

A BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

on

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

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By

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## - G E N E R A L I N T R O D U C T I O N -

### The Approach

As indicated by the title of this book, it is a Biblical, not a critical commentary on Isaiah. As such it is written from the viewpoint of a minister of the gospel and missionary of the cross, who is particularly conscious of two scriptural commands to such a workman. The first one is, "Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth." (2 Tim. 2:15). The second command, found in the same epistle, is simply this, "Preach the word." (2 Tim. 4:2a). With these clarion calls to our God-given task ringing in our ears, we would make it the earnest prayer from the heart that the Holy Spirit give us such a clear spiritual understanding of the prophet Isaiah, and such a dominant passion to reach the unreached with this saving message, that we may each be an evangelist like Philip of old, who, "opened his mouth, and beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus."

The scripture text used in this commentary is the American Revised Version of the Bible. "The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge," with its thousands of scripture references and parallel passages, has been a most valuable help in our study. Also wide use has been made of views and interpretations found in the best commentaries and Bible dictionaries at our disposal. An effort has been made to give due acknowledgement, particularly when these sources are directly quoted. Such quotations from the various writers on Isaiah are found on practically every page.

At the head of the list, most often quoted, is J. A. Alexander, of whom his colleague, Dr. Hodge, said, "I regard Dr. Joseph Addison Alexander as incomparably the greatest man I ever knew - as incomparably the greatest man our church ever produced." His commentary on Isaiah has been designated "his crowning labor, his imperishable monument."

Next to Alexander, the writer quoted most is Franz Delitzsch. Among other Bible scholars frequently quoted are John Calvin, Barnes, Matthew Henry, Fausset, Skinner, Moulton, Dummelow, George Adam Smith, A. A. Webb, W. H. Marquess, George L. Robinson, Edward Mack, and Campbell Morgan. Use has been made of dictionaries of the Bible by Davis, Smith, and by Schaff, and of the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.

For the interpretation of the prophetic parts of scripture and of Isaiah in particular, Dr. Alexander has stated a few exegetical maxims, which we may well keep in mind in our study, and from which we quote the following:

"The prophets were inspired to reveal the truth and will of God, in reference to the past and present, no less than the future. In Isaiah, for example, we find many statements of a general nature, and particular exhibitions of the general principles which govern the divine administration, especially in reference to the chosen people and their enemies or persecutors.

"All predictions, or prophecies in the restricted sense, are not specific and exclusive, that is, limited to one occasion or emergency, but many are descriptive of a sequence of events which



has been often realized ---.

"All the predictions of Isaiah, whether general or specific, are not to be literally understood. The ground of this position is the fact, universally admitted, that the prophecies abound in metaphorical expressions ---.

"The prophecies of this book are not to be always understood in a figurative or spiritual sense ---. The same application of the laws of common sense and of general analogy, which shows that some predictions must be metaphorical, shows that others must be literal ---.

"The question under which of these descriptions any prophecy must be arranged, that is, the question whether it is strictly a prediction, and if so, whether it is general or particular, literal or figurative, can only be determined by a thorough independent scrutiny of each case by itself, in reference to form and substance, text, and context, without regard to arbitrary and exclusive theories, but with a due regard to the analogy of Scripture in general, and of other prophecies in particular, especially of such as belong to the same writer, or at least to the same period, and apparently relate to the same subject."

Above all, in our approach to the study of the book of Isaiah, may t be with the prayer, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." (Psalm 119:18), and with the promise, "But the holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you." (John 14:26).

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### One Isaiah.

Many modern critical scholars, largely from Germany, have led in numerous attacks against the unity and genuineness of the book of Isaiah. They have so divided up the book as to assign its authorship to more than one person, in some cases to several authors, living over a period of several centuries. In many cases there is wide disagreement among these critics themselves, so that to follow their various theories is extremely difficult.

"But we are not concerned over-much with these multitudinous internal disturbances of criticism. And if we were, which should we follow? George Adam Smith, or Driver, or Cheyne, or Duhm, or Marti, who disagree centuries in their assignment of the time of origin to the same chapters." (Mack).

The view of conservative scholars, who believe in the unity and integrity of the book of Isaiah, is set forth in such standard works as Smith's Dictionary of the Bible (1872), A Dictionary of the Bible, by John D. Davis (1907), and the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (1925), article by George L. Robinson.

"For our present purpose it must suffice briefly to indicate the following reasons as establishing the integrity of the whole book, and indicating the authenticity of the second part:-

(a) Externally - The unanimous testimony of Jewish and Christian tradition - Ecclus. 48:24-25, which manifestly refers to this second part. The use apparently made of the second part by Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zephaniah. The decree of Cyrus in Ezra 1:2-4, which plainly is founded upon Is. 44:28; 45:1, 13, accrediting Josephus's statement that the Jews showed Cyrus Isaiah's predictions of him. The inspired testimony of the N.T., which often quotes with specification of Isaiah's name prophecies found in second part.

(b) Internally - The unity of design and construction which --- connects these last twenty-seven chapters with the preceding parts of the book. - The oneness of diction which pervades the whole book. The absence of any other name than Isaiah's claiming the authorship. - The claims which the writer makes to the foreknowledge of the deliverance of Cyrus, which claims, on the opposing view, must be regarded as a fraudulent personation of an earlier writer. - Lastly, the predictions which it contains of the character, sufferings, death and glorification of Jesus Christ; a believer in Christ cannot fail to regard those predictions as affixing to this second part the broad seal of Divine Inspiration; whereby the chief ground of objection against its having been written by Isaiah is at once annihilated." (Smith's dictionary of the Bible, page 11) See chap. 1:4 with note on "Holy One of Israel," and General introduction to chapters 40-66.

### Isaiah, the Man.

"The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah." (Is. 1:1)

Little is known of the personal history of Isaiah, "The king of all prophets," "The fifth evangelist," "The St. Paul of the Old Testament." His name means, "Jehovah saves," suggestive of the grand redemptive theme which characterizes his prophecy. He was probably born, reared, and educated in Jerusalem, belonging to a family of high rank. According to tradition he was a cousin of king Uzziah. He had a wife and two sons. The symbolic names of these sons, (ch. 7:3; 8:2-3) are suggestive of the two themes of judgment and grace so prominent in his prophecy.

He may have known personally the prophets Amos, Hosea, and Micah, his younger contemporary.

That outstanding personal experience of his life, his call and commission, recorded in chapter six, was evidently a pivotal point in his life, a glorious preparation for his mighty task, without which we would not have had his matchless prophecy. It is no wonder that Christ and the New Testament writers quote this prophet more frequently than any other, and that the apostle John, after repeated quotations from Isaiah, said, "These things said Isaiah, because he saw his glory, and he spake of him." (John 12:41).

Isaiah was the master statesman of his day. "No Hebrew prophet ever lived whose political horizon, domestic and foreign, was wider or more extended than that of Isaiah of the eighth century B.C. Syria, Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, Philistia, Ammon, Moab, and Edom were all actors upon the ever changing stage of history ---. No prophet of the Old Testament combined more perfectly than Isaiah

earthly wisdom and sagacity, courage and conviction, versatility of gifts and singleness of purpose, on the one hand, with clear vision and spiritual intuition, a love of righteousness and a keen appreciation of Jehovah's majesty and holiness on the other. Valetton describes him thus, 'Never perhaps has there been another prophet like Isaiah, who stood with his head in the clouds and his feet on the solid earth, with his heart in the things of eternity and with his mouth and hand in the things of time, with his spirit in the eternal counsel of God and his body in a very definite moment of history'." (George L. Robinson, 'The Book of Isaiah'.)

Tradition has it that Isaiah was martyred, his body being sawn asunder, during the reign of king Manasseh. Some think that reference is made to the manner of his death in the expression, "they were sawn asunder" in Heb. 11:37. We are sure of this, that his name stands high among the heroes of faith of all the ages.

### The Times of Isaiah (Is. 1:1)

The introductory verse of the book of Isaiah not only names the author, but also the period of his ministry, "in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah." This was one of the most noteworthy periods in Judah's history. A thorough presentation of this historical background is found in 2 Kings 15-20, and 2 Chron. 26-32, while much of this history is also found in the book of Isaiah, particularly chapters 36-39.

The ministry of Isaiah, according to Dr. Edward Mack, was fulfilled between 741 and 695 B.C. "At that time Assyria and Egypt were struggling against each other for world supremacy, and unfortunate Palestine lay between the two contestants. Its strategic position made it coveted of both empires, and in consequence invading armies often swept ruthlessly through all its length. This struggle of centuries, coming to climax in Isaiah's time, must be held in mind, in order to the understanding of many of his chapters. The whole world was in upheaval, very much as in our own time. Many nations were seeking better places for themselves in the sun, and fighting also to make their national gods supreme on earth. Isaiah's land and kings were caught in this restless and ambitious surging of the peoples." (Mack).

Uzziah's long reign of about a half century was the greatest in prosperity and material progress that Judah had seen since the reign of Solomon. He "did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah," but did not remove the high places where the people sacrificed to other gods. "He set himself to seek Jehovah . . . and as long as he sought Jehovah, God made him to prosper."

"But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up, so that he did corruptly, and he trespassed against Jehovah his God." He was made a leper for attempting to burn incense unto Jehovah, thus usurping the priests' office. "He was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a separate house, being a leper, for he was cut off from the house of Jehovah." Hence his son, Jotham, had to be associated with him in the government, judging the people of the land.

Jotham, reigning 16 years, followed largely in the footsteps of his father in his personal religion, his policies, and his program for the development of his country. "So Jotham became mighty, because he ordered his ways before Jehovah his God."

Under the reign of Ahaz the general condition of Judah grew much worse. His 16 year reign was characterized by gross idolatry, (2 Kings 16:1-4), wars with Syria and Israel, and the turning of Ahaz to Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, for help contrary to the clear warning of the prophet Isaiah. "He made flesh his arm, and thereby entangled the people of Jehovah with the kingdom of the world in a manner unknown before, so that they completely lost their independence. Assyria and Rome are the first and the last members of the world-kingdom that brought enslavement and oppression on Israel throughout her history. The times of Isaiah saw the approach of the calamity." (Delitzsch)

"For Jehovah brought Judah low because of Ahaz, king of Israel, for he dealt wantonly in Judah, and trespassed sore against Jehovah. And Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, came unto him and distressed him, but strengthened him not . . . And in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against Jehovah, this same king Ahaz."

Hezekiah was "the good son of a bad father and the good father of a bad son." "He trusted in Jehovah, the God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor among them that were before him. For he clave to Jehovah; he departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which Jehovah commanded Moses." Conditions were improved under the reforms of this good king, yet Assyrian aggression was looming more and more upon the horizon. Hezekiah had been on the throne only about five years when Samaria was taken (722 B.C.) by Sargon, and the ten tribes carried into captivity.

The biggest political event of Hezekiah's reign, and of the entire period of Isaiah, was Sennacherib's invasion of Judah, 701 B.C., which ended in disaster for the Assyrian hosts, due to the supernatural interposition of Jehovah. In his own account of his campaign in Judah, Sennacherib says, "As for Hezekiah himself, like a bird in a cage, in Jerusalem, his royal city, I shut him up." It is significant that Sennacherib fails to complete the record by telling of the destruction of the Assyrian army and the miraculous deliverance of Judah's capital.

Concerning the times of Isaiah Dr. Alexander says, "The two most remarkable conjunctures in the history of Judah during Isaiah's ministry are the invasion of the combined force of Syria and Israel in the reign of Ahaz, followed by the destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes, and the Assyrian invasion in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, ending in the miraculous destruction of Sennacherib's army and his own ignominious flight. The historical interest in this important period is further heightened by the fact, that two of the most noted eras in chronology fall within it, to wit, the era of Nabonassar, and that computed from the building of Rome."

## The Book of Isaiah.

The first verse of the book suggests something of its character and its contents. It is essentially a "vision". According to Alexander this means, "Supernatural perception, inspiration, revelation, prophecy, here put collectively for Prophecies."

"The title of the book 'The Vision of Isaiah,' turns our eyes to the future at the very beginning. The word indicates a spiritual, or mystical, or transcendental, or far-away vision; not what the eye sees, but the vision of the heart, when the eyes are closed. What eye could not see, nor ear hear, neither could enter into the imagination of man, God has revealed to us by His Spirit through Isaiah."<sup>1</sup>

The simple yet sublime thoughts of Isaiah are clothed in a matchless literary form. Dr. Moulton says, "Even in literary form the world has produced nothing greater than Isaiah." Of Isaiah's prophecy Dr. Mack says, "His book is the finest art gallery of the past, nearly every verse a picture with the finest lines and colors of art."

"For versatility of expression and brilliancy of imagery Isaiah has no superior, not even a rival. His style marks the climax of Hebrew literary art. Both his periods and descriptions are most finished and sublime. 'Every word from him stirs and strikes its mark,' says Dillmann. Beauty and strength are characteristic of his entire book. He is perfect artist in words. No other Old Testament writer uses so many beautifully picturesque illustrations."<sup>2</sup>

Isaiah wrote primarily "concerning Judah and Jerusalem." While whole chapters are concerning foreign nations, yet all the nations are related to the chosen land and the holy city, the seat of the true religion, the "spiritual metropolis of the world."

Isaiah is one of the greatest of all books on world missions. Two theme words in its message are judgment and peace (See Campbell Morgan's Analyzed Bible). Judgment is pronounced upon the world of the wicked, and peace is promised to the true worshippers of Jehovah, perfect peace to the steadfast mind who trusts in Him. The price of this peace was the substitutionary sacrifice of the suffering Servant of Jehovah, "The greatest thought in the Old Testament." (See Chapter 53).

Christ and the New Testament writers repeatedly recognize the divine inspiration and authority of Isaiah. "We are not left, however, to infer this incidentally; for it is proved directly by the frequent combination of the title prophet with the name Isaiah (Matt. 3:3; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; Luke 3:4; 4:17; John 1:23; Acts 8:28-30; 28:25); by the repeated statement that he prophesied or spoke by inspiration (Mark 7:6; Rom 9:29); by the express declaration that some of his predictions were fulfilled in the history of Christ and his contemporaries (Mt. 3:3; 4:14; 8:17; Acts 28:25)."<sup>3</sup> Added to all of this is that remarkable statement in John 12:41 that Isaiah saw

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1. Edward Mack.
  2. George L. Robinson.
  3. Alexander.

Christ's glory and spoke of Him. "These expressions place it beyond all possibility of doubt that the New Testament described Isaiah as a Prophet in the strictest and highest sense inspired of ~~of~~ God."<sup>4</sup>

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4. Ibid.

## Chap. 1:2-31. Jehovah's Controversy With His People.

The design of this introductory discourse is "to show the connection between the sins and sufferings of God's people, and the necessity of further judgments as means of purification and deliverance."<sup>1</sup>

The chapter may be conveniently divided into five parts:

- (1) Vs. 2-4. The Corruption of the People - ingratitude and rebellion against God.
- (2) Vs. 5-9. The Consequences of Their Sin - misery, national calamities. "The suffering is first represented by the figure of disease and wounds, and then in literal terms as the effect of an invasion, by which the nation was left desolate, and only saved by God's regard for his elect from the total destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah."<sup>2</sup>
- (3) Vs. 10-17. The Contrasted Ways of Seeking Jehovah. Mere formal religion is utterly inadequate, and abhorrent unto God. The true way to God's favor is the way of repentance--forsake evil and do well.
- (4) Vs. 18-20. A proffered Change and a Consideration of Conduct. Jehovah condescends to reason with his people, is willing to change their sins into the opposite. He promises reward to the obedient and threatens to punish the disobedient.
- (5) Vs. 21-31. The Comparison of Israel as it is with what it has been, and with what it shall be.

"In the former comparison he employs two metaphors, each followed by a literal explanation of its meaning; that of a faithful wife become a traitor, and that of adulterated wine and silver, both expressive of a moral deterioration, with special reference to magistrates and rulers. (Vs. 18-23) In the other comparison, the coming judgments are presented in a two fold aspect of purification and deliverance to the church, and destruction of its wicked members. The Prophet sees the leading men of Israel destroyed, first as oppressors to make room for righteous rulers and thus save the state, then as idolators consumed by that in which they trusted for protection. (Vs. 24-31)"<sup>3</sup>

"The chapter, entitled by Ewald 'The Great Arraignment', stands worldly as the introduction to Isaiah's prophecies. Its leading ideas - those which underlie not only Isaiah's teaching, but also that of the pre-Exilic prophets; and these elementary principles are here presented with a force and clearness unrivalled in the Old Testament. Certain resemblances both in thought and expression to the 'Song of Moses' (Deut. 32) have been noted by commentators."<sup>4</sup>

### 2. "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for Jehovah hath spoken."

The prophet calls heaven and earth to witness what Jehovah is about to speak against his people. The universe was called to witness when God spoke through the law-giver, Moses (see Deut. 32:1) whose words were similar to these of Isaiah. "For Jehovah hath spoken" is sufficient reason to attract the attention of the whole world. God's final word has been spoken in His Son. See Heb. 1:1-3. "I have nourished (or made great and

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Alexander on Isaiah.

Ibid.  
Ibid.

Skinner: "Cambridge Bible"

calted) and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me." The words 'children' and 'they' are emphatic. When Israel was in Egypt Jehovah said, "Israel is my son, my first-born" (Ex. 4:22). Israel's origin and growth to manhood and honor were due to the grace of God. Even they were guilty of filial ingratitude--a most heinous sin. "From the time that Solomon, towards the end of his reign gave himself up to idolatry, the worship of idols had never wholly ceased, even in public, down to the days of Isaiah--Hence the expression, 'they have broken away from me' which sums up the whole of Israel's ingratitude in the one culminating sin, applies to the entire history of the nation from the zenith of glory under David and Solomon down to the time of the prophet."5

3. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel both not know, my people doth not consider.

Israel's spiritual ignorance and thoughtlessness <sup>are</sup> ~~is~~ put to shame by the dumb animals which have some knowledge of their owners and masters to feed them, and which exercise instinctive fidelity to them. (Jer. 7). It is God's people, chosen from all the people of the earth, "my people" who do not consider.

4. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-ers, children that deal corruptly! they have forsaken Jehovah, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are estranged and gone back-ward.

Instead of being a holy nation (Ex. 19:6) they are a nation habitually sinning; instead of being the people of Jehovah they are a people laden with sin, as with a talent of lead (Zech. 5:7-8); instead of being the seed of righteous they are the seed of evil parents, instead of being children of Jehovah, they are children dealing corruptly. (Gen. 6:12). The three concluding clauses complete the description of Israel's apostasy--postasy "in disposition, in words, in their way of acting!"6 "The Holy One of Israel", the title of God here used for the first time in Isaiah, is found 25 times in the book, and only six times elsewhere in the Old Testament. It has been called "the Key-note of Isaianic prophecy."7 It sums up his fundamental conception of God in relation to Israel" (Cambridge Bible). Found throughout the book this is one of the strong arguments in favor of the unity of Isaiah. See Introduction.

5. Why will ye be still stricken, that ye revolt more and more? the sole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

Following sin (vs. 2-4) must come misery (vs. 5-9). Why continue to fall down more judgments by revolting against Jehovah more and more? Suffering for sin is here compared to sickness. "Head and heart are named as the noblest portions of the outer and the inner man; outwardly and inwardly, every individual of the nation has already been smitten by the wrath of God."8

6. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and fresh stripes: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with oil.

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Delitzsch: "Commentary on Isaiah"

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.



The body of Judah - the whole people - is diseased, there is nothing und. Not only is the disease general and grievous, and the wounds many d continuing, but the remedy has not been applied. (Luke 10:34) On e other hand the wounds have been neglected. The people do not care r the physician nor the medicine.

7. Your country is desolate; your cities are burned with fire; your nd, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as over-  
rown by strangers.

After using the figure of verses 5-6 to set forth the effect of his oples' sin, literal language is used showing their suffering as the ef- ct of a foreign invasion. The country in general is waste and desolation.

This verse gives a suggestion as to the date of this first prophecy. nce there were more than one foreign invasion of Judah in Isaiah's time, terpreters differ as to the invasion here mentioned, one assigning it the invasion by Rezin and Pekah in the reign of Ahaz about 735 B.C. saiah 7:1); another to the invasion by Sargon (Isaiah 20:1) 711 B.C. and third to the invasion by Sennacherib (Isaiah, Chaps. 36-37) in Hezekiah's ign 701 B.C. Considerable evidence favors the first date. See 2 Chron.

8. And the daughter of Zion is left as a booth in the vineyard, as lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.

"And the daughter of Zion, that is the people of Zion or Jerusalem, nsidered as the capital of Judah, and therefore representing the whole tion, is left, not forsaken, but left over or behind as a survivor, se a booth, a temporary covert of leaves and branches in a vineyard, se a lodge in a melon-field, like a watched city -- cut off from all mmunications with the country."9

9. Except Jehovah of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, should have been as Sodom, we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

Following the figure of disease and the fact of desolation of the ove verses there would have followed fearful destruction like unto lom where only four escaped, like unto Gomorrah where all were des- oyed, except for the favor of God in saving the remnant according to e election of grace. This verse is cited in Paul's argument in Rom. 9. Remnant has reference to "a minority of true believers in the ist of the prevailing unbelief. Jehovah of hosts means the Sovereign er of heaven and earth and all the hosts of them, that is, all their habitants (Gen. 2:1)."10 "The word hosts which is used in the title ers to the armies of the universe. The designation pictures the verse, in its spiritual and material aspects, as forming a vast army, numerous divisions, of various kinds of troops, in orderly array ler the command of Jehovah. One division consists of angels -- another t consists of the stars -- yet another host consists of all the forces nature -- the Lord of hosts, he is the King who alone commands." vis Bible Dictionary. p. 312)

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Alexander on Isaiah  
Ibid.

10. Hear the word of Jehovah, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.

The wickedness of Sodom is set forth in Gen. 13:13 and Ezekiel 16:49. Jerusalem, when rebuked for her sin "is spiritually called Sodom" in Rev. 11:8. In like manner the rulers of Jerusalem and the people subject to them are here addressed as rulers of Sodom and as people of Gomorrah. "Word and law both denote the revelation of God's will as a rule of faith and duty." 11

11. What unto me is the multitude of your sacrifices? saith Jehovah: I have had enough of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats.

Animal sacrifices, external acts of worship, without corresponding heart obedience are displeasing unto Jehovah. Compare I Sam. 15:22 and Psalms 51:16-19, Micah 6:7.

12. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your and, to trample my courts?

Not only their sacrifices are condemned but also their attendance at the courts of the temple to present them. Merely formal treading of the sanctuary is a desecration. Micah 6:8.

13. Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; new moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies--I cannot away with iniquity and the solemn meeting.

"What he said before of animal sacrifices and of attendance at the temple to present them, is now extended to bloodless offerings, such as incense and the meal offering, as well as to the observance of sacred times, and followed by a brief intimation of the sense in which they are all unacceptable to God, namely when combined with the practice of iniquity." 12 The last clause of this verse gives a key to the interpretation of this context. It is the hypercritical combination of "wickedness and worship" which is so severely condemned. See Mal. 1:10, Luke 11:42, and Proverbs 21:27.

14. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are trouble unto me; I am weary of bearing them.

The soul of God is "the centre of His being, encircled and penetrated by selfconsciousness; hence, whatever the soul of God hates (Jer. 15:1) or loves (Is. 42:1) that he hates or loves in the inmost depths and in the whole extent of His being." 13 (Amos 5:21) The soul of Jehovah hates the hypocritical observance of these sacred times and festivals. They have become a burden or cumbrance to Him. All sin is a burden, particularly mere formal religion without the inner spirit.

15. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Delitzsch.

Not only their animal sacrifices (vs. 11), their attendance at the sanctuary (vs. 12), their bloodless sacrifices and observance of sacred seasons, but even their many prayers, are an abomination unto Jehovah because of wickedness in the heart and life. Spreading forth of the hands in the attitude of a devout suppliant, and making many prayers (Hebrew - multiply prayer) are rendered useless by the guilt of those who pray. The Psalmist said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear." (Ps. 66:18) "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination." (Prov. 28:9) See also Isaiah 59:2-3, Jeremiah 7:8-10, and Ezekiel 8:16-18, - a veritable prophetic chorus, voicing Jehovah's denunciation of worship combined with wickedness.

16. "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil."

Over against the denunciations of formalism as the wrong way of seeking Jehovah as set forth in verses 10-15, there are now given in verses 16-17 exhortations pointing out the true way of seeking Him, away from works-righteousness to true righteousness. "God saith to the sinner, 'Wash you' etcetera, that he, finding his inability to 'make' himself clean', may cry to God, 'Wash me, cleanse me', (Psalm 51:2, 7, 10)"<sup>14</sup> There must be purification from sin, (Compare Jer. 4:14 and Rev. 7:14); there must be the putting away of evil deeds from the light of the countenance of God, (Isaiah 55:7, Ezekiel 18:30-32, Mt. 3:8, Eph. 4:22-24); and the putting to an end of evil. "They are to wrestle against and overcome the vicious disposition to which actual sin had grown, that it may at last wholly disappear."<sup>15</sup>

17. "Learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."

Continuing the series of exhortations in this verse, "the first exhortation is the fundamental one: they are to learn to do good, - a difficult art in which one does not become a master merely through good intentions--That this primary exhortation now branches out into four minor ones referring to the administration of justice is accounted for by the fact that no other prophet directs so keen an eye upon affairs of state and judicial proceedings as Isaiah--The law announced to them in verse 9 has been preached to them. The prophet has thrown aside the husks of their dead works, and revealed the moral kernel of the law in its universal application to mankind."<sup>16</sup>

18. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

As in verse 9 the grace of God shines out in the assurance concerning the remnant, so here grace shines out gloriously in His condescending to reason with sinful men and His gracious offer to change their sins into righteousness. "This verse contains an invitation to discuss the question whether God was willing or unwilling to show mercy, implying that reason as well as justice was on his side, and asserting his power and willingness to pardon the most aggravated sins. --- The implied conclusion of

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. Fausset: "Commentary on Isaiah"  
 . Delitzsch.  
 . Ibid.

the reasoning is that God's willingness to pardon threw the blame of their destruction on themselves."<sup>17</sup> His promise of pardon and cleansing is to the penitent sinner. (I John 1:9) "He is willing to remit the punishment, and not merely to regard the sin as if it were not, but even to change it into its opposite. Sin of the brightest red dye is by His grace to become the purest white. -- The representation of the work of grace which God promises, as a change from red to white, is founded on the symbolism of colors, quite as much as when, in the Apocalypse, the garments of the saints are said to be of a bright white (Rev. 19:8), while the clothing of Babylon is purple and scarlet (Rev. 17:4)."<sup>18</sup>

19, 20. "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it."

Following the presentation of the gospel of grace in verse 18 there is given in these two verses a consideration of conduct. "If they assent to the act of grace which God offers them, and accept this discharge from the guilt of sin, then certainly there again lies before the justified once more a blessing and a curse, in the same way as the law had already pronounced both."<sup>19</sup> Deut. 30:15-16, Isaiah 3:10-11.

The expression "for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it" is found three times in the book of Isaiah (1:20; 40:5; and 58:14) and nowhere else in the Old Testament. This is another evidence of the unity of the book of Isaiah.

21. "How is the faithful city become a harlot! she that was full of justice! righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers."

Will Israel follow the way of repentance, free grace, and obedience, which has just been described in verses 15-20? Perhaps some would, but not all; hence the beginning of an elegy or lamentation with verse 21, in the form of a comparison of the present state of Jerusalem with her former state. Figuratively speaking she was formerly a faithful wife, probably the reference being to the time of David in particular, 2 Sam. 8:15, and to the later time of the administration of justice under Jehosaphat, when she was true to her "marriage alliance", her covenant relation to Jehovah, but now she has become a harlot unfaithful to Jehovah, gone whoring after other gods. Lamentation 1:8-9. "They failed to heed the warning of Ex. 32:15. "It is not merely gross idolatry, however, that makes the Church God a harlot, but the defection of the heart, however this may at any time express itself; for which reason Jesus also could call the generation of His time an adulterous generation, in spite of the strict worship of Jehovah carried on in Pharisaic Spirit."<sup>20</sup> Formerly righteousness - "the state of him who is such as he ought to be" - lodged in her, fore-glimpse of 2 Pet. 3:13, but now the opposite, murders. I John 3:15.

22. "Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water."

The figure is changed from "adultery" to that of "adulteration", to describe further their moral weakness and degeneration, probably referring

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- . Alexander.
  - . Delitzsch.
  - . Ibid.
  - . Ibid.

the rulers who perverted justice and turned aside from righteousness. Hosea 4:18. Their character has become debased, their strength impaired.

23. "Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves; every one loveth bribes, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them."

The figurative language of the two previous verses prepares for the literal speech of this verse. Note in 2 Chron. 24:17-21 the princes' rebellion against God. The corruption of the nation is not surprising when its princes rebel against God and are unjust to their fellowmen. Instead of suppressing violation of the law, as was the duty of their office, they become partakers with the criminals in their sin. Instead of seeking to suppress evil, they sought to do evil themselves for material gain. Isaiah 7:3. Since the orphans and widows were unable to give bribes the rulers had no interest in hearing their cause. They heeded not the command of Ex. 23:8.

24. "Therefore saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies."

After comparing Israel as it is with what it has been (vs. 21-23), the prophet beginning with verse 24 looks to the future to show what Israel will be. "To this description of the general corruption the Prophet now adds a promise of purgation, which is at the same time a threatening of sorrier judgments, as the appointed means by which the church was to be restored to her original condition (vs. 24-31). -- In this verse the destruction of God's enemies is represented as a necessary satisfaction of His justice."<sup>21</sup> "Salvation through judgment is still and ever the only means of improving and preserving the congregation that takes its life from Jerusalem. Therefore Jehovah seeks to satisfy the demands of His holiness, and to sift Jerusalem through judicial dealing. -- The irrevocable decree concerning the sifting judgment is sealed with three names which indicate the irresistible omnipotence of God."<sup>22</sup> The enemies here referred to are Jews, not foreigners. (Ezek. 5:13)

25. "And I will turn my hand upon thee, and thoroughly purge away thy dross, and will take away all thy tin."

(Ezek. 22:19-22; Zech. 13:7-9; Mal. 3:3; Matt. 3:12) God's hand is said to be at rest when He leaves a person's actions or condition alone, but when he makes them the object of His attention he is said to turn his hand. This turning of the hand may be either in wrath or in love, in judgment or in mercy, or it may mean the combination. The figure of verse 25 is here taken up. Opinions differ as to the interpretation. One says it means the turning of his hand not in mercy, but in judgment. (Cambridge Bible) Another says it is "not in wrath, but in grace (Zech. 13:7) upon thee, as verse 26, 27 show; contrasted with the enemies of whom he will purge himself (vs. 24)," that the dross and tin mean "not thy sins, but sinful persons (Jer. 6:29): enemies (vs. 24) degenerate princes intermingled with the elect remnant of grace."<sup>23</sup> "Here the reference is to looking towards Jerusalem, in which punishment and salvation are combined -

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the punishment as the means, salvation as the end. Jehovah's intervention is compared to a smelting which will sweep away, not Jerusalem, but the ungodly who dwell there."<sup>24</sup> "The adulterated silver must be purified by the separation of its impure articles."<sup>25</sup> The dross and tin are taken away and the precious ore is refined in the fires of judgment. Judgment may be, and under certain conditions must be punitive. Judgment, however, in the full sense of the word is government based upon righteousness, and expressing itself in justice."<sup>26</sup>

26. "And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counselors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called the city of righteousness, a faithful town."

Here Jehovah promises to restore that which is pictured as lost in verse 21, namely, justice, faithfulness, righteousness. As a means of effecting this restoration the wicked rulers of the state would be replaced by righteous rulers, men such as Israel had known in the best days of the kingdom. Good public officials are the gift of God, and the means used by him for the establishment of that righteousness which exalteth a nation.

27. "Zion shall be redeemed with justice, and her converts with righteousness."

Here is a glorious promise to the church and those who return to her in true repentance, namely, redemption, a gift of grace, from Jehovah who reveals Himself in justice and righteousness. (Is. 5:16; 42:21; Rom. 3:26) The verse means that the very same events by which the divine justice was to manifest itself in the destruction of the wicked, should be the occasion and the means of deliverance to Zion or the true people of God."<sup>27</sup> The idea of the righteousness of God as here set forth is more fully developed in the New Testament. "In front there is the fire of the law, behind, there is the light of the gospel. Behind the wrath is hidden love, as the ultimate motive-power, like the sun behind the clouds. Zion, as far as it is truly Zion and is becoming Zion, is redeemed; only the ungodly are destroyed, but these without mercy, as is added in verse 28."<sup>28</sup>

28. "But the destruction of transgressors and sinners shall be together, and they that forsake Jehovah shall be consumed."

Here is stated a prediction similar to the one with which Isaiah closes his whole prophecy (66:24), namely, that the wicked will be destroyed. They are transgressors, sinners, those who forsake Jehovah. This last phrase is especially appropriate in reference to idolatry. See Isaiah 9:6-9 and Zeph. 1:4-6.

29. "For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen."

Oaks and gardens in this connection immediately suggest scenes of idolatry and nature-worship. Is. 57:5 margin, Is. 65:3, Ezek. 6:13. Such idolatry was committed by King Ahaz (II Kings 16:4). The idolaters shall be ashamed, realizing the impotence of all their idols (Isaiah 45:16).

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 Delitzsch.  
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30. "For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water."

The idolators themselves are compared to their objects of worship, not as prosperous, but as perishing or perished; not as fruitful, but faded, not as refreshed, but as dried up. People easily become like the gods they worship (Ps. 135:18). The faded leaf and unwatered garden are easily inflammable, readily consumed.

31. "And the strong shall be as tow, and his work as a spark; and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them."

The strong may mean the powerful wicked rulers, and his work the idolatrous images he has made. Tow is the coarse and broken part of flax, easily inflammable. The figure of speech then represents the idol being the cause of the destruction of the idolator, both burning together in unquenchable fire. This final threat of the destruction of the wicked presents a fearful picture of sudden and complete ruin with one to deliver them. Mal. 4:1, Matt. 3:12, Rev. 14:10, 11.

The prediction of verses 24-31 according to Matthew Henry is applicable: 1. To the blessed work of reformation, which was wrought in Hezekiah's time, after the abominable corruptions of the reign of Ahaz. Then good men came to be preferred, and the faces of the wicked were filled with shame. 2. To their return out of their captivity in Babylon, which God thoroughly cured them of idolatry. 3. To the Gospel-Kingdom, and the working out of the Spirit by which the New Testament Church should be made a New Jerusalem, a city of righteousness. 4. To the second coming of Christ, when he shall thoroughly purge his floor, his field, shall gather the wheat into his barns, unto his garner, and burn the chaff, the tares, with unquenchable fire."

#### Dctrinal and Practical:

1. Names of God: (1) Jehovah, expresses "the covenant promise of the divine presence, both at the immediate time and in the Messianic Age of the future." (2) Holy One of Israel (See note on verse 4) signifies (a) His transcendence, His separateness above all other beings, His aloneness as compared to other gods. (b) His peculiar relation to His people Israel unto whom He separated Himself, as He did not unto other nations." (3) Jehovah of Hosts. (See note on verse 9). "It is probable that the title is intended to include all created agencies and beings, of which Jehovah is maker and leader." (4) Lord, "emphasizes His sovereignty (Ps. 104; Is. 7:7) and corresponds closely to Kurios of the N.T." (5) Mighty One of Israel. (Gen 49:24; Ps. 132:2,5; Is. 1:24; 49:26; 60:16.) Expresses "the assurance of the Divine strength in behalf of the oppressed Israel (Is. 1:24), or in behalf of Israel against his oppressors." 29

2. Sin as a Burden: Prominence of sin in chapter one. Ingratitude, rebellion, idolatry, hypocrisy.

(1) Sin a burden unto God - verse 14.

(2) Sin a burden unto man - Matt. 11:28.

(3) Sin a burden unto Jesus - Is. 53:6(b); I Peter 2:24.

hold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29.

### 3. Glorious Grace:

- (1) Remnant - vs. 9 - according to the election of grace.  
Rom. 11:5.
- (2) Reasoning - vs. 18 - Grace greater than all of man's sin.  
James 4:6.
- (3) Redemption - A gift of grace, conditioned on Repentance -  
verse 27. Titus 2:11-14.



Chaps. 2, 3, 4. Zion Preeminent, Polluted, Punished, Purified.

These three chapters contain the second sermon or prophecy of Isaiah. It deals with the future glory of Zion under the reign of the Messiah, and the present sins of Judah and their consequences, showing that God's people must pass through judgment to glory.

After the title or introduction of Chap. 2:1, similar to 1:1, Zion is first presented in its future glory as Preeminent, in the prophecy of the Mountain of Jehovah's house. Zion or the church of God is conspicuous among the nations, and there shall be the pouring of the nations upon it for the purpose of receiving instruction in the true religion, and as a result there shall be peace among the nations, 2:2-4. These verses with slight variations are also found in Micah 4:1-3. It is uncertain as to the relation of these two passages, whether one quoted from the other, or both from an earlier writer, or neither. One explanation is that Isaiah selected the passage, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, from Micah as a text for this sermon. Immediately following this vision of the ideal Zion, the prophet comes down to the real condition of Judah urging upon it a godly walk (vs. 5) pointing out in the remainder of Chapter 2 her pollution and consequent punishment. Such sins as alliance with foreign nations indulging in their evil practices, trusting in material wealth and power, and outright idolatry are mentioned in verses 6-8. In the remainder of this chapter is described the consequences of these great sins; in general humiliation to the guilty ones, while Jehovah will be exalted, verses 9-11. In particular certain exalted objects will be brought low while Jehovah will be exalted. The day of Jehovah is foretold and described, verses 12-17. Idols and idolatry must pass away, while the wicked flee from the terror of Jehovah, 18-21. It is not only confidence in idols, but even confidence in man is folly, vs. 22.

Chapter three, continues the same theme of Judah's sins, with special emphasis upon their effects. Jehovah will take away from them their necessary support (verse 1). Public men are to be removed, resulting in anarchy, and the reasons are set forth as the effect of sin, particularly the wickedness of Judah's rulers, verses 2-15. Following this denunciation of the wicked rulers is a denunciation of the pride and luxury of the Babylonian women, verses 16-4:1.

Chapter 4:2-6 presents the second great Messianic prophecy of Isaiah, that of the Branch of Jehovah, bringing into view again the future glory of the church as Zion purified. "The prophecy of the Branch of Jehovah in Isaiah 4:2-6 is a counterpart of that of chap. 2:2-4. The one opens, the other closes, the appeal to the house of Jacob. The one presents an outward historical picture, the other an inner view of the redemption of the true Israel. The one should be compared with the parable of the mustard seed, the other with the parable of the leaven. (Matt. 13:31-33)"<sup>1</sup> The climax of this second sermon of Isaiah first there seems to be presented the person through whom Zion will attain its glorious state, the figurative language being suggestive of both the divine and human nature of Christ (verse 2). The people of Zion are to be purified through the power of the Spirit of God, verses 3-4. The Divine Presence is to be manifested, glorifying the church, verse 5, and the Divine Protection is promised, verse 6.

There are striking resemblances between this sermon and the one recorded in chapter one. Each puts strong emphasis upon the fact of sin and its consequences, and that the way of Israel must be through judgment to glory; each looks through the sin and misery of the present to Zion redeemed through Jehovah, mighty to save; each sees the salvation of the remnant to the glory of His Grace.

Chap. 2:1. "The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem."

This title is similar to 1:1. Seeing the word is an expression used frequently in the prophets, the idea expressed by vision and word being similar. The term here used for word denotes a "command, a promise, a doctrine, an oracle, a revelation, a message." See I Sam. 3:1.

Verses 2-4. "Let us now inquire after the essential content and the corresponding essential prophetic thoughts of this passage. Beyond question the four main ideas are (1) the temple - a mountain (including Zion) to be exalted into prominence above all other hills; (2) Jerusalem will be the source of law and revelation; (3) there will be a confluence of all nations thither; (4) universal peace is to be effected by divine judgment among the nations. These essential contents furnish a clear prediction of four corresponding facts, which are fulfilled in the origin and propagation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They may be thus formulated: (1) Jerusalem occupies a conspicuous historical, geographical, and religious position in the origin and development of the Kingdom of God on earth; (2) the Gospel is a republication and enlargement of the law and word of Jehovah, having issued from Jerusalem as a geographical and historical starting point, (comp. Luke 24:47); (3) the nations will acknowledge and accept the truths and excellencies of this new and higher revelation; (4) the ultimate result will be universal peace among the nations. By this method of interpretation we show due regard to the language and thought of the writer, avoid the unnatural extremes of literalism, allow no fanciful allegorizing, and obtain a result which is at once simple, clear, and evidencing as a truthful exposition, and confirmed by manifested New Testament fulfilment."2

2. "And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and all shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it."

"In the latter days" refers to the future in general as in Gen. 49:1 and Deut. 4:30. It is used frequently in the prophets to refer particularly to the times of the Messiah, and in the New Testament to the Christian dispensation, I Pet. 1:20; I John 2:18; Heb. 1:12. The preeminence of the gospel church shall be recognized by all the nations. Is. 27:13; 66:20; Ps. 22:27; Ps. 86:9; Rev. 11:15.

3. "And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion will go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem."

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Ibid. pp. 329-330.

The great missionary vision of Isaiah is being revealed. See Is. 5:22-25 and 60:3-6. "The desire of the many peoples shall be instruction in the true religion. This is shown in their determination to seek it and to follow its teachings. Their destination is Zion. From Zion - Jerusalem will go forth the law, that is, instruction regarding the questions man has to ask at God; and the word of Jehovah, is that by which the world was created and by which it is spiritually transformed. -- This was fulfilled at the Feast of Pentecost when the first fruits of the Church of Christ proclaimed the law of Zion, that is, the gospel in all the languages of the world."3

4. "And he will judge between the nations, and will decide concerning many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

The teacher of verse three is the one who arbitrates in verse four with the result that men will convert their weapons of warfare into implements for farming. When he shall be the teacher, the lesson of peace will be learned. This condition of universal peace is far from fulfillment now. As Alexander points out, "The event is suspended on a previous condition, namely the confluence of the nations to the church, which has not yet taken place." The most effective agent for peace in the world is the minister of the gospel and the missionary of the cross. See Isaiah 7; Ps. 72:3-7.

5. "O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of Jehovah."

(I John 1:5,7) Following the vision of the future glory of Zion is the practical exhortation of the prophet to sinful Judah of his times to walk in a manner worthy of such a destiny. "The summons, 'Come and let us walk', is the echo of the summons, 'Come and let us go up' of verse 4. See Micah 4:3. "Walk as children of light", Eph. 5:8. Light in the Bible frequently refers to the Scripture and to Christ himself. Ps. 9:105; Acts 26:23; II Cor. 4:4; John 8:12.

6. "For thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob, because they are filled with customs from the east, and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they strike hands with the children of foreigners."

Jehovah is addressed as having forsaken Judah because of their sins which are here listed. They had forsaken Jehovah and he had forsaken them, Is. 31:16-17. In particular, in intercourse with heathen nations they fell into their superstitious practices, such as soothsaying. See Is. 8:19. Note the sin of Saul, I Chron. 10:13, and Philistine soothsaying, I Sam. 28, and II Kings 1:2. Also they join hands with foreigners in foreign alliances. Solomon had done it in marriages, I Kings 11:1-2. Ahaz did so for political reasons, II Kings 16:7.

7. "And their land is full of silver and gold, neither is there any end of their treasures; their land also is full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots."

This increase in wealth and military strength, both probably being secured through foreign intercourse, was in violation of the command of Deut. 31:16-17. Solomon had been guilty of these sins, I Kings 10:21-27. Their tendency was to cause the people to put confidence in their own wealth and strength rather than in God. Is. 31:1; Ps. 20:7. Horses were not only used for military purposes but had also been used in idolatrous practices. II Kings 23:11.

8. "Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made."

For idolatry in Uzziah's reign, see II Kings 15:4, in Jotham's reign, I Kings 15:35, and particularly in the reign of Ahaz, II Chron. 28:2-4, 23-25. The word "idols" in this verse means "non-entities", "gods which are no gods," Jer. 2:11; "for we know that an idol is nothing in the world," I Cor. 8:4. They worshipped the works of their own hands "as if that could be a god to them, which was not only a creature, but their creature, and that which their own fancies had devised, and their own fingers had made."<sup>5</sup> See Ps. 115:4-8. "The nation whose God will one day become the desire and salvation of all nations had exchanged Him for the idols of the nations, and vied with them in the appropriation of heaven religion and practice."<sup>6</sup>

9. "And the mean man is bowed down, and the great man is brought low: therefore forgive them not."

"Here the Prophet passes from the sin to its punishment, or rather simultaneously alludes to both, the verbs in the first clause being naturally applicable as well to voluntary humiliation in sin as to compulsory humiliation in punishment, while the verb in the last clause would suggest, of course, to a Jewish reader the two fold idea of pardoning and lifting up. They who bowed themselves to idols should be bowed down by the mighty hand of God, instead of being raised up from their wilful self-abasement by the pardon of their sins."<sup>7</sup> Matthew Henry thinks that the prayer "therefore forgive them not" amounts to a threatening, and that it refers not to individuals many of whom repented and were pardoned, but to the body of the nation against whom God's righteous judgment had been passed and not to be reversed. One interpretation of this last clause, which the Hebrew form of the verb allows, is that it expresses "not so much the Prophet's own desire as the certainty of the event, arising from the righteousness of God."<sup>8</sup> In line with this interpretation is an old paraphrase as follows, "So great is their sin, that thou Lord wilt not pardon them." See I John 5:16.

10. "Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, from before the anger of Jehovah, and from the glory of his majesty."

Palestine is a land of rocks and caves, the latter a common hiding place from danger. Israel when oppressed by Midian and when attacked by the Philistines had taken refuge in caves. Judges 6:2; I Sam. 13:6; 14:11. The nation that was supposed to be a glorious one shall and must creep away and hide itself ignominiously, when the glory of God which it had rejected, but which alone is true glory, is judicially manifested."<sup>9</sup> Rev. 15-16; Jer. 10:10.

11. "The lofty looks of man shall be brought low, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day."

Under the judgment of God the pride of man shall be brought low, Jer. 13:31,32, and Jehovah show himself to be exalted, Is. 5:16, Jer. 9:24, in the day of Jehovah here announced, and described more fully in verses 15-17.

12. "For there shall be a day of Jehovah of hosts upon all that is proud and haughty, and upon all that is lifted up; and it shall be brought low;"

"Jehovah of hosts hath a day"<sup>10</sup> that is "an appointed time for the manifestation of his power."<sup>11</sup>

"The 'Day of Jehovah' in the prophetic writings, is conceived of, sometimes more generally, as denoting any great manifestation of God's power in judgment or salvation (e.g. the locusts in Joel 2), sometimes more eschatologically, of the final crisis in the history of God's kingdom, involving the overthrow of all opposition, and the complete triumph of righteousness (e.g. Is. 2:2-5; Joel 3; Amos 9:11ff; Zech 14, etc.). The two things are not unconnected; the one is the prelude, or anticipatory stage of the other. --- (1) Relation to Israel. The 'Day' is in its primary aspect a day of judgment (Is. 2:12); not however, to be thought of as a day of vengeance only on the adversaries of Israel (Amos 5:18ff). Israel itself would be the first to experience the strokes of the Divine chastisement: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities" (Amos 3:2). God's judgments on Israel, while retributive, were also purifying and sifting; a remnant would remain, who would be the seed of a holier community (Is. 6:13; Ps 9:9; Zech. 3:13,20, etc.) -- (2) To the nations. A wider scope is the relation of the 'Day' to the gentile world. The nations are used as the instruments of God's judgments on Israel (Assyrians, Chaldeans, Persians) but they, too, would in turn be judged by Jehovah (cf. the prophecies against the nations in Isa. Jer. Ezek. Nahum, Hab. etc.). The result would be, although this does not fully appear in every prophet, that a remnant of the heathen would also turn to Jehovah, and be rescued from the judgments, (Zech. 14:16). More generally an extension of the Kingdom of God would take place till the earth was filled with God's glory (e.g. Is. 2:2-5, with Micah 4:1-5; Is. 42:4; 60; 66:3-6; ---) -- and prophecy closes with the announcement of Him, Jehovah's messenger, by whom His great and terrible day of Jehovah is to be brought in (Mal. 4)."<sup>12</sup>

13. "And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, upon all the oaks of Bashan,"

Not only will the judgment of God fall upon man, but also upon the many objects in nature in which man takes pride and confidence. Specific examples of the noblest of the forest trees are the cedars of Lebanon, the oaks of Bashan. There may be a reference here to the truth frequently expressed in scripture that nature must suffer from the curse of sin as well as man. Some interpreters take the cedars and oaks here as figures for the princes and nobles of the land whose pride would be brought low.

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Revised Version, margin.

Alexander.

James Orr in International Standard Bible Encycl., p. 977.

14. "And upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that were lifted up,"

Continuing the thought of judgment upon lofty objects of national pride and delight, mountains and hills are mentioned, which were scenes of idolatrous practices in Judah.

15. "And upon every lofty tower, and upon every fortified wall,"

Uzziah and Jotham had built extensive fortifications in Jerusalem and Judah. II Chron. 26:9-10; 27:3-4. That which is exalted in the world of nature is followed by the objects of pride and glory made by man. Works of human art are last mentioned as being nearer to the sinful pride of man which is the ultimate cause of the judgment."<sup>13</sup>

16. "And upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant imagery."

Tarshish is supposed by some to have been a Phoenician settlement in southwest Spain. Ships of Tarshish evidently had reference to the largest merchant ships. I Kings 10:22; Rev. 18:17-19. "All pleasant imagery" is also translated, "pictures of desire". See Numbers 33:52. The Vulgate translation is "All that is beautiful to the sight." This may be "a general expression for such lofty and imposing objects as had just been enumerated - cedars, oaks, mountains, hills, towers, walls, ships, and in short, all attractive and majestic objects."<sup>14</sup>

17. "And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be brought low; and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day."

See verse 11. Repetition here for emphasis.

18. "And the idols shall utterly pass away."

This was literally fulfilled in the history of Israel following the Babylonian captivity. See also Hosea 13:8, and Zech. 13:2. This is an inevitable consequence when Jehovah alone is exalted.

19. "And men shall go into the caves of the rocks, and into the holes of the earth, from before the terror of Jehovah, and from the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake mightily the earth."

As the previous verse tells what will become of the idols, this verse tells what will become of the idolators. They will flee to the caves and holes of the earth in an attempt to escape the presence of Jehovah for judgment. Jehovah arising to shake mightily the earth is a figure for the terrible and universal judgments He will cause to fall on the earth. (Isa. 2:6,7; Heb. 12:26.)

20. "In that day men shall cast away their idols of silver, and their idols of gold, which have been made for them to worship, to the moles and the bats;"

This further explains verse 18. The idol-worshippers, convinced by God's judicial manifestation that their idols are non-entities, and furious over their unfortunate deception, will throw away with imprecations their gold and silver images which artist hands made to their order, and thrust them like smuggled goods in bat-holes and mole-heaps to hide them from the eyes of the Judge, that, after casting away the useless burden that would condemn them, they may then betake themselves to flight."15

21. "To go into the caverns of the rocks, and into the clefts of the ragged rocks, from before the terror of Jehovah, and from the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake mightily the earth."

This is similar to the refrain in verses 10 and 19. How foolish and futile is man's attempt to escape from the presence and power of Jehovah of hosts! What a vivid picture of the terrors of the final judgment! In that great and terrible day of Jehovah, not only the presence of God, but also that which is as equally impossible for the impenitent sinner to face, namely, the wrath of the Lamb, will so reveal and condemn the objects of Divine wrath, that they will "say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?" See Rev. 6:12-17.

22. "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?"

Not only must confidence in idols cease (see above vs.), but also confidence in man, even the great man, who is frail and mortal. Is. 40:15, 7; Jas. 4:14; Ps. 146:3-5 has a similar exhortation as this verse.

Chap. 3. See analysis at beginning of chap. 2.

3:1. "For, behold, the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah stay and staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water;"

Continuing the subject of the last part of chapter 2, namely the effects of Judah's sins, this verse predicts that the Lord will take away from them all kinds of support, mentioning in particular first bread and water. As is common in Isaiah, Jehovah of hosts is referred to as the source of judgments. (See 1:24, 2:12, etc.) Bread is considered the staff of life. The removal of bread and water means famine, and this prediction was actually fulfilled when the Chaldeans took Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar, II Kings 25:4; Jer. 52:6, and again when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem under Titus. We are told that in each case the famine conditions were so terrible that women devoured their own children.

2. "The mighty man, and the man of war; the judge, and the prophet, and the diviner, and the elder;"

Also the great men of the state will be taken away. This, too, was fulfilled in the time of Nebuchadnezzar. II Kings 24:14-16. Enumerating particular, there are the military men, the hero and the soldier; also

the civil and religious leaders, the judge, the representative of justice, the prophet who is closely related to the diviner or soothsayer, and the elder or old man whose advice was highly regarded.

3. "The captain of fifty, and the honorable man, and the counsellor, and the expert artificer, and the skilful enchanter."

Not only military leaders will be taken from Judah but also those expert in mechanical and magical arts. Captain of fifty probably means army officer; honorable man, literally means a man eminent in counsel, see II Kings 5:1; counsellor, a public official; it is a question whether expert artificer refers to mechanical or magical art. Skilful enchanter is translated in the Vulgate "skilled in whispering."

4. "And I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them."

This probably means children in character, and not in age. The R. margin reads the last clause, "with childishness shall they rule over them." Another translation is "and outrage shall rule over them."<sup>16</sup> A government by weaklings means a distressed people. See Eccles. 10:16.

5. "And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbor: the child shall behave himself proudly against the old man, and the base against the honorable."

Misgovernment will be followed by anarchy, mutual oppression, and disrespect for age and rank. Micah 7:3-6. "Man becomes a wolf to man. wickedness receives the stamp of the law. The guest and the host are in danger from each other."<sup>17</sup> The command of Lev. 19:32 will be disobeyed, when Elisha was mocked by the children, II Kings 2:23, and David cursed Shimei, II Sam. 16:5-9. The most striking example of this sin was when they spat upon Jesus and mocked Him, Matt. 26:67; 27:28-30.

6. "When a man shall take hold of his brother in the house of his father, saying, Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler, and let this ruin be under thy hand:"

Such will be the anarchy and distress that "the government goes a begging."<sup>17</sup> In the crying need for rulers, one who is supposed to possess sufficiency will be implored to take the public office, in the hope that under his leadership they would be saved out of this general wretchedness and anarchy. "When the purple of the ruler is offered for sale at the market, then woe to the buyer and the seller alike."<sup>18</sup>

7. "In that day shall he lift up his voice, saying, I will not be a ruler; for in my house is neither bread nor clothing: ye shall not make me ruler of the people."

Instead of desiring the office, as would be expected under normal circumstances, conditions will be so deplorable that he will refuse the invitation. "I am not a physician" is the Vulgate rendering. "I am not sufficient to be a leader" is the LXX and Chaldee rendering. Extreme



poverty is given as his reason for refusing the offer, insufficient to maintain the dignity and demands of the office. The ruler in such a time of distress must needs be a healer, Hebrew "a binder up". The Son of Man did not fail to respond gladly as Healer for fallen man, Is. 53:4.

8. "For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen; because their tongue and their doings are against Jehovah, to provoke the eyes of his glory."

The cause of such a condition of ruin and fall as presented in the above verses is sin. Lam. 5:16. Here particularly, sin in word and in deed is mentioned. The responsibility for the judgments falling upon Jerusalem and Judah is upon themselves. "The Prophet here explains his use of the word ruin in reference to the commonwealth of Israel, by declaring that it had in fact destroyed itself by the offence which its iniquities had given to the holiness of God, here compared to the sensitiveness of the human eye."<sup>19</sup> See Ezek. 8:4-6, 17, 18.

9. "The show of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have done evil unto themselves."

In contrast to the eyes of His glory manifesting perfect holiness (Is. 60:1-3), is the bold and unashamed exposure of their sins by the people of Israel. The expression of their face displays their sin, and, like the Sodomites, Gen. 19:5-9, they make no secret of their wickedness. Each unabashed sinning brings down woe upon the sinner. Prov. 8:36; Eccl. 10:23.

10. "Say ye of the righteous, that it shall be well with him; for ye shall eat the fruit of their doings."

This and the following verse state a universal law of Divine administration consistent with the blessing and the curse predicted in Chap. 19-20, and containing in brief truth such as is stated in Deut. 28. Compare this verse with Deut. 28:1-14.

11. "Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him; for what his hands have done shall be done unto him."

This is the converse of verse 10. Our best commentary on this verse is Deut. 28:15-68. Note the contrasts in verses 10 and 11.

12. "As for my people, children ~~and~~ <sup>are</sup> their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they that lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths."

Some think the reference here is to Ahaz who began to reign when he was 20 years old, among whose councillors the queen mother was prominent. It may refer to rulers who are weaklings in character, influenced by their harem. The second part of the verse probably refers to religious leaders - "The way of salvation shown in the law is no more to be seen or heard; it has perished, as it were, in the preaching of the false prophets with their misleading doctrines."<sup>20</sup> Or if their preaching be true their practices may be false and thus contradict their words. When

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the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch (Matt. 15:14). See also Matt. 23:14, for fate of those who neither enter heaven themselves nor suffer others to enter.

13. "Jehovah standeth up to contend, and standeth to judge the peoples."

"Thus God stands - Accuser and Judge and Executioner in one Person - in the midst of the nations (Ps. 7:8). But among the nations it is Israel specially, and among the Israelites it is particularly the leaders of the poor, misguided, and neglected people against whom He stands, as shown in verses 14, 15."<sup>21</sup>

14. "Jehovah will enter into judgment with the elders of his people, and the princes thereof: It is ye that have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses:"

The second part of the verse is commonly understood to be the beginning of the accusation in the words of the Judge himself, which is continued into the next verse. The pronoun "Ye" is emphatic, as he directly accused the rulers of Israel, - "the heads of houses, families and tribes", and "the hereditary chiefs of Israel, here and elsewhere treated as representatives of the people" - of having eaten up, or burnt up the vineyard. The vineyard represents the people or house of Israel, a parable of which is found in Is. 5:1-7, its application being in verse 7. The rulers were made the keepers of the vineyard, but instead of doing so had consumed it. J., F. and Brown point out that this is a "type of the crowning guilt of the husbandmen in the days of Jesus Christ (Matt. 21:34-41)."

15. "What mean ye that ye crush my people, and grind the face of the poor? saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts."

The sovereign, omnipotent Judge in this climax of his accusation of the rulers, calls them to consider and answer regarding their extreme cruelty, to describe which He uses some of the strongest expressions. A special characteristic of their cruelty was merciless oppression of the poor. See Micah 3:1-3.

16-17. "Moreover Jehovah said, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with outstretched necks and wanton eyes, walking and dancing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet; therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and Jehovah will lay bare their secret parts."

Turning from His denunciation of the wicked rulers the Accuser and Judge in the next paragraph denounces the wicked women of Jerusalem (Compare Isaiah 32:9-15) particularly for their pride and luxury, and predicts the consequent judgment. Prov. 16:18 is a good text for this paragraph.

The daughters of Zion were proud, wanton, lovers of luxury, much like the women of Sodom. See Ezek. 16:49-50. Therefore they must suffer a loathsome disease, scabs on the crown of the head, and shameful exposure. See Ezek. 16:36-37.

18-23. "In that day the Lord will take away the beauty of their anklets, and the cauls, and the crescents; the pendants, and the bracelets, and the mufflers; the headtires, and the ankle chains, and the sashes, and the perfume-boxes, and the amulets; the rings, and the nose-jewels; the festival robes, and the mantles, and the shawls, and the satchels; the hand-mirrors, and the fine linen, and the turbans, and the veils."

Emphasizing their love of ornament there is here a list of 21 articles of feminine attire which Jehovah would take from the women of Jerusalem. They may be briefly described as follows:

- (1) Anklets - the word from which tinkling is derived, vs. 16.
- (2) Cauls - R.V. Margin, "networks".
- (3) Crescents and (4) pendants - used by Midianites, Ju. 8:26.
- (5) Bracelets - R.V. Margin "chains".
- (6) Mufflers - Oriental veils (7) Headtires - also worn by priests, Ex. 39:28, and by the bridegroom, Is. 61:10.
- (8) Ankle-chains - supposed to be used to regulate length of step (9) Sashes - such as were used by brides, Jer. 2:22.
- (10) Perfume-boxes - "holders of scent", breath of an aroma.
- (11) Amulets - derived from word meaning whisper, to work magically, may have been used in superstition. (12) Rings - "signet rings worn on the finger".
- (13) Nose-jewels - See Gen. 24:47.
- (14) Festival robes - changeable suits for special occasions.
- (15) Mantles - worn over the common frocks or tunic. (16) Shawls - broad wrapping - clothes (Ruth 3:15).
- (17) Satchels - probably money-bags, II Kings 5:23. (18) Hand-mirrors - probably polished metal used for looking-glasses. Ex. 38:8.
- (19) Fine linen - frequently mentioned in Scripture, Gen. 41:42; Rev. 19:8.
- (20) Turbans - common head dress in the Orient.
- (21) Veils - large covering for shoulders or head. Gen. 24:65.

Over against this picture of haughtiness, wantonness, and luxury compare the New Testament ideal for women in I Tim. 2:9, 10, and I Pet. 3:3-6.

24. "And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet spices there shall be rottenness; and instead of a girdle, a rope; and instead of well-tailored hair, baldness; and instead of a robe, a girding of sackcloth; branding instead of beauty."

There will come upon the wicked women not only disease, shameful exposure, deprivation of ornaments as mentioned in the above verses, but also general degradation, as described in this verse. "In the fivefold change, shame and sadness take the place of the haughty rejoicing of prosperity." Rottenness and baldness are suggestive of disease, sackcloth mourning, and rope and branding of captivity.

25. "Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war."

To the men of Jerusalem shall come death, and to the women mourning widowhood.

26. "And her gates shall lament and mourn; and she shall be desolate and sit upon the ground."

Gates is here used figuratively probably to represent the people who assembled at the city gates, or as personified the place now deserted cries out in its distress. The desolation is further pictured by the daughter of Zion sitting on the ground - a common posture of grief.

Following the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans the commemorative medal had Judaea represented as a woman sitting under a palm-tree in despair before a standing soldier, while the inscription at the side was "Judaea capta."

Chap. 4:1. "And seven women shall take hold of one man in that day, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name; take thou away our reproach."

The scarcity of the man is here vividly set forth (Isaiah 3:25), also the desperation of the women who must suffer the judgment of God because of their wickedness. The figure of speech picture the desperate effort of these women to escape "the reproach of widowhood" (Is. 54:4) or of being unmarried (Judges 11:37) or of being childless (Gen. 30:23).

One writer on this verse says "A companion picture to 3:6 -- the male population are in search of a ruler; the women in search of a husband."

Chap. 4. (See analysis at beginning of Chap. 2).

2. "In that day shall the branch of Jehovah be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel."

There are several interpretations of this verse. One explains "branch of Jehovah" and "fruit of the land" literally, as referring to the blessings of harvest, the rich produce of the land to be given by Jehovah. Another explains these expressions as referring to the remnant itself, the new growth of Israel after the chastening judgments." A third interpretation, which we prefer, is that both expressions figuratively represent a person, and that person the Messiah. "This Branch is here represented as at once a sprout of Jehovah and a growth of the land of Israel, somewhat dim but very suggestive intimation of the Christ who was at once divine and human."<sup>23</sup> In Jer. 23:5 the Branch is King, in Jer. 33:15 righteous judge, in Zech. 6:12 a man, in Zech. 3:8 a servant, in each use Branch is a proper name for the Messiah. One other interpretation, worthy of our consideration, is that branch represents the Messiah according to the above view, but that the fruit of the land refers to the gospel of Christ. The escaped are the remnant according to the election of grace. Jer. 6:13; 10:20-22.

3. "And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem."

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 . Terry, Hermeneutics, p. 331.

Rom. 11:5. "The Chaldee Paraphrase is "Every one shall be called holy who is written to eternal life; he shall see the consolation of Jerusalem." The meaning of the verse is that the elect shall be sanctified - a clear teaching of the Bible. Eph. 1:4; II Thess. 2:13. "Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see God." (Heb. 12:14). Rev. 21:27.

4. "When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of justice, and by the spirit of burning."

The holiness promised in the above verse is accomplished not by the might or power of men, but through the washing and purging by the Spirit of God. Filth here may refer in particular to the sins of the women of Zion, and blood to the sins of the rulers, both having been so severely denounced in chapter three. "This filth and these spots of blood the Sovereign Ruler washes and purges away (see II Chron. 4:6) by the pouring out of His Spirit or breath (Isaiah 30:28) over the men and women dwelling in Jerusalem."<sup>24</sup> Ezek. 36:25; Mal. 3:3; Matt. 3:11-12.

5. "And Jehovah will create over the whole habitation of mount Zion, and over her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory shall be spread a covering."

The cloud and fire, as in the time of the Exodus, Ex. 13:21-22; 14:19-20, were symbols of God's presence and favor. As verse 2 suggests redemption, and verses 3-4 teach sanctification, verse 5 suggests glorification. "The church is not only to be purified by God's judgments but glorified by his manifested presence, and in that state of glory kept secure by his protection."<sup>25</sup> Over "every dwelling place" and over the sacred assemblies, Jehovah will make a new manifestation of his glorious presence.

6. "And there shall be a pavilion for a shade in the day time from the heat, and for a refuge and for a covert from storm and from rain."

The presence of Jehovah as a protection to his people is further emphasized: "He is as the shade of a pavilion, a refuge, and a covert, while the dangers and distresses are represented by the sun's heat, the storm, and the rain. Ps. 27:5; Ps. 121:5-8; Ps. 91:1.

#### Dctrinal and Practical:

A Glorious Missionary Prophecy. Is. 2:2-4.

1. The Desire of Many Peoples - Salvation, instruction in the true religion.
2. The Determination of Many Peoples - obedience to this instruction - to walk in this light.
3. The Destination of Many Peoples - Zion "the spiritual metropolis of the world." Ps. 87.
4. The Disarmament of the Nations - A result of the acceptance of the gospel.

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A Glorious Church. Is. 4:2-6; Eph. 5:25-26.

1. A Glorious Head - "Fairest Lord Jesus" vs. 2.
2. A Glorious Body - Washed, Purged.
3. A Glorious Presence - Shekinah.

When may we look for the fulfilment of these prophecies of the future  
 ory of Zion? Delitzsch has this to say in answer:

"Is it the Jerusalem which is to see the glorious days of the people of God in this present life (Rev. 12), or is it the Jerusalem of the new heavens and the new earth (Rev. 20)? The proper answer is, Both in one. In the vision of the prophet the Jerusalem of the latter days on earth and the Jerusalem of the life beyond - the glorified Jerusalem of earth and the glorified Jerusalem of heaven - are fused together as one. For it is a characteristic of the Old Testament that it views the closing period of the present life and the eternity that lies beyond as forming one continuous line, and looks upon the whole as if its character were that of earth. The first cross-line was drawn by the New Testament."

## Chap. 5. The Parable of the Vineyard.

This is a third distinct prophecy, similar in many ways to what has preceded. Lowth says, "The subject of this prophecy does not differ materially from chapter one, but it is greatly superior to it in force, in severity, in variety, in elegance."

This subject, The Parable of the Vineyard, may conveniently be divided into three parts: (1) The Parable Stated, 1-6; (2) The Parable Applied, 7; (3) The Parable Explained, 8-30. The Parable shows the privileges, responsibilities, sin and ruin of Judah. Judah was as a favored vineyard, but its fruit was a disappointment, verses 1-7. Its fate is destruction. Six woes are listed, which must be punished. The closing paragraph of the chapter sets forth a foreign invasion as a means of God's judgment, and the consequent distress of Judah, 8-30. This chapter differs from the preceding in that its emphasis is almost entirely on the dark side of the prophecy.

1. "Let me sing for my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well-beloved had a vineyard in a very fruitful hill:"

Bible scholars do not fail to note the variety of methods used by Isaiah in presenting his prophecies, and the varied forms of his literary excellence. For instance his first prophecy (Chap. 1) begins like the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32; his second one with a great missionary text which was used also by his contemporary Micah. The present prophecy begins in a more popular style, that of a musician calling a crowd to gather around him to hear a beautiful song. He first announces his subject - "of my beloved touching his vineyard." This language is similar to the poetic language of the Song of Solomon where the same figure of the vineyard is used, as was also used in the New Testament by Jesus himself, Matt. 21:33. As he reveals later "my Beloved" is Jehovah, the God of Israel, and his vineyard is the house of Israel (verse 7). Beginning his song he first tells the location of Jehovah's vineyard, "in a very fruitful hill" or as the Hebrew puts it "a horn, son of oil" suggestive of fertility and fatness. So Jehovah had favored Israel with such privileges. Their lines had fallen in pleasant places.

2. "And he digged it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also hewed out a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes."

This remainder of the parable pictures the labor, care, interest, provision, protection, given the vineyard, the expectation of fruitfulness, and the disappointment. Such is a parable of what Jehovah has done for Israel. Deut. 32:8-10; Ps. 44:1-3; Rom. 9:4. They were indeed the apple of His eye. He looked for fruit, (verse 7) (Mk. 11:13) (Gal. 5:23), but what a disappointment - wild grapes! Deut. 32:32-33; Gal. 19-21.

3. "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard."

Here the Lord of the vineyard is represented as speaking. He calls

upon the people themselves to be the judges in this case, appealing to them as in Chap. 1:18. An excellent illustration of this is in the parable of Jesus, (Matt. 21:20-21) Here it is the vineyard representing the people who are under judgment, there the husbandmen representing the teachers of the people. They are being led to condemn themselves, just as David did following Nathan's parable. II Sam. 12:1-6.

4. "What could have been done<sup>more</sup> to my vineyard, that I have not done to it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?"

Had not the Lord of the vineyard done all that could be done consistent with the circumstances of the case for the good of His vineyard? Even so had God from ancient times sent unto his people his servants the prophets, "daily rising up early and sending them, yet they hearkened not." Jer. 7:25-26. With a similar heart of longing over Jerusalem Jesus cried out, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem -- how often would I have gathered thy children together -- and ye would not." Matt. 23:37.

5. "And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up: I will break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down:"

With no answer from the people the Lord of the vineyard proceeds to answer his own question. What he will do to his vineyard is not to try new methods of cultivation. In accord with the previous verse the conclusion is, according to Barnes, that God has done all for the salvation of sinners that in the circumstances of the case could be done, and that if they are lost, they only will bear the blame. "In New Testament terminology, There is none other name under heaven" (Acts 4:12). What remains for the Lord of the vineyard to do instead of protecting it is to expose it so that it will be consumed and trodden upon. So to the wicked people must come the wrath and vengeance of the God of justice and righteousness. Luke 21:24.

6. "And I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned nor hoed; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it."

Desolation, no cultivation, a wilderness, no rain! What a picture of what the Lord of the vineyard will do. The last part of the verse reveals fully that it is Jehovah speaking, for only He can command the clouds. Jeremiah, Chapter 14, gives a vivid picture of a drought in Judah and Jerusalem. One instance of the fulfillment of this prediction that the vineyard would be laid waste, is recorded in II Chron. 36:1-21 when Jerusalem was laid waste by the Chaldeans. Matthew Henry suggests that this prophecy of the Lord of the vineyard has "its frequent accomplishment in the departure of God's Spirit from those persons who have long resisted him, and striven against him, and the removal of his presence from those places that have been long a reproach to it, while it has been an honor to them."

7. "For the vineyard of Jehovah of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for justice, but, behold, oppression; for righteousness, but, behold, a cry."



The application of the parable is made quite clear in this verse. It reveals who the Lord of the vineyard is, who the vineyard, who the pleasant plant, what the Lord looked for, and what He saw. The pleasant plant corresponds to the choice vine of verse 2. Compare Jer. 2:21 and Psalms 80:8-11. He looked for good fruit (Micah 6:8; Matt. 3:8-10; John 15:2; I John 3:7-8). What He saw was the opposite. Oppression is also translated, shedding of blood (R.V. Margin). One meaning is "scab". Delitzsch says that the word here denotes "the grasping appropriation and unjust heaping up of worldly possessions." One interpretation of "cry" is that it refers to the cry that attends anarchy, covetousness and dissipation, as illustrated by the cries of the rabble at the crucifixion of Christ. A more common interpretation is that it refers to the cry of the oppressed. The blood of Abel crieth from the ground (Gen. 4:10). In Egypt the cry of the children of Israel came up unto God by reason of the bondage (Ex. 2:23-24). "Behold, the hire of laborers who mowed your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth out ---" James 4:5.5:4

"That true religion is not a plant that grows wild among men, but is a divine culture in human history; that from the people of his choice the Lord expects the fruit of righteousness; that the divine husbandry is thwarted by some natural tendency to degeneration in the people, and by the infidelity of their civil and spiritual leaders; that judgment - the withdrawal of protection and gracious influences - is the inevitable issue of such apostasy: these are the main truths expressed by the image as conceived in the mind of Isaiah, and truths which are developed with remarkable incisiveness in the teaching of our Lord."1

8. "Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no room, and ye be made to dwell alone in the midst of the land!"

The wild grapes of the vineyard are described more in detail as sin. In verses 8-24 six woes are pronounced upon social sins of the times, sins of "the world and the flesh," centering around the "land question and the liquor question" (G. A. Smith). The first of these sins condemned is the unjust grasping after worldly possessions - greed and covetousness, like Ahab when he seized the vineyard of Naboth (I Kings 21:16-20), and like the rich man of the parable of Jesus who lay up treasures for himself, but was not rich towards God, Lu. 12:16-24. Similar denunciations of such sin are found in Jer. 22:13-17 and Hab. 2:9-12. In this connection Matthew Henry quotes two sayings from the Latin: "If the whole earth were monopolized, avarice would thirst for more," and again "Was the wide world created merely for you?"

9. "In mine ears saith Jehovah of hosts, Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, even great and fair, without inhabitant."

Jehovah reveals to the prophet the result of the greed of Judah, namely many empty houses, in a word, general desolation. A similar prediction was given by the Lord to the prophet in answer to his question, "How long?" Isaiah 6:11, 12. When on earth in person our Lord in His

ament over Jerusalem said, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Greed and covetousness bring desolation to many houses - a timely warning for the present!

10. "For ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, and a homer of seed shall yield but an ephah."

The result of such sin would mean also the failure of the crops. If the seed planted they would get as a crop only one-tenth of the seed planted, in other words almost a complete crop failure.

We are told that "acres", literally "yokes" was the amount of land the yoke of oxen could plow in a day. A bath amounted to about 8 gallons. Ten baths are a homer (Ezek. 45:11). The ephah is a dry measure of the same capacity as the liquid bath. A homer was a dry measure containing about 11 bushels. It was equal to ten ephahs.

11. "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that tarry late into the night, till wine inflame them!"

A second sin upon which a woe is pronounced is that of drunkenness - intemperance. It was considered particularly disreputable by the Jews to rise up early and drink wine. The sin is all the greater in making it an all-day business, revelling in the day-time, and on into the night. Tarrying long at the wine means woe, sorrow, contentions, complaining, wounds without cause, redness of eyes (Prov. 23:29-30, 33), and worse (Gal. 5:21 - "Envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which forewarn you, that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.")

12. "And the harp and the lute, the tabret and the pipe, and wine, be in their feasts; but they regard not the work of Jehovah, neither have they considered the operation of his hands."

Instead of using musical instruments in praising God, as did King David, they <sup>use</sup> them to accompany their revellings and carousals. They come spiritually blinded, forget God, and leave out of their consideration the work of God. "In their carousing and revelling they have no sense for the moving and working of God in history; nor do they at all serve the judgment which is being prepared in the present. And therefore will the judgment fall upon them in this blind, dull, stupid animal state."<sup>2</sup>

A poetical picture of such sin in not regarding Jehovah is found in Job 21:11-15, and a most vivid illustration of it in Belshazzar's drunken glatrous feast. (Dan. 5:1-4, 23). On the other hand note the psalmist's regard for the work of Jehovah, as in praising Him he said,

"How great are thy works, O Jehovah!  
Thy thoughts are very deep.  
A brutish man knoweth not;  
Neither doth a fool understand this."

- Ps. 92:5-6.

13. "Therefore my people are gone into captivity for lack of knowledge; and their honorable men are famished, and their multitude are parched with thirst."

Some effects of the sin of God's people are captivity, hunger, and thirst, both the nation's leading men as well as the common people suffering from the calamities. During the reign of Ahaz at the time of the war with Syria and Israel a great multitude were taken captive to Damascus (II Chron. 28:5-8). The primary meaning may be a prophetic reference to the Babylonian captivity. The form of the sin here judged is spiritual ignorance and blindness. "Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider" (Is. 1:3). "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hos. 4:6). Like the Gentiles of whom Paul wrote, "They refused to have God in their knowledge" (Rom. 1:28).

14. "Therefore Sheol hath enlarged its desire, and opened its mouth without measure; and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth among them, descend into it."

One other effect of the sin above denounced is subjection to death. Sheol, or the place of abode of the dead, is figuratively represented as a ravenous monster, with mouth open to receive all these people of Judah, all the revellers with their glory and their pomp. Compare the incident in Numbers 16:30-34, when the earth swallowed up the rebels in the time of Korah, and Herod's terrible death recorded in Acts 12:21-23, and the warnings of Luke 17:34 and Rom. 13:13. "Jerusalem has thus been swallowed up twice by Hades: once in the Chaldean war, and again in the Roman war. But the invisible background of the outward event was the fact that it had already fallen under the accursed power of hell."<sup>3</sup>

15. "And the mean man is bowed down, and the great man is humbled, and the eyes of the lofty are humbled:"

The thought of this verse is similar to what is found in Chapter 9, 11, 17. "Let a man be ever so high, death will bring him low; ever so mean and death will bring him lower."<sup>4</sup> Outstanding O.T. examples of the high and mean brought low are Pharaoh, Sennacherib, and Nebuchadnezzar.

16. "But Jehovah of hosts is exalted in justice, and God the Holy one is sanctified in righteousness."

See Chap. 1:27 and comments. Much of the theology proper is found here. In the execution of His judgments upon the mean and the great, He reveals His power, His justice, His holiness, His righteousness, and He proves Himself to be worthy of all praise and glory, such as are given Him in the cries of the seraphim in Isaiah 6:3, and in the songs of Moses and the Lamb in Rev. 15:3-4.

17. "Then shall the lambs feed as in their pasture, and the waste places of the fat ones shall wanderers eat."

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Ibid.

Matthew Henry Commentary.

There are various interpretations of this verse. One, taking it literally, considers it a prediction of utter desolation in Judah, the land becoming a pasture for flocks, even the deserted places of the rich becoming the possession of wanderers or foreigners. Such a passage as Isaiah 32:14 seems to bear out this interpretation.

Another view is that "lambs" are used figuratively as referring to the people of God for whom provision will be made although the foreigners take possession of the waste places of the impious Jews. This is the Chaldee interpretation: "Then the just shall feed as it is said to them; and they shall be multiplied, and shall possess the property of the impious." Compare Ezek. 34:14 and Micah 2:12. The Syriac translates the latter part of the verse, "And foreigners shall devour the ruins which are yet to be restored."

In brief the passage may mean "that the pious should be fed, that the proud should be desolate, and their property pass into the hands of strangers." In Isaiah 40:11 it is clear that "lambs" is used figuratively, while in the present passage it is not so clear.

18. "Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of falsehood, and in as it were with a cart rope:"

This is the third woe. It is pronounced on those who instead of being enticed or drawn by sin (James 1:14), take the initiative by making strong effort themselves to sin, "laboriously drawing it to them by soliciting temptation, drawing it out by obstinate persistency in evil and contempt of divine threatenings."<sup>5</sup> The idea seems to be that instead of resisting sin, or driving it from them, they do the opposite, namely, striving to draw sin to themselves, enticing rather than escaping sin. An ancient interpretation of the Rabbins was as follows: "An evil inclination is at first like a fine hair-string, but the finishing like a cart-rope." The evil inclinations of Judas Iscariot may at first have been like "cobwebs", but at last they were like "cables".

19. "That say, Let him make speed, let him hasten his work that we may see it; and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it!"

Not only do they draw doom upon themselves by drawing sin unto themselves, but also by the heinous sin of defiant doubt. In a spirit of scoffing or mockery they defy or challenge the announced judgments of the Holy One of Israel. Such a spirit was present in the early days of the race (Gen. 4:23-24), and is characteristic of the last days. "Knowing this first, that in the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for, from the days that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue they were from the beginning of creation." (II Pet. 3:3-4)

20. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"

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Alexander.

This fourth woe is pronounced upon those who pervert distinctions between right and wrong. Darkness is a common figure in Scripture for evil (Luke 22:33) and light for good (I John 1:6-7). Bitter and bitterness are frequently used with reference to sin. Jer. 2:19; 4:18; Acts 23; Rom. 3:14; Heb. 12:15. The word of God is sweeter than honey (Ps. 19:10; 119:103).

21. "Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!"

This fifth woe is uttered against those guilty of self-conceit - a fundamental sin. In Prov. 3:7 we find an admonition against this sin together with its antidote:

"Be not wise in thine own eyes:  
Fear Jehovah, and depart from evil."

Alexander well observes that undue reliance upon human reason is indeed compatible with the fear of God. See also Prov. 26:12.

22. "Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength mingle strong drink;"

This sixth woe is like the second, verse 11, in being pronounced upon the drunkards. As is shown in verse 23, it has special reference to the unjust judges. Woe unto them "whose god is the belly, and whose glory is in their shame." Instead of using their strength to promote justice and righteousness they dissipate it in intemperance.

23. "That justify the wicked for a bribe, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!"

This is closely connected with verse 22. Drunkenness, bribery and injustice are frequently found together. A mother's counsel to a king Proverbs 31:4-5 are to the point "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes to say, Where is strong drink? Lest they drink, and forget the law, And pervert the justice due any that is afflicted." Woe unto them who for a bribe clear the guilty and take away the right of the innocent. "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the righteous, Both of them alike are an abomination to Jehovah." (Prov. 17:15).

24. "Therefore as the tongue of fire devoureth the stubble, and as the dry grass sinketh down in the flame, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust; because they have rejected the law of Jehovah of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel."

Following the six woes pronounced upon the sinners in Judah there begins anew here a description of the resulting punishment and its effect, and a summary statement of their sin, which was the cause of all God's judgments. The first figure of speech to describe God's vengeance is that of fire devouring dry grass and stubble (Mal. 4:1a). The second figure to describe its effect upon the people is a tree, representing

the people. It is not a healthy, fruit-bearing tree, but one whose root is rottenness and blossoms blown off like dust. (Mal. 4:1b and Ps. 1:46). The reason for such calamities is given in the closing summary statement to the effect that they have rejected the teaching of Jehovah and despised His word. This was the reason Israel's first King, Saul, was rejected of God (I Sam. 15:23, 26) and for the same reason the people were rejected (II Kings 17:14-15). Compare John 12:41.

25. "Therefore is the anger of Jehovah kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them; and the mountains tremble, and their dead bodies are as refuse in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still."

When His people reject his law the anger of Jehovah is kindled. It is difficult to tell whether this manifestation of His wrath refers to past or to future judgments. Alexander says, "The previous inflections here referred to are described as a stroke from Jehovah's outstretched hand, so violent as to shake the mountains, and so destructive as to fill the streets with corpses." In the time of King Josiah great was the wrath of Jehovah because of the rejection of His word (II Kings 22:13, 17). In the time of King Zedekiah the people of Jerusalem "mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and scoffed at his prophets, until the wrath of Jehovah arose against his people, till there was no remedy." (II Chron. 36:16). Delitzsch thinks the reference to dead bodies as refuse in the street indicate this to be a prediction of the bloodshed brought about by the Syro-Ephraimic war in Judah. Notwithstanding all these calamities there are to be even more judgments as predicted in the closing refrain of this verse found also in Isaiah 9:12, 17, 21, and 10:4.

26. "And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss for them from the end of the earth; and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly."

The instruments used of God for further judgments upon Judah, are here predicted as distant nations, the judgments being in the form of foreign invasion, and subjection to these nations. One notable fulfillment was when the Chaldeans destroyed Jerusalem, another the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus, A.D. 70. Isaiah here used two figures which vividly portray the work of God in calling the distant nations to be his instruments in the judgment of Judah. One is the ensign lifted up as a banner to call the nations from afar. The other is the hissing for them. This figure is taken from the custom in bee-culture of hissing in order to assemble the bees. This figure is used in Is. 7:18, where Egypt and Syria are particularly mentioned. The nations are pictured as hurrying swiftly at the call of Jehovah. He has the supreme control over all the nations. See Dan. 4:35.

27. "None shall be weary nor stumble among them; none shall slumber or sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken:"

Verse 26 represented the response of the nations to the summons of Jehovah as prompt and rapid. This verse further describes them as having endurance, sure-footedness, wakefulness, preparedness of outfit. Compare Joel 2:7-8.

28. "Whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent; their horses' hoofs shall be accounted as flint, and their wheels as a whirlwind:"

Their weapons and means of conveyance are here described. The weapons are in readiness for action. We are told that ancients did not shoe horses as are done at present, so that horses with hard hoofs were needed for long marches. See description of war-horse in Job 39:19-25. The wheels of the war-chariots run with such rapidity that they are compared to a whirlwind. Compare Nahum's description of war-chariot. Nahum 2:4.

29. "Their roaring shall be like a lioness, they shall roar like young lions; yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey, and carry it away safe, and there shall be none to deliver."

The battle-cry of the enemy as it draws nearer is like the roaring of a lion for its prey. In fierceness they fall upon their prey and drag it away so that it cannot be recovered. Thus Judah will become the prey of the foreign invader. Compare Jer. 50:17.

30. "And they shall roar against them in that day like the roaring of the sea; and if one look unto the land, behold, darkness and distress; and the light is darkened in the clouds thereof."

It is easy to pass from the figure of the roaring lion to that of the roaring sea. The roaring of the sea suggests the battle-cries of the multitude of the enemy coming upon Judah, while a look landward reveals darkness, catastrophe; and in the heavens the clouds cover the light, a portrayal of "the gloom of anguish" (Is. 8:22), and general calamity.

But may there not be a glimmering hope expressed in this verse? The Massoretic text, instead of "Behold, darkness and distress" has "Behold darkness and light" etc. On the basis of such a reading Delitzsch says, The prophet here prophesies that before it come to an extremity with Judah, approaches will be made toward it within which a divine respite will always again appear. Grace tries and always tries again to spare, till at last the measure of sin is full, and the period for repentance has expired. The history of the Jewish people runs on, according to this law, till the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans." May we not add that this is an unchanging law, effective until the end of this age. See Luke 21:25-26.

#### Doctrinal and Practical:

##### 1. Isaiah's Parable of the Vineyard.

- a. A Favored Vineyard - The goodness of God.
- b. Its Fruit, a disappointment - The sinfulness of man.
- c. Its Fate, destruction - The wages of sin. But there is a free gift. Rom. 6:23 and Ezek. 18:31-32.

2. This chapter emphasizes particularly the Reality of Divine Vengeance. May it not also adumbrate the Redemption of the Remnant in verse , and verse 30 (Massoretic text)?

## Chap. 6. Isaiah's Vision and Commission.

This is one of the great chapters of the Bible. Both its grandeur and simplicity are impressive. It presents first A Vision of Glory (1-4). Its date is about 758 B.C. Its central object is the Lord exalted in glory. The attendant parts of this vision of glory are the throne, train, temple, seraphim, shaking of the foundations of threshold, and the smoke filling the house. The keynote of the vision is holiness. Immediately following this vision of glory is A Voice of Guilt, verse 5. Then there is a Visit of Grace, verses 5-7, and finally The Divine Voice and the Dedicated Volunteer, verses 8-13. Here is the call of the Triune God, and the consecration of the volunteer; the commission to the prophet with the answer to his question, How long?

1. "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple."

See II Chron. 26:21-23 for reference to Uzziah's leprosy and death. Contrast the leper's grave with the loftiness of the Lord - the central object of this vision. Alexander, after quoting from John 1:18; Ex. 33:20; Matt. 5:8; and Gen. 32:30, says, "It is therefore plain that the phrase 'see God' is employed in different senses, and that although his essence is and must be invisible, he may be seen in the manifestation of his glory or in human form. It has been a general opinion in all ages of the church, that in every such manifestation it was God the Son who thus revealed himself. In John 12:41 it is said to have been Christ's glory that Isaiah saw and spoke of, while Paul cites vs. 9 and 10 (Acts 8:25-26) as the language of the Holy Spirit." Matthew Henry suggests that the throne upon which the Lord sits is a throne of glory which calls for worship, a throne of government, which calls for obedience, and a throne of grace to which we may come boldly. His train or skirts of his royal robes filled the temple. Some think it was the literal temple in Jerusalem where Isaiah had this vision, others that it was the temple of heaven he saw in vision as did the apostle John, Rev. 4:2-3.

2. "Above him stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly."

In the attitude for service to Him were the seraphim, who are burning spirits, or angels of fire. Two wings of each covering his face seem to represent humility and reverence, the two covering the feet also to represent reverence. The Targum says, "With two he covered his face that he might not see; and with two he covered his body that he might not be seen." With two he did fly, executing the will of God.

3. "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory."

This is an antiphonal chorus of adoration, the keynote of which is holiness. "Holiness is equivalent to separateness, sublimity - in fact, next to that loftiness or exaltation which Isaiah has already so often reiterated as the principal attribute of God. In their thrice-repeatedly the seraphim are only telling more emphatically to the prophet's ears what his eyes have already seen, the Lord high and lifted up. -- Glory



the expression of holiness."<sup>1</sup> From Wilderness days came the divine assurance, a glorious missionary promise, that "all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Jehovah." (Num. 14:21) The glory of Jehovah shall be revealed -- (Is. 40:5). Compare this chorus of the seraphim with that of the representatives of nature in Rev. 4:8,9 and the song of Moses and the Lamb, Rev. 15:3-4.

The fact that the word "Holy" is used in the chorus of the seraphim three times has led the church from early times to consider this a reference to the Trinity and has caused this doxology to be given the name *mnus Trinitatis*. Delitzsch remarks, "The favorite name of God in the mouth of the prophet, Holy One of Israel, is the echo of his seraphic nctus -- All the prophecies of Isaiah bear this name of God in them their stamp -- it occurs 15 times in Chaps. 1-39, and 14 times in Chaps. 40-66."

4. "And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who cried, and the house was filled with smoke."

The immediate effect of the seraph's song and of this whole supernatural manifestation is set forth in this verse. The shaking of the foundations of the threshold and the filling of the house with smoke tend to produce terror and awe in the prophet. "What Isaiah actually felt was the dim-eyed shame, the distraction, the embarrassment, the stunning shock of a personal encounter with One whom he was utterly unfit to meet."<sup>2</sup> Smoke here may refer to the smoke of incense. In Isaiah 6 and Rev. 15:8 smoke is symbolic of the glory of the Divine holiness, and this may be its significance here.

5. "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts."

Immediately following the vision of glory came the sense of sin, like that of Gideon (Ju. 6:22), Manoah (Ju. 13:22), Job (42:5-6), Daniel (Dan. 10), Peter (Lu. 5:8) and John (Rev. 1:17). In the presence of God Isaiah was a man and before a holy God an unclean man. While holy angels with pure lips were praising Him, he had unclean lips, like Moses (Ex. 6:12, 30). Also he was a part of a people with unclean lips (Is. 63:59:3). Did he think particularly of the leper king, Uzziah? On the other hand his eyes had seen the King, Jehovah of hosts, the Holy One of Israel. Tradition has it that Isaiah was sawn asunder in the reign of Manasseh, the pretext for the crime being that he had seen the King. (See note on Is. 6:1).

6. "Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:"

Angels are ministering spirits (Heb. 1:14). Compare Daniel 9:21-23. Fire is a symbol of purification. (Mal. 3:23; Matt. 3:11). The altar signifies either the altar of burnt-offering or the altar of incense. "Nothing so powerful to cleanse and comfort the soul, but what is taken from Christ's satisfaction, and the intercession he ever lives to make in the virtue of that satisfaction."<sup>3</sup>

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G. A. Smith.

Ibid.

Matthew Henry Commentary.

7. "And he touched my mouth with it, and said, Lo, this hath touched my lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin forgiven."

"The meaning of the Seraph's act is that the atoning efficacy of the altar is conveyed to the person of Isaiah, to his lips in particular, because there the sin of his nature had seemed to be concentrated."4 De-tzsch suggests that the seraphim may be the bearers and mediators of the fire of the Divine wrath. "The mention of the altar and the assurance of forgiveness, or rather of atonement, makes it natural to take the application of fire as a symbol of expiation by sacrifice."5 See Is. 53:5, 6, 11; I John 1:7; 2:1-2. There must be a visit of grace to prepare a prophet for his mighty tasks. John 12:41; Jer. 1:9; Dan. 10:16.

8. "And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I; send me."

The purpose of the preceding scene was preparatory. Now comes the call of God and the consecration of the volunteer. God does the calling and the sending, the prophet does the answering and the going. The assurance of sins forgiven is followed by willingness to do God's will. Compare Ps. 51:12-15.

The question of the Lord suggests that He would not send just anyone - He would select. It also suggests that not every one would be willing to go. The apostle Paul, in considering the glory of the ministry, raised the question, "And who is sufficient for these things?" "Here I" in the Hebrew is "Behold me". The prophet's message is "Behold your God" (40:9). Compare the call and consecration of the apostle Paul. Acts 9:4; 22:21; 26:16-19; Eph. 3:8.

9. "And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not."

In this and the following verse is given the prophet's commission together with predictions in the form of commands as to the result of his preaching. The prophet's first duty is to do the preaching God bids him, "whether they will hear or whether they will forbear" (Ezek. 3:11). In this case he is commissioned to a service of hardening. The people will be spiritually deafened and spiritually blinded through his speaking. In the Septuagint the imperatives "understand" and "see" are rendered as "obscure" and so quoted in Matt. 13:14 and Acts 28:26. Similar thought continues in the next verse.

10. "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn again, and be healed."

As in verse nine the prediction of the peoples' spiritual insensibility is in the form of a command to them thru the prophet's preaching. Here the same is predicted in the form of a command to the prophet himself. "There are three figurative expressions for hardening; to make heavy, to make without feeling for the operations of grace; to make heavy, especially heavy or dull of hearing; to spread thickly, to smear over, to do to any one what happens to diseased eyes when their sticky secretion

during the night becomes a closing crust."6

"The thing predicted is judicial blindness, as the natural result and righteous retribution of the national depravity. This end would be promoted by the very preaching of the truth, and therefore a command to preach was in effect a command to blind and harden them. The art required of the prophet is here joined with its ultimate effect, while the intervening circumstances, namely, the people's sin and the withholding of God's grace, are passed by in silence. But although not expressed, they are implied in this command. The essential idea is their insensibility, considered as a fruit of their own depravity, as the execution of God's righteous judgment, and as the only visible result of Isaiah's labors."7

"What God expresses to Isaiah so imperatively as almost to take our breath away; what Christ uttered with such abruptness that we ask, Does He speak in irony? What Paul laid down as the conviction of a long and patient ministry is the great truth that the Word of God has not only a saving power, but that even in its gentlest pleadings and its purest Gospel, even by the mouth of Him, who came, not to condemn, but to save the world, it has a power that is judicial and condemnatory."8 "This is the judgment that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil." (John 3:19)

11. "Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until cities be waste without inhabitant, and houses without man, and the land become utterly waste."

In answer to his question as to how long the people would be under this judgment of hardening, the answer is until they come to utter ruin. This was partly fulfilled under the Chaldeans and again under the Romans, the prophecy probably pointing to repeated desolations.

12. "And Jehovah have removed men far away, and the forsaken places be many in the midst of the land."

Such a removal of men took place under Nebuchadnezzar. The verse may also be applied to repeated desolations of the land. Here is illustrated the Reality of Divine Vengeance.

13. "And if there be yet a tenth in it, it also shall in turn be eaten up; as a terebinth, and as an oak, whose stock remaineth, when they are felled; so the holy seed is the stock thereof."

Here is that characteristic, glorious doctrine of Isaiah - the Redemption of the Remnant (Ch. 1:9; 10:20-23; 37:31). "There will be 'a remnant' after every repetition of infliction to the last." Rom. 11:5. The trees mentioned here have "the property of renewing themselves again from the root-stump, even when their trunk has been felled. Of the felled terebinth or oak, deprived of its trunk and its crown, there is still a stock, that is a root-stock fast fixed in the ground, an image of the remnant surviving the judgment, which becomes a holy seed, from which a new Israel shoots out after the old Israel is exterminated. In a few weighty

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words the way is thus sketched upon which God will henceforth go with his people. It presents an outline of the history of Israel to the end of time."9 Tenth here is symbolical of a very small part, not an arithmetical measurement. Compare Zech. 13:8-9.

For an inspired exposition of Is. 6:13 see Rom. 11 where Paul shows that the rejection of the Jews is neither total nor final.

#### Revelation of Glory and Grace.

1. Isaiah saw the Lord of Glory.
2. Isaiah saw his own sinfulness.
3. Isaiah experienced a work of grace.
4. Isaiah heard the voice of the Lord of Glory.
5. Isaiah consecrated his life to His service.

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Chaps. 7:1-9:7.    A Sign and a Son.

The cycle of prophecy in chapters 7-12 has been called the Book of Immanuel. "Here begins a series of connected prophecies (ch. 7-12) belonging to the reign of Ahaz, and relating in general to the same great objects, the deliverance of Judah from Syria and Israel, its subsequent objection to Assyria and other foreign powers, the final destruction of its enemies, the advent of the Messiah, and the nature of his Kingdom." The Syro-Ephraimite invasion with which chap. 7 opens is recorded in two other books, II Kings 15:37; 16:5-9; and II Chron. 28:5-15. (See Account of Ahaz' reign in Introd.)

The prophecy beginning at chapter 7 and continuing thru 9:7 may have been uttered at the same time as one oracle, or it may be a group of prophecies.

There was consternation in Judah, the occasion being the Syro-Ephraimite invasion, 7:1-2. Whereupon Jehovah sends Isaiah, accompanied by his son Shear-jashub, with a message of comfort and encouragement to King Ahaz (3-9). This message is followed by a confirmation in the form of the sign of the Child Immanuel, with its assurance, not only of the early downfall of Judah's enemy, but also its glorious promise of the birth of the Messiah, 10-16. The concluding part of the chapter is a prophecy of calamities that will come upon Judah as a result of Ahaz' policy of making an unholy alliance with the King of Assyria (18-25). Chapter 8 opens with a prediction, expressed in a symbolical name, to be the name of Isaiah's second son - Maher-shalhash-baz - that Syria and Israel, the invaders of Judah, will soon be overthrown by the armies of Assyria (1-4). Not only so but the land of Judah will also be overrun by the King of Assyria (5-8). God's judgment will be upon the enemies of the land of Immanuel, and they will be overcome (verses 9-10). Comfort will come to those who fear Jehovah, and do not fear His enemies (11-18). Damnation will rest upon those who practice necromancy, and who do not follow the law and the testimony. To them there will be distress, sickness, gloom, anguish (19-22).

In striking contrast to this concluding note of Chapter 8 are the light, increase, joy, deliverance, and peace in Galilee of the Gentiles to be brought about through the coming of the Prince of Peace, 9:1-7. This paragraph presents a magnificent description of the Messianic Kingdom and the person of the Messianic King, who "must reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet." (I Cor. 15:25)

7:1. "And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, King of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remalliah, King of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it."

II Chron. 28 gives us a detailed account of the great victories of Sennacherib and Pekah had in the land of Judah. Following the gross idolatry of Ahaz God delivered him into the hands of his enemies who smote him with great slaughter and took away multitudes of captives. However, the Assyrians had not succeeded in taking the capital city of Jerusalem. See II Kings 16. It was probably between the time of their first successes and their final retreat that Isaiah's record begins.

2. "And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria, is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart trembled, and the heart of his people, the trees of the forest tremble with the wind."

The news of the invasion caused general consternation in Judah. It may have been at this time that Ahaz, in his fear, and lack of trust in Jehovah, was particularly tempted to seek aid from the King of Assyria, form that unholy alliance which not only had a great effect upon the politics of his whole generation, but a most marked effect upon the region of Judah.

3. "Then said Jehovah unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shear-jashub, thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, the highway of the fuller's field;"

Shear-jashub was a symbolic name, meaning "a remnant shall return", characteristic message of Isaiah. Jehovah had spoken this message in 13. It is emphasized in 10:20-21 and Rom. 9:27. This in itself was a sermon to Ahaz who was at this place mentioned probably to examine the city-water supply for the strengthening of the defenses of the city.

4. "And say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither let thy heart be faint, because of these two tails of smoking fire-brands, the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria, and of the son of Remaliah."

In a message of assurance and encouragement the prophet is to urge on him quietness and confidence (Is. 30:15) because the two invading kings have almost spent themselves, like expiring torches. He is to take heed to fear Jehovah, not the enemy (8:11-14). Moses had a similar message for Israel at the Red Sea. (Ex. 14:13-14)

5. "Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have purposed evil against thee, saying,"

"The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against Jehovah and against his anointed, saying:" (Ps. 2:2)

6. "Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set up a king in the midst of it, even the son of Beel;"

Compare Ps. 2:3. Their plan was to dethrone Ahaz and enthrone a king of their own choice - an obscure person, whether a Syrian or Israelite is unknown, as a vassal-king.

7. "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, It shall not come to pass."

Chap. 8:10.

Ps. 2:4-6 is a good exposition of this verse, also Dan. 4:35. "He will do according to his will -- among the inhabitants of the earth; and he can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?"

8, 9. "For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken in pieces, so that it shall not be a people: and the head of Ephraim is"

Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established."

The first part of verse nine has been transposed by Dr. Jubb, and the passage rendered as follows, thus clarifying the meaning: "Though the head of Syria be Damascus; and the head of Damascus Rezin; and the head of Ephraim be Samaria; and the head of Samaria Remaliah's son; yet within threescore and five years Ephraim shall be broken, that he be no more a people." The prediction regarding the fall of Ephraim was accomplished partly thru the invasion by Tiglath-pileser (II Kings 15:29; 16:9) partly by Shalmaneser (II Kings 17:6) and finally by Esarhaddon (II Kings 17:24; ~~II Chron. 33:11~~). The conclusion of this prediction emphasizes the necessity of faith, the acceptance of the word of Jehovah thru the prophet. To despise His word would mean destruction. (Is. 5:24).

10, 11. "And Jehovah spake again unto Ahaz, saying, Ask thee a sign of Jehovah thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above."

To the fearful, unbelieving Ahaz Jehovah not only sent the assurance that his enemies would not be successful in taking Jerusalem, but <sup>also</sup> continuing his grace to the house of David. He now generously offers Ahaz a sign of confirmation. His condescending love is shown in His speaking again, in His saying "thy God" to such a wicked king as Ahaz, and in giving him the universe from which to select a sign to confirm the truth of Jehovah's promise, just given thru Isaiah. "A sign is not necessarily a miracle, nor necessarily a prophecy, but a sensible pledge of the truth of something else, whether present, past or future; sometimes consisting in a miracle (Jud. 6:37; Isaiah 38:7,8) but sometimes in a mere prediction (Ex. 3:12), and sometimes only in a symbol, especially a symbolical name or action (Is. 8:18; 20:3)."2

12. "But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt Jehovah."

A direct refusal to obey the clear command of Jehovah, and a pious excuse for such disobedience. Chrysostom and Calvin are probably correct in the interpretation that this is "the language of a hypocrite who assumes the mark of reverence for God and his command." Instead of trust in Jehovah and belief in His promise of the overthrow of Ephraim was his trust in help from the king of Assyria linked with gross idolatry. II Chron. 28:22; II Kings 16:7-9, 15. "In this hour when Isaiah stands before Ahaz the fate of the Jewish people is decided for more than two thousand years."3

13. "And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David: Is it a small thing for you to weary men, that ye will weary my God also?"

A severe rebuke to Ahaz and those associated with him. Not only did Ahaz refused to accept the message of the prophet of God but had even directly refused the gracious offer of a sign from Jehovah to attest the truth of the prophet's words.

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Delitzsch.

14. "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

This is one of the most difficult Messianic prophecies to explain, and there have been many different interpretations. One refers it solely to the birth of Christ as recorded in Matthew. The problem of this view is to show how the birth of Christ coming hundreds of years after the time of Ahaz, could be a sign to Ahaz of deliverance from Syria and Ephraim. In what sense could the infancy of Christ himself still far remote be the sign and measure to Ahaz of deliverance in Isaiah's time? A second view is that this passage refers to two distinct births, verse 14 to the birth of the Messiah and verse 16 to that of some other child born in the time of Ahaz. Matthew Henry's view is that this second child is Isaiah's son Shear-jashub, and that the meaning of verse 16 is "Before this child which I have now in my arms." While the prophet foretells the birth of Christ he foretells the birth of another child, during whose infancy the promised deliverance to Ahaz will be experienced. A view having much to favor it is to understand the prophecy to have been fulfilled in a sense in the time of Ahaz and Isaiah by the birth of a child who was a type of the Messiah. The prophet makes a first reference to his own times, the birth of the child then to be a sign or pledge to Ahaz of the safety of his kingdom then; yet the ultimate reference and glorious fulfilment is in the birth of Christ as recorded in Matthew 1. In accord with this there is an interpretation given by Terry (Biblical Hermeneutics, p. 333) well worthy of our consideration. He says, "The language has no double or occult meaning. Its application to Christ in Matt. 1:23 is to be explained typically, just as we explain the passage cited from Hosea in Matt. 2:15. The most simple explanation is that which identifies the virgin with the prophet's young wife, called in Chap. 8:3 the prophetess, and the child Immanuel is no other than Maher-shal-hash-baz, whose name and birth were so solemnly attested (see Chap. 8:1-3). We understand this latter as but another symbolical name for the child Immanuel, for the same great sign is to be at once a proof that God is with his people, and that he also hastens the spoilation of the two kingdoms of which Ahaz was so much afraid. In less than three years from the beginning of Ahaz' reign, Tiglath-pileser, King of Assyria, broke the power of Damascus, and spoiled the cities of Ephraim, as described in II Kings 15:29; 16:9. The language of Is. 8:4, when compared with Is. 7:16, confirms this interpretation, for it shows that the significant sign, which the child Immanuel was to be to the house of David, was also to be fulfilled in Maher-shal-hash-baz. This is still farther incidentally confirmed by the repetition in Isaiah 8:8 and 10 of the name Immanuel." Whatever may be one's interpretation as to the details of this difficult and enigmatic prophecy, let us rejoice with the Christian church thru the ages in its belief that this is a signal and specific prophecy of the miraculous birth of Christ. "It is the Messiah whom the prophet here beholds as about to be born, then in Chap. 9 as born, and Chapter 11 as reigning."<sup>4</sup>

15. "Butter and honey shall he eat, when he knoweth to refuse the ill and choose the good."

This limitation of the food of Immanuel to simple pastoral products taken by many to indicate a time of agricultural privation (vs. 22). The essential idea is that the desolation should not last until a child born, could reach maturity, and probably not longer than his first



ew years."5

16. "For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land whose two kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken."

See 8:4; II Kings 15:29-30; 16:9. Before the child reached years of discretion, in fact in less than three years from the beginning of the reign of Ahaz the land of Syria and Ephraim was taken by the King of Assyria whom Ahaz had called hither. Two tails of smoking firebrands (7:4) were extinguished.

17. "Jehovah will bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah -- even the King of Assyria."

According to the most common interpretation the person here addressed is Ahaz, and the land referred to in the remainder of the chapter to become desolate the land of Judah. While they will be spared from devastation from Syria and Ephraim, judgment will come down upon them from the King of Assyria, such as the house of David had not seen since the ten tribes had revolted under Jeroboam. The very King whom Ahaz had called to his aid brought him to the very verge of ruin, and ultimately the domination of Assyria took away the independence of Judah as well as Israel and led to their captivity. See II Chron. 28:19-21; 33:11; 36:20. (See "Times of Isaiah" in Introduction.)

18. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah will hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria."

Verses 18-25 give a more detailed description of the judgment announced in verse 17. Like 5:26 Jehovah is here represented as calling the nations to be his instruments. The Egyptians, living in a land of many flies, the land of the plague of flies, are compared to the fly, and likewise the Assyrians are appropriately compared to bees.

19. "And they shall come, and shall rest all of them in the desolate alleys, and in the clefts of the rocks, and upon all thorn-hedges, and upon all pastures."

Carrying out the figure, the Egyptians and Assyrians are represented as coming in and infesting the land in every part like swarms of insects. This prophecy may point to the fulfilment recorded in II Chron. 35:20-25.

20. "In that day will the Lord shave with a razor that is hired in the parts beyond the River, even with the King of Assyria, the head and the hair of the feet; and it shall also consume the beard."

Jehovah will use the King of Assyria as his instrument to inflict devastation upon Judah, Is. 10:5. In a sense Ahaz hired Tiglath-pileser beyond the Euphrates to come to his aid, and gave him presents out of the house of Jehovah (II Kings 16:7-8), but this unholy alliance distressed him and did not strengthen him (II Chron. 28:20-21).

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Delitzsch remarks that the cheap knife which Ahaz "had hired for the deliverance of Judah is hired by the Lord to shave Judah wholly and most shamefully."

21, 22. "And it shall come to pass in that day that a man shall keep alive a young cow, and two sheep; and it shall come to pass that because of the abundance of milk which they shall give he shall eat butter; for butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the midst of the land."

These verses are commonly interpreted as meaning that only a pastoral life will be possible, since the land will be so laid waste there will be no agricultural products, and since the land will be so depopulated there will be an abundance of pastoral products for the small number left in the land. "Whoever has escaped the Assyrian razor eats thickened milk and honey; this and nothing but this, without change, ad nauseum; for the hills, formerly covered with vines and corn-fields, are now overgrown with thorns."<sup>6</sup>

23. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that every place where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings, shall be for briers and thorns."

Instead of vineyards of definite value there shall be waste and desolation with a growth of briers and thorns.

24. "With arrows and with bow shall one come thither, because all the land shall be briers and thorns."

The land will become a hunting ground - a howling wilderness instead of a pleasant land.

25. "And all the hills that were digged with the mattock, thou shalt not come thither for fear of briers and thorns; but it shall be for the sending forth of oxen, and for the treading of sheep."

The picture of desolation is here completed as it shows cattle treading the hills which were formerly agricultural or garden spots, but now dangerous waste places. In the background of this whole picture of the devastation of Judah are the unbelief, idolatry, and disobedience of King Ahaz, who, trusting in an arm of flesh rather than in Jehovah made an unholy alliance with the kingdom of the world, thus laying the foundation for the ruin of Judah as well as of Israel. (Prof. Moulton thinks verse 17-25 refer to Israel rather than Judah.)

8:1. "And Jehovah said unto me, Take thee a great tablet, and write upon it with the pen of a man, For Maher-shalal-hash-baz;"

Like the prophet Habakkuk (Hab. 2:2), Isaiah is here commanded to write upon a great tablet this symbolical word which is a prediction of the speedy overthrow of Ephraim and Syria by the Assyrian power, the word meaning literally, "The spoil speedeth, the prey hasteth." This was to be in the form of a clear public announcement.

2. "And I will take unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberchiah."

The two witnesses were reliable, responsible public persons. It might be necessary for them later to witness this to be a bonafide prophecy. Boaz called witnesses for his transaction (Ruth 4:2, 10, 11). Zechariah may be the same man mentioned in II Kings 16:10, 11, 15, 16. Was this Zechariah the father-in-law of Ahaz? (II Kings 18:2)

3. "And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived and bare a son. Then said Jehovah unto me, Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz."

Some Bible students consider this prophetess to be identical with the virgin of Chap. 7:14, whom Isaiah had married in the meantime as his second wife. It has even been suggested that the two witnesses of verse two might have borne testimony to the marriage of the prophet at that time. Besides the symbolical name being written upon the great tablet (vs. 1), it was now given to Isaiah's own son, Maher-shalal-hash-baz. There was a sermon in the name of each of his sons.

4. "For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and My mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria, shall be carried away before the king of Assyria."

Here is given the meaning of the symbolical name. It not only announces the fact that the King of Assyria would spoil Damascus and Samaria, but the date of it is measured by the growth of the child, as in the case of Immanuel (7:16). In fact, the child of 7:16 and of 8:4, according to some interpreters, is one and the same child with two names.

Tiglath-pileser took Damascus, and plundered the land of Samaria in keeping with this prophecy.

5. "And Jehovah spake unto me yet again saying,"

A period of time may have intervened here. Compare 7:10.

6. "Forasmuch as this people have refused the waters of Shiloah that softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son;"

Isaiah 1:20; 5:24; 5:9. One interpretation is that "this people" refers to Judah. Another that it refers to Israel. It probably includes both Judah and Israel, both need the rebuke. Shiloah, meaning a sending of waters, an aqueduct, is probably the same as Siloam, the pool at Jerusalem, John 9:7, and the pool of Shelah (Neh. 3:15). The house of David led by Ahaz had refused the help of Jehovah and had sought aid from Assyria, in that sense despising the waters of Shiloah. The Ten Tribes had not only revolted from the house of David at first, but had allied itself with the King of Syria to overthrow Judah. This people, both Judah and Israel, had despised the still flowing waters of Shiloah which "present an image of the invisible ruling of God, which does not always appear sensibly to the eye."

7. "Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the River, strong and many, even the King of Assyria, and all his glory;"

and it shall come up over all its channels, and go over all its banks."

In striking contrast to the softly flowing waters of Shiloah are the strong over-flowing waters of the Euphrates, the emblem of the Syrian power. As a judgment upon Israel the Lord will cause Assyria overflow upon Israel like the Euphrates overflows its banks. Israel will be submerged. For fulfilment of this prophecy see II Kings 17:3-18:9-12.

8. "And it shall sweep onward into Judah; it shall overflow and pass rough; it shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of its wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel."

The Assyrian power will sweep on into Judah and that land will be most submerged too. "The prophet compares Jerusalem here to the head of the human body. As when the waters reach to the neck of a man he is very near drowning, so here, the prophet intimates that the whole land would be deluged, and that it would be nearly utterly destroyed." (Kimball). Judah's deliverer is here addressed as Immanuel; See Is. 7:14 and Matt. 1:23.

Judah is Immanuel's land, the land to which He must come. It will not be totally and finally overwhelmed since it has a Savior, God-with-us, who has all power in heaven and on earth. Matt. 28:18-20.

9. "Make an uproar, O ye peoples, and be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and be broken in pieces."

Following the direct address to Immanuel is a direct address to the enemies of Immanuel, in the form of an ironical command to them to go on in their evil work, and be ruined. "Go on exasperating yourselves, on equipping yourselves; nevertheless ye are about to fall in pieces." 7

10. "Take council together, and it shall be brought to nought; speak the word and it shall not stand; for God is with us."

Not only their evil work, but also their evil words shall come to nought, because the Deliverer is Immanuel. Is. 7:7; Ps. 2:1-6; Ps. 33:1-12; Ps. 46:6-7; Rom. 8:31; Rev. 17:14.

11. "For Jehovah spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed not to walk in the way of this people, saying."

Isaiah was under the compelling influence of the inspiration of Jehovah, as was Ezekiel (Ezek. 3:14). God thus warned him not to sin like his people were doing. Ezek. 2:8.

12. "Say ye not, A conspiracy, concerning all whereof this people shall say, A conspiracy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be in dread there-"

A common understanding of "conspiracy" here is that it refers to the alliance between Syria and Ephraim against Judah (7:2), and the force of the admonition that the prophet not walk in the way of the people who be-

some frightened and panicky because of these enemies; as if the words of the admonition were, "Do not join in this panicky cry that there is a confederacy between Rezin and Pekah which threatens to ruin us. There is no cause for such alarm."

Another view of the verse is that it is a warning against the prevailing demand, led by Ahaz, for an alliance with the king of Assyria, a demand motivated by distrust in Jehovah and fear of the two kingdoms to the north.

According to either of these views the heart of the command is "Fear not man, and do not fear what the terrified people fear, namely earthly danger." See I Pet. 3:14-15.

13. "Jehovah of hosts, him shall ye sanctify; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread."

Here is the positive side of the command. Jehovah is to be recognized as the Holy One of Israel. Stand in awe of Him as the object of our fear (Is. 29:23). Because Moses and Aaron believed not in Jehovah to sanctify him in the eyes of the children of Israel at Meribah they would not bring Israel into Canaan. (Num. 20:12-13). That Moses learned his lesson here is evident in the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb, v. 15:3-4. "Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy."

14. "And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem."

The idea of refuge is easily associated with the word sanctuary here. (Is. 4:5-6; Ps. 25:5). "The temple is not only a place of shelter, but also of grace, of blessing, of peace. Whoever sanctifies the Lord of lords, him He encompasses like temple walls, He hides him in Himself while death and tribulation dwell without, and He comforts, feeds, and blesses him in his fellowship."8

Dr. Alexander says the Hebrew word here translated sanctuary corresponds almost exactly to the Greek word, τὸ ἅγιον, applied to Christ in Luke 1:35. "The holy thing that is begotten shall be called the Son of God;" and that in I Pet. 2:7 where this Isaiah passage is applied to Christ the Greek word, ἡ τιμή, the preciousness, seems to be employed as an equivalent to the word here used. "To others he is a stone of stumbling, but to you who believe he is ἡ τιμή, something precious, something honored, something looked upon as holy. The same application of the words is made by Paul in Rom. 9:33 -- The doctrine of the text is, that even the most glorious exhibitions of God's holiness, of his infinite perfection, may occasion the destruction of the believer."9

15. "And many shall stumble thereon, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken."

Many, not all shall be destroyed, for a remnant will remain. The

se of five verbs here emphasizes the certainty of the destruction of any. Compare Matt. 21:44 and John 6:66.

16. "Bind thou up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples."

Compare Dan. 12:4,9,10. The Chaldee translation of this verse is, "The prophet, preserve the testimony, lest ye testify to those who will not believe; seal and hide the law, because they will not learn it." I Cor. 14. "The act described is not that of literally binding and sealing a material record, but that of spiritually closing and depositing the revelation of God's will in the hearts of those who were able and willing to receive it, with allusion at the same time to its concealment from all others."<sup>10</sup> The literal interpretation which is the basis for this spiritual one is that the prophet was commanded to take the volume or roll of teaching he had just received, bind it up and secure it for safe-keeping by the true followers of Jehovah.

17. "And I will wait for Jehovah, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him."

See Is. 54:8; 59:2; 64:7. Jehovah hiding his face means the withdrawing of his favor. Here there may be some connection with the withholding divine illumination suggested in verse 16.

The verbs "wait" and "look for" express the attitude of confident hope and expectation, trust.

18. "Behold, I and the children whom Jehovah hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from Jehovah of hosts, who dwelleth in the high places of Zion."

There are two interpretations of this verse. One considers it the personal words of the prophet Isaiah in which he speaks of his family given him of Jehovah for a gracious purpose, his own name (Jehovah saves) and those of his two sons having each a sermon in it. Since in Hebrews 1:3 the first part of the verse is put in the mouth of Christ, the prophet is here the type of the Messiah. "Isaiah and his children are figures and emblems of the redemption which is making way for itself through judgment -- the spirit of Jesus was in Isaiah -- the spirit of Jesus which in this holy family, bound together by bands of the shadow cast into the New Testament community, bound together by bands of substance."<sup>11</sup>

The other interpretation considers the speaker of this verse, also the two preceding verses to be the Messiah himself, and the children mentioned the spiritual children of the Messiah, according to Is. 53:10.

In either case Heb. 2:13 stamps the verse with a clear Messianic force.

19. "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto the wizards, that chirp and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? on behalf of the living should they seek unto the dead?"

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Ibid.  
Delitzsch.

Instead of putting confidence in Jehovah such as is expressed in verses 17 and 18 there would be those people, influenced by the sinful superstitious practices of the heathen around them, to advise God's people to enquire regarding the future from necromancers and wizards. Such practices had been clearly forbidden in the law of Moses (Deut. 18:9-14). Such a great sin was committed by King Saul when he enquired from the witch of Endor (I Sam. 28:8-11; I Chron. 10:13-14). Such also was a great sin of King Manasseh (II Chron. 33:6), and a sin that was put down in the reforms of King Josiah (II Kings 23:24).

This verse gives the reply to be made to the invitation to participate in such evil. Jehovah is the God of Israel, the only true and living God and his people are to seek Him, not senseless idols and the dead. See II Kings 1:1-4.

20. "To the law and to the testimony! if they speak not according to this word, surely there is no morning for them."

The law and the testimony (vs. 16) is "the divine revelation, considered as a system of belief and as a rule of duty." See Luke 16:29; John 5:39, 46, 47; II Tim. 3:15-17. "And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts, (II Pet. 1:19)." There will be no dawn to the dark night of sin for those who speak not according to the revealed word of God. vs. 119:130; Prov. 4:18; Mal. 4:2.

21. "And they shall pass through it sore distressed and hungry; and it shall come to pass that, when they shall be hungry, they shall curse themselves, and curse by their king and by their God, and turn their faces upward."

This pictures the judgment to fall upon those who are without a saviour, wandering through the land in misery and hunger, raging and cursing, vainly looking for help. Compare Zeph. 1:5-6.

22. "And they shall look unto the earth, and, behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish; and unto thick darkness they shall be driven away."

Whether they look above or below they see only distress, darkness, gloom, anguish. Compare 5:24, 30 and contrast 9:1. The chapter closes with the prediction that the wicked shall be driven away into thick darkness, similar to the words of Jesus, Matt. 8:12. Such is the terrible fate of these who reject Jehovah as God and King.

9:1. "But there shall be no gloom to her that was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali; but in the latter time hath he made it glorious, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations."

Here is a most striking contrast to the close of chapter eight. Darkness and gloom will not continue forever. The land of deep darkness will see a great light. Reasons for Zebulun and Naphtali being in contempt formerly may have been their remote frontier position, and their exposure to heathen influence and inroads. Benhadad had invaded the region 200 years before the time of Isaiah, (I Kings 15:19-20) then Tig-

ath-pileser's invasion was in Isaiah's time (II Kings 15:29). Indications of contempt for Galilee are seen in the New Testament. John 1:46; 52; Matt. 26:69. Instead of being a land of contempt this region will be made glorious. How this prediction was fulfilled is recorded in Matt. 4:12-17.

2. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."

The prophetic perfect of the verbs in this passage emphasize the certainty of the fulfilment of this prophecy, which like that of the previous verse, is fulfilled according to Matt. 4:12-17. Spiritual blindness is dispelled through the coming of Christ, the light of the world. John 8:12; 12:46. In scripture light is not only used as a symbol of knowledge and illumination, but also of salvation or deliverance.

3. "Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased their joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil."

The prophet here suddenly addresses Jehovah. Another blessing retold is the increase in the people and of their joy. This may refer to the increase of the true Israel of God in the times of the Messiah and the joy attending such increase. See Isaiah 35:2, 10; Acts 8:8; Pet. 1:8. This joy is compared to that of two joyous times, the harvest season (Ps. 136:5-6), and the time of division of the spoil (Ps. 9:162). Alexander suggests that there is probably an allusion to this verse in the announcement of the angel to the shepherd of the birth of Jesus, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people." (Luke 2:10)

4. "For the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, thou hast broken as in the day of Midian."

Added to the other blessings promised is that of freedom from oppression. It is compared to the deliverance such as God gave to Israel from the dominion of Midian when Gideon was given the victory (Judges 7). This prophecy may point to the temporal deliverance given to Israel when by the supernatural power of God Sennacherib's army was destroyed, but probably refers in particular to the glorious spiritual deliverance from the yoke of Satan and sin received by the converts to Christianity in Galilee and all the true Israel of God. See Luke 4:18 and Gal. 5:1.

5. "For all the armor of the armed man in the tumult, and the garments rolled in blood, shall be for burning, for fuel of fire."

Following the victory over the enemies there will come peace, as has already been prophesied in chapter 2:4. The very equipments of war will be entirely burnt up. They will not be needed any more. "He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth -- He burneth the chariots in the fire (Ps. 46:9). Dr. Alexander points out that an allusion to this prom-



of universal peace and its final consummation may be found in the praises of the heavenly host as they celebrated the Savior's birth, saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased." (Luke 2:14).

6. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Here is one of the greatest texts of prophecy, telling of the person and government of the Messiah. He comes into the world as a child, the child Immanuel of 7:14, a shoot of the stock of Jesse of 11:1, and out of a dry ground of 53:2, a Savior of Luke 2:11. This child is the son of John 3:16, and Rom. 8:32, and I John 4:10. He is a gift, a gift of grace, not to angels, but to sinful men, unto us. The burden of the government shall be upon him. Is. 22:22; Ps. 2:6-12; Ps. 110:1-4; Is. 6:12-13; 9:9-10; Matt. 28:18; I Cor. 15:25; Rev. 19:16. He is our King. He is our divine King. His name in the last of this verse "may fairly be considered an expansion of the single name Immanuel."<sup>12</sup> (1) Wonderful - Note that this is the name of the angel Jehovah who appeared to Manoah. (Judges 13:17-19; Ex. 15:11; Ps. 8:23). Jesus was wonderful in his supernatural birth, sinless life, substitutionary death, glorious resurrection. (2) Counsellor - Is. 28:1; Luk. 21:15; Col. 2:3. (3) The Mighty God - As truly God he has divine power and strength. John 1:1-3; Tit. 2:13. (4) The everlasting Father - He is Strong God, as the man in whom God exhibits Himself, and he uses his divine strength in a philanthropic gentle manner forever for the good of his people."<sup>13</sup> See Heb. 2:13-14. (5) Prince of Peace - "But the goal and fruit of his dominion is peace."<sup>14</sup> "and this man shall bring peace" (Micah 5:5a). The root of the word "shalom" (peace) signifies "completion, or filling full of all hopes and ideals." Luke 2:1; John 14:27; Eph. 2:14-18; Col. 1:20.

7. "Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his Kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even forever."

The principality of the Prince of Peace will have (1) progress, increase, Ps. 2:8; 72:8-11; Dan. 2:44; (2) peace (see notes on verses 5 and 6); (3) perpetuity, Dan. 7:14, 27; Luke 1:33; (4) it will be the fulfillment of the promise to David, II Sam. 7:16; Ps. 89:35-37; Jer. 33:15-16; Luke 1:32; (5) it will be founded and upheld upon the principles of justice and righteousness, Ps. 72:1-3; (6) and its performance is guaranteed by the zeal of Jehovah of hosts, that is, "the jealous love of God for his people." (Zech. 1:14)

#### Two Kings Contrasted:

1. Ahaz, a worshipper of idols, II Chron. 28:1-4.
1. Immanuel, the object of worship - God with us.
2. Ahaz, a Record of Iniquity and Ruin, II Kings 16:10-18; II Chron. 28:22-25; Is. 9:12.

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 . Davidson.  
 . Delitzsch.  
 . Ibid.

2. Immanuel, Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, Is. 9:6.
3. Ahaz, a subject king, II Kings 16:7-9; II Chron. 28:20-21.
3. Immanuel, All authority, Is. 9:6; Matt. 28:18.
4. The Effect of the Reign of Ahaz, Judah brought low, II Chron. 28:19.
4. The Effect of the Reign of Immanuel, Peace on Earth, Is. 9:7.

Chaps. 9:8-10:4. God's Hand Stretched Out Against Israel.

Here is a Doom Song artistically arranged in four verses, each one closing with the key-note refrain, "For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still." The message of the song is directed primarily to Ephraim, the Northern kingdom, but is applicable to all the nations that forget God. Just as in the book of Revelation before the pouring out of the seven bowls of the wrath of God there is the vision of the victors who sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, so in Isaiah before this threnody of sin and judgment to come is the glorious prophecy of the birth and reign of the Prince of Peace. Coming back to his own time the prophet bears the message of the Lord to Israel of his own day. The first verse, after a preface, points out the sins of pride and self-confidence, and the consequent judgment of God in the form of invasion by their adversaries who will devour Israel (8-12). The second verse tells of impenitence, failure to seek Jehovah, profanity, evil doing, folly. The result will be the cutting off of all classes of people, particularly the civil and religious leaders, and the withdrawal of God's compassion (13-17). The third verse pictures sin burning, the wrath of God burning, discord among brethren, mutual animosities. (18-21). The fourth stanza pronounces woe upon injustice and oppression, the consequence of such sins being captivity, death.

8. "The Lord sent a word into Jacob, and it hath lighted upon Israel."

This message from God is directed particularly to the Northern kingdom, upon which doom had already been pronounced in Chapters 7:7-9 and 8:4-8.

9. "And all the people shall know, even Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria, that say in pride and in stoutness of heart,"

The Chaldee version is, "All the people have exalted themselves, Ephraim, and the inhabitants of Samaria, in their magnitude, and in the pride of their heart." Pride is a root sin that brings destruction. Is. 8:1-3; Prov. 16:18; Mal. 4:1; I Pet. 5:5.

10. "The sycamores are cut down, but we will build with hewn stone; the cedars are cut down, but we will put cedars in their place."

"The sycamore is a tree which only flourishes in the plain and there the most wretched dwellings are still built in the present day of bricks fired in the sun, and of knotty beams of sycamore."<sup>1</sup> "Bricks and sycamores are proverbial expressions for that which is inferior and cedars and hewn stone for that which is superior."<sup>2</sup> Hence the force of this verse is to show the pride and self-confidence of Ephraim in defying the judgments of God.

11. "Therefore Jehovah will set up on high against him the adversaries of Rezin, and will stir up his enemies."

The adversaries of Rezin seem to refer to the Assyrians (II Kings 16:9) whom Jehovah used as his instruments to inflict Ephraim (Is. 8:4-7).

12. "The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with open mouth. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still."

One supposition is that the Syrians and Philistines referred to in this verse formed a part of the Assyrian army. Another is that after the death of Rezin, Syria ceased being an ally of Israel and became its foe. Another that the vision widens here to include Judah which was invaded by the Philistines in the time of Ahaz (II Chron. 28:16-19). Enemies from different directions shall devour Israel with open mouth, like a ravenous beast, and even this will not be all of God's judgment upon Israel. (Chap. 5:25; 9:17, 21; 10:4). Deut. 31:17.

13. "Yet the people have not turned unto him that smote them, neither have they sought Jehovah of hosts."

They failed to repent (Jer. 5:3, Hos. 7:10) and to seek Jehovah. "To seek God, in the idiom of Scripture, is to pray to him (Is. 55:6), to consult him (Is. 8:19), to resort to him for help (Is. 31:1), to hold communion with him (Amos 5:4-5). Hence it is some times descriptive of a godly life in general (Ps. 14:2). So here it includes repentance, conversion, and new obedience."3

14. "Therefore Jehovah will cut off from Israel head and tail, palm-branch and rush, in one day."

These are common proverbial expressions to denote the different ranks or classes of people, the high and the low, and are explained in the next verse. The palm-branch grows at a great height on the tree. The rush is a coarse reed of the marsh.

15. "The elder and the honorable man, he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail."

The elder and the honorable man, the wicked ruler may be compared to the head and the palm-branch; the false prophet to the tail and the rush. Is. 3:2-3; Jer. 14:14-15; Matt. 7:15; II Pet. 2:1-3; Rev. 19:20.

16. "For they that lead this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed."

Note chapter 3:12. "And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit." (Matt. 15:14b)

17. "Therefore the Lord will not rejoice over their young men, neither will he have compassion on their fatherless and widows; for every one is profane and an evil doer, and every mouth speaketh folly. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still."

This shows the extent of God's judgment in His withdrawing his delight from the young men, the main strength of the nation, and from the widows and orphans, ordinarily the special objects of His care. Even this does not end His judgment. (Chap. 5:25; 9:12, 21; 10:4).

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Alexander.

18. "For wickedness burneth as the fire; it devoureth the briers and thorns; yea, it kindleth in the thickets of the forest, and they roll upward in a column of smoke."

"Thorns and briers are often used as emblems of the wicked (Mic. 7:4, Nah. 1:10; II Sam. 23:6), and their burning as a figure for the punishment of sinners (Is. 33:12; Ps. 118:12; II Sam. 23:7), especially by means of foreign enemies (Is. 10:17; 32:13)."<sup>4</sup>

19. "Through the wrath of Jehovah of hosts is the land burnt up; and the people are as the fuel of fire: no man spareth his brother."

Commonly in Scripture the anger of Jehovah against sin and the punishment of sinners is represented by fire. Num. 11:1-3; Ps. 89:46; Is. 30:33; Heb. 10:27. "Burnt up" in the R.V. Margin is "darkened", the idea appearing to be that what is burnt up becomes darkened. Jer. 13:16.

20. "And one shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry; and he shall eat on the left hand, and they shall not be satisfied: they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm."

Not only is judgment presented as a destructive conflagration, but also as a horrible devouring of one's own flesh and the flesh of others, a maddening, unsatisfied hunger, cruelty and strife.

21. "Manasseh, Ephraim; and Ephraim, Manasseh; and together shall they be against Judah. For all this <sup>they</sup> his anger is not turned away, but his and is stretched out still."

This verse illustrates the previous one. Although Manasseh and Ephraim were most closely related as sons of Joseph they had mutual enmity and strife from the time of the Judges (Judges 8:1-3; 12:1-6). However, they were brought together in their common hatred of their common relative Judah. See II Chron. 28:6-8; Gal. 5:15.

The closing refrain is the same as in 5:25; 9:12; 9:17; 10:4.

10:1. "Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and to the writers that write perverseness."

Compare Ps. 94:20-21.

For illustrations of this sin see Jezebel's plot to secure Naboth's vineyard (I Kings 21), the procuring by Haman of a decree for the destruction of the Jews (Esther 3), the plot of the presidents and satraps against Daniel (Dan. 6). Woe falls on both the superiors who decree and the inferiors who promote them.

2. "To turn aside the needy from justice, and to rob the poor of their right, that widows may be their spoil, and that they may make the fatherless their prey." *of my people*

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Ibid.

The effect of injustice and oppression particularly is that the needy and poor are denied justice and their right, and widows and orphans mercilessly treated. See Chap. 1:23 and Mal. 3:5.

3. "And what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far? To whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your glory?"

"According to the usage of the Old Testament the day of visitation is a time when God manifests his presence specially, whether in mercy or in wrath, but most frequently the latter."<sup>5</sup> Here it is his manifestation in wrath. These three rhetorical questions imply that in this judgment there will be nothing to do to escape its calamities, no one to whom they can flee for refuge, no place of safety to deposit their glory, which probably means wealth in this verse (Gen. 31:1). The judgment coming from far suggests a foreign invasion. See Is. 5:26.

4. "They shall only bow down under the prisoners, and shall fall under the slain. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still."

The first part of the verse seems to point to captivity and death, the second part repeats the refrain of this doom song. (9:12, 17, 21) For the subject of the fulfilment of the wrath of God see Rev. Chapters 16 and 17.

#### Doctrinal and Practical.

"Every sin deserveth God's wrath and curse both in this life and that which is to come. That we may escape the wrath and curse of God due to us from sin God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the means whereby Christ communiceth to us the benefits of redemption."<sup>6</sup>

Thank God we have revealed from heaven not only the wrath of God, but in the Gospel of his Son there is also revealed a righteousness from faith unto faith, so that the believer becomes acceptable before God, justified, sanctified, glorified.

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Alexander.

Shorter Catechism. 34-35

Chaps. 10:5-12:6. The Kingdom of the World and the Kingdom of our Lord.

The first part of this section sets forth Assyria the instrument of God's wrath, as a boastful world-kingdom which in turn will be punished with a terrible doom, this being the answer of Jehovah to the arrogance of Assyria (vss. 5-19). In contrast to this there will be the allegiance of the remnant who because of God's grace will put their trust in Jehovah rather than leaning upon the arm of flesh (vs. 20-23). The prophecy continues with the assurance that the anger of Jehovah will be directed against the Assyrian invaders to their destruction (vs. 24-27), their approach to attack Jerusalem being vividly pictured in verses 28-32. The annihilation of this imperial world-kingdom is finally portrayed under the figure of the destruction of the forests of Lebanon, verses 33-34.

In striking contrast to the fate of the kingdom of the world there is given in Chap. 11 a view of the ascendancy of the kingdom of God through His Anointed One. He is a shoot of the stock of Jesse, house of David (vs. 1). The Seven Spirits of God are upon Him (2-3). The standards which he, the sinless one, will exemplify in his government are perfect (4-5). The state of his kingdom will be that of peace and prevalence of the knowledge of Jehovah (5-9). His successful sway will be further shown in His drawing unto him the nations, His assembling the outcasts of Israel, and His "restraining and conquering all His and our enemies." (10-16).

Such a glorious view of the triumphant Christ and of His triumphant Church is appropriately followed by the Song of Thanksgiving with its two stanzas in Chap. 12.

Summing up in the words of Delitzsch, "Assyria proud of its own power, after having served for a time as a rod of the wrath of Jehovah, itself now falls under the power of that wrath; its attack upon Jerusalem becomes its overthrow, and on the ruins of this imperial kingdom the world, there rises up the kingdom of the great and righteous son of David, who rules in peace over his redeemed people and over the people who rejoice in him. This is the counterpart of the redemption from Egypt, and one rich in material for songs of praise, like that which happened on the other side of the Red Sea."

Chap. 10:5. "Ho Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, the staff in whose hand is mine indignation!"

See Is. 7:14; 8:4; Jer. 51:20-24. Assyria is to be the instrument of God's hands for inflicting Israel.

6. "I will send him against a profane nation, and against the people my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like mire of the streets."

"The king's heart is in the hand of Jehovah as the watercourses: He turneth it whithersoever he will." (Prov. 21:1) The profane nation, the people of Jehovah's wrath may have a special reference to Judah but it is so limited. God will send the Assyrian king literally to "spoil spoil" and to "prey prey" and "to make them a treading down."

7. "Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy, and to cut off nations not a few."

The Assyrian is unconscious of the fact that he is the instrument in executing God's will. On the other hand he has his heart set only on ambitious conquering of nations. This principle of the providence of God overruling the designs of evil men is typically illustrated in the case of Joseph's brethren (Gen. 50:20), and of those who crucified Christ, Acts 2:23,24. See also Ps. 76:10 and Micah 4:11-12.

8. "For he saith, Are not my princes all of them kings?"

From this verse through verse 11 is the first arrogant speech of the Assyrian. Compare Chap. 36:18-20 and 37:10-13.

Many higher officers under the Assyrian king were like kings in the size and splendor of their dominion and some were subjugated kings. (II Kings 25:28), "King of Kings" was a title given the Oriental Monarch (Ezek. 26:7; Dan. 2:37). Contrast Rev. 17:14.

9. "Is not Calno as Carchemish? is not Hamath as Arpad? is not Samaria as Damascus?"

In the previous verse he boasts of his princes, in this verse of his cities conquered, not one of which was able to resist the Assyrian power. Dummelow says of these cities, "The places named were all captured by the Assyrians under Tiglath-pileser, Shalmaneser, or Sargon; Calno (a Chaldean city, cp. Gen. 10:10) in 738 B.C., Carchemish (on the W. bank of the Euphrates) in 717; Hamath (on the Orontes, in the early times of Hivite capital) in 720; Arpad (near Hamath, with which it is always coupled in O.T.) in 740; Samaria (capital of Israel) in 722; Damascus (capital of Syria) in 732."

10, 11. "As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols, whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and of Samaria; shall I not as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols?"

From boasting of his princes and his cities he now boasts of his making of idol-kingdoms and includes Samaria and Jerusalem. Compare I Kings 18:33-35; 19:12,13,17-19; II Chron. 32:12-16, 19. His argument is that since he had conquered kingdoms with more or greater idols than those of Jerusalem and Samaria, should he not, as he had done unto Samaria and her idols, a city with the same deity as Jerusalem, also do unto Jerusalem and her idols? "The prophet has now characterized Assyria's sin. It is ambitious self-exaltation above Jehovah, carried even to blasphemy; and yet he is only Jehovah's rod, which it was in his power to use."<sup>1</sup>

12. "Wherefore it shall come to pass, that, when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks."



God here foretells through the prophet that when he has performed his work upon his people in Jerusalem, by means of Assyrian, a work which in wrath mercy is remembered, a work of chastisement and purification (Is. 10:5-6; II Kings 19:31; I Peter 4:17), He will "visit upon the fruit of the greatness of the heart" of the king of Assyria, and "the glory of the lifting up of his eyes." "The end of the work of punishment passes into the judgment upon the instrument of punishment, and therefore into the deliverance of Jerusalem from extreme distress. The fruit of the pride of the heart of Assyria is his vain glorious blaspheming of Jehovah -- glory is the self-glorification which expresses itself in the lofty look of his eyes." See Is. 31:5-9; 37:36-38.

13. "For he hath said, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I have understanding; and I have removed the bounds of the peoples, and have robbed their treasures, and like a valiant man I have brought down them that sit on thrones."

Here are added reasons for the punishment of the Assyrian king. He boasted of his strength and wisdom, and that he had broken down national distinctions incorporating in a single empire, plundered their possessions, and disposed men at his pleasure. See Hab. 2:6-11.

14. "And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the peoples; and as one gathered eggs that are forsaken, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or chirped."

This figure represents the Assyrian king as boasting of the ease with which he rifled and plundered all the nations, their utter helplessness before him, and their lack of resistance or opposition. "Thus proudly does Assyria look back upon his course of victory, and thus contemptuously does he look down upon the subdued kingdoms." <sup>3</sup>

15. "Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? shall the saw magnify itself against him that wieldeth it? as if a rod should wield them that lift it up, or as if a staff should lift up him that is not wood."

The prophet shows the absurdity of the Assyrian's self-exaltation. While he is in a sense doing as he pleases at the same time God is overruling his actions for the accomplishment of His purposes. The Assyrian is as a tool in the hand of a workman. An old rendition of this verse "Shall the axe boast against him who uses it, saying I have cut (wood); the saw boast against him who moves it, saying, I have sawed? When the rod is raised to smite, it is not the rod that smites, but he who smites with it." See Jer. 51:20 and Rom. 9:20-21.

16. "Therefore will the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, send among his fates leanness; and under his glory there shall be kindled a burning like the burning of fire."

The manifestation of Jehovah's punitive power upon the Assyrians is expressed under the figures of disease and fire, the former reducing the strength (Ps. 106:15), and the latter destroying suddenly and completely.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Is. 37:7, 29,36; 30:30-33; Acts 12:23.

17. "And the light of Israel will be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame; and it will burn and devour his thorns and his briers in one day."

Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel is light (Ps. 27:1; Is. 60:19; I John 1:5). Light is "the symbol and expression of holiness." "Our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29). The sin of Assyria stirs up this fire of God's wrath, and the host of Assyria is as thorns and briers before the flames of His righteous judgment. Is. 9:18; 30:33; 37:36.

18. "And he will consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body: and it shall be as when a standard-bearer fainteth."

The Assyrian army in all its glory is like a forest and a fruitful field, yet Jehovah will consume it in its entirety. Sennacherib boasted that he would cut down the choice trees of Lebanon and enter the fruitful field of Palestine (II Kings 19:23) but because of his raging and arrogance he in turn was punished (II Kings 19:28).

"As when a standard-bearer fainteth" in the R.V. Margin is "as when a sick man pineth away," the force of the expression being "the dying out in the consuming fire of fever." Thus interpreted there is a return to the figure of disease in verse 16.

19. "And the remnant of the trees of his forest shall be few, so that a child may write them."

From the scene of the sick man pining away we are led back to the forest destroyed by fire, where only a few isolated trees are left here and there, so few that a child can count them and write down the number. This is a picture of what actually happened to the host of Assyria when it attacked Jerusalem. Is. 37:36.

20. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant, and they that are escaped of the house of Jacob shall no more again lean upon him that smote them, but shall lean upon Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, in truth."

In contrast to the remnant of the Assyrian power of verse 19 the prophet now turns to a favorite theme of his, the remnant of Israel who shall return to Jehovah, the escaped who shall lean no more on the arm of flesh as did Ahaz (II Kings 16:7; II Chron. 28:20) but in sincerity, without hypocrisy upon the Holy One of Israel. Is. 1:9; 4:2-3; 6:13; 8:1-5; 11:11,16; 37:31-32; Hos. 14:3; Rom. 9:27-29.

The word remnant "has a special significance in the prophecies of Isaiah, as denoting 'a holy seed', or spiritual kernel, of the nation which should survive impending judgment and become the germ of the people of God, being blessed of God and made a blessing."<sup>4</sup>

21. "A remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God."

This is the prophecy stated in the name Shear-jashub (7:3), and the name 'mighty God' as found in 9:6. As verse 20 suggests the faith of the remnant (leaning upon Jehovah), this verse suggests the repentance of the remnant (returning unto Jehovah). Is. 55:7; Acts 26:20.

22. "For though thy people, Israel, be as the sand of the sea, only the remnant of them shall return: a destruction is determined, overflowing with righteousness."

While the preceding verses (20-21) emphasize faith and repentance with respect to the remnant, this verse emphasizes election and foreordination. Out of the great multitude of Israel only the remnant shall turn, according to the election of grace (Rom. 9:27; 11:5).

"With regard to the mass, extermination is irrevocably decided; an extermination which is overflowed by righteousness, or better, which flows along, that is, flowing brings along righteousness, and therefore comes like a swelling billow of divine righteousness, that is, penal justice." 5 Isaiah 6:11; 8:8; Rom. 9:28; Acts 17:31.

23. "For a full end, and that determined, will the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, make in the midst of the earth."

Paul in Rom. 9:28 follows in the main the translation of this verse in the Septuagint. "For the Lord will execute his word upon the earth, finishing it and cutting it short." Alexander points out that "this verse and the one before it are quoted by Paul (Rom. 9:27-28) to show that the Jews, as such, were not the heirs of the promise, which was intended for the remnant according to the election of grace."

24. "Therefore thus saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, O my people at dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian, though he smite thee with the rod, and lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt."

Turning from the subject of the remnant of Israel back to the main subject of the rod of God's wrath, namely, the Assyrian power, Jehovah in this verse speaks words of comfort to his people, dwellers of Zion. He exhorts them not to be afraid, assuring them that the invasion of the enemy will be frustrated. The implication of this verse is that the Assyrian might smite the people of Zion like Pharaoh did Israel in Egypt. Yet their fathers in Egypt were delivered by the power of Jehovah, and their hope of deliverance from Assyria is through Jehovah of hosts. Is. 34:4; 37:33-35.

25. "For yet a very little while, and the indignation against thee shall be accomplished, and mine anger shall be directed to his destruction."

That the indignation against Israel expressing itself in chastisement is only for a short time, accomplishing its purpose of correction and purification, seems to be the force of the first part of the verse. (Is. 54:7) At the same time his anger against Assyria will culminate in its destruction. Is. 14:24-25; 30:30-33; 31:4-9; 37:36-38.

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Delitzsch.

26. "And Jehovah of hosts will stir up against him a scourge, as in the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb: and his rod will be over the sea, and he will lift it up after the manner of Egypt."

How signally and totally Jehovah will destroy the Assyrian power (Is. 37:36-38) is compared first to the manifestation of his power against Midian (Is. 9:4; Judges 7:25) in the time of Gideon, and secondly to a similar manifestation of His power in the destruction of Pharaoh's army in the time of Moses (Ex. 14:16; 14:25-27). Contrast the rod of Assyria (vs. 24) smiting Israel after the manner of Pharaoh in Egypt, with the rod of Jehovah in verse 26 to be directed to the destruction of Assyria as his rod was used to the destruction of the Egyptians.

27. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall depart from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed by reason of fatness."

The Assyrian oppression shall cease. Is. 9:4; 14:25. There may be a reference here to the tribute Hezekiah had to pay Sennacherib (II Kings 18:13-14). Interpretations of the last part of this verse are many. One is that "Judah is compared to a bullock which grows so fat and strong that a yoke can no longer be imposed upon it." Another is that the force of the last word is not "fatness", but "oil" suggestive of anointing, and that deliverance from oppression shall come "because of the anointed king of David's house to which God has promised a lasting kingdom." Ps. 20:6; Ps. 89:20-23. The primary meaning of the verse is clear, a prophecy of freedom from the bondage of Assyria.

28-32. Approach of Assyrians to attack Jerusalem.

28. "He is come to Aiath, he is passed through Migron; at Michmash he layeth up his baggage;"

Verses 28-32 are "a prophetic description of the march of Sennacherib's army approaching Jerusalem in order to invest it, and of the terror and confusion spreading and increasing through the several places as he advanced; expressed with great brevity, but finely diversified. Aiath, or Ai, was situated a little east of Bethel about twelve miles north of Jerusalem; Michmash about three miles nearer, where there was a narrow pass between two sharp hills; Geba and Ramah about three miles more to the south; Gibeah a mile and a half more southward; Anathoth within three miles of Jerusalem; to the westward of which, towards Lydda, was Nob, from which place Sennacherib might have a prospect of Zion, and near which, it would appear, his army was destroyed."<sup>7</sup> Aiath, was probably the ancient Ai (Josh. 7:2) in Benjamite territory, from which point the land to the south to be conquered could be seen, Migron - I Sam. 14:2; Michmash - I Sam. 13:2,5.

29. "They are gone over the pass; they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah trembleth; Gibeah of Saul is fled."

The pass of Michmash is mentioned in I Sam. 13:23. Compare I Sam. 14:4-5. Geba - Josh. 21:17; I Kings 15:22. After describing the Assyrian approach thus far, there comes the description of its terrifying effect.

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Dummelow Commentary.

Treasury of Scripture Knowledge, p. 436.

Ramah - I Sam. 7:17; Jer. 31:15. Gibeah of Saul (I Sam. 10:26) was the birthplace and residence of Saul.

30. "Cry aloud with thy voice, O daughter of Gallim! hearken, O Laishah! O thou poor Anathoth!"

After the vivid description of the approach of the invaders, and the resulting terror in the towns as the Assyrian draws nearer and nearer Jerusalem, the prophet changes the form of description to direct address to the places of Gallim, Laishah, and Anathoth, calling upon one town to cry out in distress, another to hearken, and to another he makes a lamentation. Gallim - I Sam. 25:44. Laish was evidently not the place named in Judges 18:7, 29, but a small village near Jerusalem. Anathoth, well known in connection with Jeremiah (Jer. 1:1; 32:8).

31. "Madmenah is a fugitive; the inhabitants of Gebim flee for safety."

Madmenah is not the city mentioned in Jos. 15:31. It together with Gebim are unknown today. As places near Jerusalem they fled before Sennacherib.

32. "This very day shall he halt at Nob: he shaketh his hand at the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem."

Nob was a city of priests (I Sam. 22:19), and may have been located on the height just north of Jerusalem. Here the Assyrian halted and threatened the holy city.

33. "Behold, the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, will lop the boughs with error: and the high of stature shall be hewn down, and the lofty shall be brought low."

Man's extremity is God's opportunity. With the Assyrian power just outside the holy city ready to attack what would Jehovah do? This and the next verse tell us, comparing the Assyrian host to a forest as in verses 18, 19, and Ezek. 31:3. Jehovah will cut down this power with error which had boasted that it would cut down Lebanon. See Is. 37:24, 26-38. In the words of Nebuchadnezzar, "Those that walk in pride he is able to abase." (Dan. 4:3-7b).

34. "And he will cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one."

In verse 18 the figure is that of fire consuming the forest. Here it is changed to that of iron, hewing it down. (Is. 31:8) "Mighty One" may refer directly to Jehovah himself (Is. 10:21; 9:6) or to the angel of Jehovah (Is. 37:36), his agent in smiting the Assyrian host of Sennacherib.

Chap. 11:1. "And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit."

A great Messianic passage.

The close of chapter ten has just pictured the fate of the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar, the destruction of the Assyrian power, under the figure of the forest of Lebanon cut down. In striking contrast the Kingdom

of Sennacherib.

f God is here pictured as rising thru the Messiah who is pictured as shoot growing out of the stump of Jesse. Here is the same figure as he one used in connection with the holy seed in chapter 6:13. We are told that the cedar is unlike the oak, in that when it is cut down it does not send up any shoots. So the Assyrian power was cut down not to rise again. On the other hand out of the ruin of the Jewish state and house of David came forth the Messiah from the stock of Jesse like a prout from the oak. Jesse is here mentioned instead of David probably to emphasize the lowliness of the birth of Jesus. The house of David had sunk into apparent insignificance at the time of the birth of Christ. Yet from this lowliness, as a root out of dry ground (53:2) He became glorious (4:2) fruit-bearing, exalted (Rev. 5:5; 22:16).

For relation of Jesse to Jesus see Ruth 4:17; I Sam. 17:58; Is. 9:7; Matt. 1:6-16; Acts 13:22,23; Rom. 15:12.

2. "And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah."

This is a classic passage on the subject of the Holy Spirit and His relation to the second person of the Trinity. It is here prophesied that the Messiah will be endowed with the highest intellectual, practical, and religious gifts by the direct power of the Holy Spirit. See Is. 42:1; Matt. 3:16; John 1:32-33; 3:34. Note the emphasis in this verse of the Holy Spirit as the Author of the intellect, and compare John 14:7; 15:26; Col. 2:2-3.

"There are seven spirits which are enumerated from above downwards; for the spirit of the fear of God is the basis of all (Prov. 1:7; Job 3:28; Ps. 111:10), and the spirit of God is absolutely the heart of all; it corresponds to the shaft of the sevenflamed candlestick, and the three pairs to the arms that stretched out from it. In these seven forms -- the Holy Spirit descends upon the second David for abiding possession -- the seven torches before God's throne in Rev. 4:5, compare 1:4, burn and illumine the soul. The seven spirits are his seven eyes. (Rev. 5:6)"<sup>8</sup>

3. "And his delight shall be in the fear of Jehovah; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither decide after the hearing of his ears."

Interpretations differ as to the first expression. G. A. Smith says it may mean "He shall draw his breath in the fear of Jehovah." R. Margin reads it "He shall be of quick understanding in the fear of Jehovah." A more literal translation by Delitzsch is "The fear of Jehovah is fragrance to him." Not only will the Messiah delight himself to do God's will as the beloved Son in whom God is well pleased, but his delight will be in the fear of God when he perceives it in others. He shall "smell it with pleasure."

From this verse to verse five are presented the character of his government, the perfect standards which he will exemplify as the sinless Messiah. He will not judge according to outward appearances, or common reports. I Sam. 16:7; John 2:25; 7:24.

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Delitzsch.

Alexander well expresses the force of this verse by saying "He shall take delight in goodness, and be able to distinguish it without ail from its counterfeits."

4. "But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked."

In contrast to the unjust rulers of Judah, Is. 1:23; 10:2; 5:23, he will judge righteously, Is. 9:7; 16:5; 32:1, the poor, Ps. 72:1-4, 2-14; Matt. 11:5, and "he will decide with straightness for the humble and meek of the land." Is. 61:1; Matt. 5:5.

Some understand "the earth" in the second part of the verse to mean the anti-christian world, others, that it means literally the earth which is under the curse of sin, which together with the wicked people of the earth will suffer his punitive righteousness. "The very word of his mouth is already a staff which shatters to pieces (Ps. 2:9; Rev. 1:16), and the very breath of his lips, no further means being required, exercises an annihilating influence. (II Thess. 2:8)"<sup>9</sup>

5. "And righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins."

As the girdle holds together the clothes, ready for action so are righteousness and faithfulness as girdles of the Messiah's clothing. Righteousness has been called the fundamental attribute of an ideal king. Note the connection of righteousness and faithfulness in Hosea 2:19, 20, also compare I John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

6. "And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them."

From this verse to verse 9 is a prophecy that the state of the Messianic Kingdom will be that of peace and the prevalence of the knowledge of Jehovah. Some take this and the following verses literally as foretelling peace in the animal world, such restoration of the harmony of creation as is suggested in Rom. 8:19-22. This view<sup>10</sup> expressed by Delitzsch follows, "There now reigns in irrational nature, from the greatest things in it down to the invisibly least, a malevolent strife and fierce light in carnage. But when the son of David shall have entered upon the full possession and exercise of his royal inheritance, then will the peace of Paradise be renewed." The other interpretation which we prefer is that of Calvin, Luther, and most Christian writers who regard these images from the animal world as symbolical of the harmony and security that will come to God's people thru the coming and reign of the Prince of Peace. Thru His power the cruel, ferocious natures of men are changed, and they become new creatures in Christ Jesus. Such a change was typically illustrated when Saul the persecutor was changed into Paul the preacher. Acts 9:13-20; II Cor. 5:14-21; Titus 3:3-5).

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Delitzsch.

7. "And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox."

This continues the beautiful imagery. While recognizing the truth that there is a sense in which the harmony of creation will be restored through the reconciliation of Christ (Col. 1:20), we believe the primary thought here is to the change to be made in the hearts of wicked men, and as a consequence in the condition of society.

8. "And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den."

Matthew Henry says "A generation of vipers shall become a seed of saints, and the old complaint of 'Homo homini lupus' (Man is a wolf to man) shall be at an end."

9. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters over the sea."

The picture of peace, harmony, safety is here completed, and the reason given in conclusion. Alexander says "This passage is descriptive of the reign of the Messiah, not at any one period, but as a whole. A historian, in giving a general description of the reign of David, would not use language applicable only to its beginning. The prophecy is therefore one of gradual fulfilment. So far as the cause operates, the effect follows, and when the cause shall operate without restraint, the effect will be complete and universal. The use of the future in the first clause and the preterite in the second may imply, that the prevalence of the knowledge of Jehovah must precede that of universal peace. It is not till the land has been filled with that knowledge, that men will cease to injure and destroy." Is. 2:4; Acts 2:41-47; Rom. 12:17-21; Gal. 5:22-24; Rev. 21:27.

10. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse, that standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto him shall the nations seek; and his resting place shall be glorious."

Continuing the prophetic view of the righteous reign of the root of Jesse (See comment on verse 1) it is here shown that the Gentiles shall seek Him. Paul makes this application of this verse in Rom. 15:12. The Messiah shall be as an ensign, banner, rallying point. He will be conspicuous before the nations. John 3:14, 15; 12:32 "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself." Is. 60:3; Matt. 2:1-2; Luke 2:32; John 12:20-21; Acts 11:18; 26:17-18; 28:28. The last clause, according to Delitzsch means "the place where he has settled down to dwell and reign is glory, that is, the dwelling and reigning seat of a king who shines over all, and rules all and gathers all the nations around him."

11. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord will set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, that shall remain from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea."

Following the prediction that the Gentiles will come into the Mes-



siah's kingdom there is here a prediction of the gathering of the remnant of dispersed Jews from the nations, a recovery or purchase (Ex. 15:16). It is called a ~~second~~ time probably in relation to the redemption from Egypt as the first time.

At the head of the list of countries are the two leading powers of the time, Pathros, or Upper Egypt, and Cush, or Ethiopia, perhaps including part of Arabia, were dependencies of Egypt. Elam, a province of Persia and Shinar or Babylonia were dependencies of Assyria. Hamath was a Syrian city at the northern foot of Lebanon. Lastly, the isles and coastlands of the Mediterranean, practically equivalent to Europe. The islands in Isaiah occupy a most important place. 24:15; 42:4, 10, 12; 49:1; 51:5; 60:9; 66:19. For remnant see chapter 1:9; 10:20-22; 37:4, 31, 32; 46:3. "The complete fulfilment is to be expected when all Israel shall be saved. The prediction must be figuratively understood, because the nations mentioned in this verse have long ceased to exist. The event prefigured is according to some, the return of the Jews to Palestine; but according to others, their admission to Christ's Kingdom on repentance and reception of the Christian faith." 10

12. "And he will set up an ensign for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."

Here are two predictions, the calling of the Gentiles and the restoration of the Jews, agreeing with Paul in Rom. 11:25-26 - "A hardening in part hath befallen Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved." Verse 10; 59:19; Rev. 5:9; Is. 27:13; Is. 49:11-12; Is. 56:8; Is. 24:16.

13.. "The envy also of Ephraim shall depart and they that vex Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim."

The breach between the Northern and Southern Kingdoms mentioned in 2:21 was historic. The envy of Ephraim was evident as far back as the time of the Judges (Judges 8:1; 12:1). It reached a climax when Ephraim joined Jeroboam, their own tribesman in revolt (I Kings 11:26). It was long-continued envy. "And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually" (I Kings 14:30). "And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days" (I Kings 15:16). In New Testament times there was enmity between Jews, Samaritans and Galileans. Compare promises of reunion of Judah and Israel in Ezek. 37:16-24 and Hos. 1:11. Under Christ as head national and sectional distinctions are abolished. Conciliation through the cross abolishes enmity. Eph. 2:16.

14. "And they shall fly down upon the shoulder of the Philistines from the west; together shall they despoil the children of the east; they shall put forth their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them."

Israel reunited will be victorious over their old enemies. Under the Messiah the church will spiritually conquer her enemies. Shoulder means a coast-land or borders of Philistia (Zeph. 2:5). Like birds of prey,

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Alexander.

Israel will swoop down upon the enemy. Children of the east are the Edouin Arabs (Judges 6:3; II Chron. 21:16). Compare Is. 34:5-6 for God's judgment on Edom, and Num. 24:17-18 for ancient prophecy regarding Israel, Moab, and Edom, and II Sam. 12:26-31 for David's victory over the children of Ammon. This verse gives a glorious picture of the spiritual conquests of the gospel among the enemies of the church, or in the heathen world, under the reign of the Messiah.

15. "And Jehovah will utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his scorching wind will he wave his hand over the River, and will smite it into seven streams, and cause men to march over dry land."

By His Almighty power Jehovah will remove all obstacles to the return and restoration of His people. See Is. 51:10-11. The tongue of the Egyptian refers to the Gulf of Suez where His miraculous power was shown in delivering Israel from Egypt under Moses. (Ex. 14:21) Again He will redeem his people. (Is. 19:21) Not only the dispersed out of Egypt, but also out of Assyria will be restored, the way being provided by Jehovah. He will remove the barrier of the River Euphrates. Compare Rev. 16:12. "The prophet under these metaphors intends nothing else than that there would be no impediment to God when he wished to deliver his people from captivity." 11

16. "And there shall be a highway for the remnant of his people, that shall remain from Assyria; like as there was for Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt."

God will provide a way for the return of the remnant of his people. The figure of the highway is characteristic of Isaiah. See 19:23; 35:10; 40:3-4.

As God's power has removed the obstructions of His people in the past so will His power in the future restore His people, and overcome the obstacles to the progress and success of the gospel. See Is. 42:16; 51:10-11.

Chap. 12:1. "And in that day thou shalt say, I will give thanks to thee, O Jehovah, for though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me."

This song of thanksgiving in chapter 12 may well be compared with the Song of Moses and Miriam, Ex. 15:1-19, following their deliverance from the Red Sea, and the Song of Moses and the Lamb, Rev. 15:3-4 sung by Moses standing by the sea of glass who had come off victorious. This song may have been sung first following the deliverance from Sennacherib retold in chapter ten, while it continues to be sung by those delivered from the bondage of sin under the reign of the Messiah presented in chapter eleven. Verse one expresses thanksgiving for anger turned away and comfort turned back. Is. 10:4, 25; 40:1-2; 54:8-10; Ps. 30:5; 85:1-3; 119:14:4-9.

2. "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for Jehovah, even Jehovah, is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation."

Ex. 15:2; Ps. 118:14. Jehovah is the source of my salvation, Is. 5:17; Matt. 1:21; Rom. 1:16; Rev. 7:10; the source of my strength and protection (Ps. 27:1; Is. 26:3-4) and the subject of my song. Rev. 19:

3. "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."

With Jehovah as our strength, song, and salvation with joy shall we receive an exhaustless supply of living water. Jesus may have had this passage in mind when he spoke to the Samaritan woman of the living water (John 4:10-14), and when he cried on the last great day of the feast the words of John 7:37-38. Jewish writers tell us that one feature of the premonial of the feast of the tabernacles on the last day was the carrying by the priest of a golden pitcher of water taken from the pool of Siloam, the joyous singing by the people of Is. 12:3, and the pouring out of the water as a libation on the altar of the temple, in memory of the water from the rock in the wilderness, and in prophecy of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the times of the Messiah. The joy of salvation is here emphasized as in Hab. 3:18.

4. "And in that day shall ye say, Give thanks unto Jehovah, call upon his name, declare his doings among the peoples, make mention that his name is exalted."

In this second stanza of the song of thanksgiving it is prophesied that God's people will exhort each other not only to praise Jehovah, but to make known His praises to others. God's people are to praise, pray, and sing. Compare Ps. 105:1 and I Chron. 16:8; Ps. 113:1-3; Ps. 117; Ps. 150; Phil. 2:9-11.

5. "Sing unto Jehovah; for he hath done excellent things: let this be known in all the earth."

Compare Ex. 15:1 and 21 which the prophet may have had in mind when he wrote this song. See also Ps. 98:1; 105:2 and Rev. 15:3.

His praises are to be sung in all the earth. Is. 24:14-15; 42:10-12. His glorious salvation of which God is the author has in view all peoples. Is. 45:22.

6. "Cry aloud and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion; for great in the midst of thee is the Holy One of Israel."

Here is a final call to the people of God to give expression to exultant joy, and the reason therefor. Compare Is. 40:9; 52:7-10; Zeph. 3:15-17; Zec. 2:5; Zec. 2:10-11. Concerning the name Holy One of Israel see note on Chap. 1:9.

So the so-called Book of Immanuel (Is. 7-12) closes with the thought of Immanuel God with us. Great in our midst is the Holy One of Israel, the fulness of time Immanuel became flesh and tabernacled among men, who "beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

The Kingdom of the World.

- . The Rod.
- . The Fruit.
- . The Forest.

The Kingdom of God.

- . The Shoot.
- . The Ensign.
- . The Remnant.
- . The Highway.

Reasons for Thanksgiving.

- . Anger turned away, comfort turned back, 12:1.
- . Jehovah - my Strength, Song, Salvation, 12:2. Therefore verse 3.
- . He hath done gloriously - So great a salvation, 12:5.
- . Holy One of Israel great in our midst, 12:6.