:1–2, 31; Amos 5:18; Zeph. 1:7–8, 2:2–3; Zech. 14:1; Mal. 4:1–5).

26:1–9 <u>The gates of the millennial city of Jerusalem opened</u>.
Here, the remnant pilgrims, coming out of the Tribulation, sing of the *"strong city,"* which is Jerusalem—Mount Zion. The gates are opened that *"the righteous nation,"* believing Jews, might enter. Can you imagine coming out of the Great Tribulation to this time of peace and blessing?

Verses 3–4 emphasize the importance of *"trust"* as the key, both to peace in times of trial, and as the means of entering into the *"everlasting strength"* of the Lord. The Hebrew word here is *batach*, which pictures "casting your cares on the Lord" as we find in 1 Peter 5:7. It is the trust of Jacob in Genesis 32:22–28. He gave up fighting and simply clung to the Lord, *"I will not let you go* [until] *you bless me."* Paul makes a similar point in Philippians 4:5–7.

In verse 5, the *"lofty city"* is Babylon, who exalted herself, but is now brought down in judgment (Isa. 21:9; Rev. 18:2).

Verses 7–9 magnify the Lord as the object of our faith and our longing. *"You weigh the path of the just"* uses a word that can mean both to evaluate and to level or smooth. It is in the intensive stem, showing God's mighty working and watch-care over those who are His. When God judges sin in the Earth, men learn the way of righteousness (v. 9b).

What is the *"way of righteousness"*? *"The just shall live by faith,"* (Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17)! *"From faith to faith, for the just shall live by faith."*

In verses 8–9, Isaiah expresses the longing of every believer in four actions:

1. We "wait" for Him—the Hebrew *chavah*: piel perfect,
2. We "desire" Him,
3. We "remember" Him, and
4. We "seek" Him. We must never forget that our faith is only as strong as its working object. The more intimately we know Him, the greater the power of our faith.

26:10–18 <u>God's mighty deliverance of the persecuted</u>.
In verses 10–11, we have a reference to the unbelievers in the Millennial Kingdom. These are the ones who will join the devil's final revolt (Rev. 20:7–10).

In verses 12–18, it is important to distinguish between the "us" and the "them." The "us" refers to the believing remnant, the "them" to those who continue in unbelief and rebellion against Christ. *"They are dead, they will not rise. Therefore You have punished them … And made all their memory to perish"* (v. 14).

In verses 15–18, we see the "travail" of Israel against her enemies, as revealed in Revelation 12:1–2. Jesus used the image of travail in Matthew 24:4–8. The *"time of her delivery"* (v. 17) refers not just to the coming of Jesus Christ, but the whole Tribulation, where the remnant is brought forth.

Verses 19–21 is a fascinating picture of the first resurrection, which appears to include the Rapture of the Church.

<u>The First Resurrection</u>

1) In 1 Corinthians 15:20–26, Paul gives us four "ranks" or "orders" of resurrection. First, the Lord Jesus Christ, then those *"at His coming."* His coming is in two parts: the Rapture (Church-age believers), and the Second Coming (Old Testament and Tribulation believers), the "end" or final order, would be Millennial saints at the end of the Kingdom Age.
2) In Revelation 20:4–6, John speaks of the resurrection of believers as *"the first resurrection."* Note in v. 5, *"the rest of the dead"* refers to Millennial saints, who are not part of the *"thrones"* (Rev. 4:4, Church Age) or of those *"beheaded … who had not worshipped the beast"* (Tribulation saints).

Those called to *"enter your chambers"* are instructed to do so *"until the indignation is past,"* (v. 20). This cannot refer to Tribulation believers, for they will suffer greatly during the Tribulation Period. It is important to note the *"until,"* which refers to the entire Tribulation Period.

The three "untils" given to Israel

1) *"Until you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord'"* (Matt. 23:39).
2) *"Until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled"* (from Nebuchadnezzar to antichrist) (See Luke 21:24).
3) *"Until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in."* (Rom. 11:25).

The *"indignation"* refers to the Tribulation Period, the time of *"wrath"* (See 1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9), on *"the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity."* In the book of Revelation, the term *"those who dwell on the earth"* occurs in 2:10; 6:10, 15, 17; 13:8, 12, 14; 14:6; 17:8. It speaks of those who are "at home" in this world.

27:2–6 The restoration of God's vineyard.

This is the final battle between the Lord and *"Leviathan,* "the figure of the devil, who inhabits the *"sea"* of the nations (Rev. 12:3–4; 13:1; 17:15; Psalm 74:14; Job 41:1).

"In that day," a classical reference to "the day of the Lord," the unfruitful vineyard of Isaiah Chapter 5 will become fruitful. God will nurture and care for her, and will destroy all who would oppose her, unless they turn to Him in faith (v. 5). As in 26:10–11, God will continue, throughout the Kingdom Age, to offer grace and forgiveness to His enemies, yet many will continue in unbelief.

Those from the Gentile nations who turn to the Lord in faith will be *"grafted in"* to Israel again (Rom. 11:16–24), and Israel will blossom with fruitfulness to the blessing of the whole world.

27:7–13 The discipline of Israel completed.

God used other nations (Egypt, Assyria, etc.) as the *"rod"* of His anger against Israel (Isa. 10:1, 11; 14:29). By God's discipline on the nation, they will be healed (vv. 7–9).

It is worth noting that v. 11 actually interprets and explains a very difficult passage in the New Testament. In John 15:6, Jesus speaks of branches in Him that are broken off and burned. He is referring to this very verse—of Israel (the *"natural branches"* of Romans 11:19–22), who are broken off and *"burned"* in divine judgment, but who will ultimately be *"grafted in again"* (Rom. 11:24)

Verses12 and 13 anticipate a great regathering of Jewish believers, *"one by one,"* which Jesus refers to in Matthew 24:31, when he send forth His angels to gather the remnant back to Jerusalem. The *"trumpet"* in v. 13 is spoken of in Joel 2:1, 12–17, of the great work of restoration that God will do for Israel.

The chapter closes where Isaiah 19:24–25 ends, with Israel, Egypt and Assyria gathering together in Jerusalem to worship the Lord. What an amazing conclusion, with a vision of the redemption of sinners, the reconciliation of enemies, and the whole world under the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ!