

Isaiah
For LoveIsrael.org
Chapter 1
Part 1: Isaiah 1:1-17

Some of the best-known prophecies, and most glorious promises of God in the Bible, are found within the prophecy of Isaiah. The name 'Isaiah' means 'God of salvation' or 'God who saves'. However, much of this prophecy is centered around the judgment of God. It is important to note that salvation and judgment are not unrelated. It is only through judgment that salvation can be manifested. When God pours out His wrath upon this world, we are told in Revelation 19:1-7, there is going to be rejoicing in heaven as it is God's judgement that is going to give birth to the Kingdom of God.

Verse 1: *"A vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah."*

A vision: Isaiah does not start off this prophecy as so many of the prophets did. He does not call it a burden or a word from the Lord. Over a long period of time, Isaiah, much like John in the book of Revelation, encountered visions from the Lord.

Judah: Referring to the Southern Kingdom.

Jerusalem: The capital of the Southern Kingdom. It was the place where God had caused His Name to dwell, and where He (despite being omnipresent) manifested Himself in a unique way.

Uzziah: Also called Azariah (2 Kings 15:1-7). He reigned for 52 years.

Jotham: Uzziah's son (2 Kings 15:32-38). He reigned for 16 years.

Ahaz: Jotham's son (2 Kings 16). He reigned for 16 years.

Hezekiah: Ahaz's son (2 Kings 18-20). He reigned for 29 years.

Kings of Judah: In a unique way this verse places emphasis on Judah, the Southern Kingdom.

Note: Many scholars estimate that Isaiah received this prophecy over a period of approximately 60 to 65 years. Rabbinical scholars say that it was even longer than this. The fact that Isaiah was a prophet for this length of time would have given him a degree of power, respect and influence over the people in his day.

Verse 2: *"Hear O heavens and give ear O land! For the Lord has spoken: 'Children I have raised and exalted, but they have transgressed against Me.'"*

Hear O heavens and give ear O land: There is a hint of creation in these words – not of the first creation found in Genesis 1, but of the second...that of the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

The Lord has spoken: Although this is written in the past tense the implication is that God is going to speak. When the past tense is used it shows completeness. It is as if it has already happened.

Children I have raised and exalted: God brought the Jewish people into existence, and He exalted them, He chose them; they are His chosen people.

But: Although many translate this word as ‘and’ it should be interpreted as ‘but’ because it shows a contrast.

Transgressed: Sinned against (broken spiritual laws) and committed a crime against (they did not only break the spiritual laws, but they also broke the civil laws. They violated the laws of God as well as the laws of man).

Verse 3: *“The ox knew his owner, and the donkey the trough of his master; but Israel does not know, My people do not consider.”*

Knew: This is also written in the past tense, alluding to the fact that the ox knows completely and utterly what the owner expects of him.

The donkey the trough of his master: Both the donkey and the ox know who they belong to. They recognize the authority of their owner over them.

Know...consider: Although God is Israel’s master and owner, they do not care to know Him and nor do they pay attention to (consider) Him. Isaiah begins this prophecy by letting the people know that God is not important to them – they do not know, and are not studying, God’s Word; they are not paying any attention to God.

Verse 4: *“Woe, O sinful nation, a people heavy in iniquity. They are offspring of evildoers; they are children that are corrupt. They have left the Lord and have spoken blasphemously against the Holy One of Israel. They have turned backward.”*

Woe: This is a word that speaks about how bad something is going to be. God is not pleased with the people and therefore there are going to be consequences to their actions.

Heavy in iniquity: They have violated the Word of God in a very serious manner.

They have left the Lord: God did not abandon Israel. Through their choice of sin, iniquity and transgression they left Him.

Blasphemously: They have spoken incorrectly. They have spoken in an improper way to the Lord.

Turned backward: They have moved away from God. Instead of going toward Him they have turned their backs on Him and are walking in the opposite direction, the wrong direction.

Verse 5: *“On account of what have they been bruised? More and more have you turned aside. The head is sick, and the heart is diseased.”*

On account of what have they been bruised (struck)?: God is asking them a question. He wants to know if they know the reason why they are experiencing punishment.

More and more have you turned aside: They are being punished because they have rebelled against the Lord God.

The head is sick, and the heart is diseased: This is an example of parallelism. Head....heart. Sick...diseased. Throughout this prophecy there is poetic parallelism...heavens...earth/land, ox...donkey etc. The head (and heart – Proverbs 23:7) is synonymous with thinking, a thought process. Israel is thinking incorrectly (in a diseased way) and as a result they are making poor decisions. Their thought process was not pleasing to God.

Verse 6: *“From the sole of your feet unto your head there is no soundness. There are wounds and bruises and being struck, and there is trouble. They have not been closed or bound up or anointed with ointment.”*

There is no soundness: This is a Hebrew idiom for pain or suffering. From top to toe, they are in pain. There is not a single part of them that is well, but every member of their body is affected. Many scholars speak here of Israel’s spiritual condition being likened to a disease or a sickness.

There is trouble: Things are not in their correct order.

Not been closed or bound up: Israel’s (spiritual) wounds are infected. Nothing has been done to extract the pus from their wounds to get rid of the infection. The wounds have not been tended to, wrapped up, but they have been left open to fester.

Anointed with ointment: Isaiah is saying that Israel is wounded. Her wounds have been infected, but nothing is being done to bring health or healing to the children of Israel.

Verse 7: *“Your land is desolate. Your cities have been burned with fire; your ground is devoured by foreigners – it is desolate and overthrown by strangers.”*

Your land is desolate: The parallelism here is this: There is a relationship between the spiritual condition of the people and the physical condition of the land. Because of Israel’s spiritual suffering the land of Israel was itself physically suffering.

Your ground is devoured by foreigners: The southern kingdom of Israel was being attacked by foreign armies and they were making the land desolate. A revolution by foreigners had occurred within the land.

Verse 8: *“The daughter of Zion is left like a booth among the vineyards, as a shack in a vegetable patch, as a besieged city.”*

Booth: Sukkah. This was a temporary shelter, a shack, that was built for a short period of time (eg over harvest time) and then was abandoned when it was no longer needed (no longer had a purpose). God is saying that Israel was no longer serving a purpose.

Besieged city: No one is paying attention to this city anymore. It has been abandoned and is falling into disrepair.

Verse 9: *“Unless the Lord of hosts had not left for us a survivor, then we would have been like Sodom, and we would have been likened to Gomorrah.”*

The Lord of hosts ... left for us a survivor: God himself acted to preserve a remnant.

Sodom ... Gomorrah: These two words give us a clue as to how dissatisfied and displeased God was with His people.

Verse 10: *“Listen to the Word of the Lord O officials of Sodom, give ear to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah.”*

Officials of Sodom: It is so important to recognize parallelism when we are reading Hebrew poetry or prophecy. Here God (using parallelism) is talking to Judah (the Jewish people), but He is addressing them with this offensive name.

Give ear: The word used here is a word that means to draw close to hear. God wanted the Jewish people to come closer to Him. He wanted them to pay attention.

The Word of the Lord ...the law of our God: God's Word (His revelation) is likened to (parallel to) His Law.

Verse 11: *"Why is to Me these abundant sacrifices?" says the Lord. 'I have had too much of your burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of cattle. The blood of bulls and sheep and goats I have not desired.'"*

Why is to Me these abundant sacrifices: The people's worship, the way that they respond to God, is inadequate. He is not pleased with their worship.

Have had too much: Saturated.

The fat: The choice parts.

The blood of bulls and sheep and goats I have not desired: Their offerings were not wrong. These sacrifices were not against God's will. What God was displeased with was the manner in which they were being offered up. They were offering up these sacrifices with the wrong motives. They were going through the motions, they were fulfilling their obligations, but their behaviour, their hearts, did not change. Although they were making sacrifices to God their hearts and lifestyles reflected that they were far from Him.

Verse 12: *"For when you come to see My face who has required this from your hand – this trampling of My courtyards?"*

See My face: When they appeared before God.

Trampling of My courtyards: They were coming to God in an improper way. Instead of coming to worship they were showing contempt for the courts of the Lord. They did not go with the right hearts, nor with the right purpose.

Verse 13: *"You shall not continue to bring the offering of futility and incense which is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and your holy convocations - I am not able to tolerate the wickedness nor your assembly."*

Offering of futility: That which is a vanity, that which is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

Abomination: Because of their mindset and their behaviour God was not pleased with their offerings. What they thought was a sweet-smelling aroma in God's nostrils (incense) was in fact a stench.

I am not able to tolerate: God no longer wanted to see Judah in this spiritual condition. He no longer wanted these observances from them.

Verse 14: *"Your New Moons and your appointed days My Soul hates; they have become a burden, I have grown weary of lifting them up."*

Soul: Speaking of the very essence of someone (in this case: God), their innermost being.

Hates: A very strong word of profound dislike.

I have grown weary of lifting them up: God is very frustrated with the people, and He has grown tired of responding to them.

Verse 15: *“When you spread out your hands, My eyes will ignore you. When you make abundant prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood.”*

Spread out your hands: Lift up their hands to the Lord.

Ignore...not listen: Because of their actions, their deeds, God is no longer going to engage with them. He is distancing Himself from them as He is displeased with them.

Your hands are full of blood: They have shed innocent blood.

Verse 16: *“Wash yourselves, purify yourselves. Remove evil deeds from before My eyes and cease to do evil.”*

Wash yourselves...: God is calling them to repent. It is only when they repent that God will offer them forgiveness.

Verse 17: *“Learn to do good. Seek justice. Make straight the ruthless one. Judge properly the orphan. Contend for the widow.”*

Learn to do good: Learn to do the things which are the will of God.

Seek justice: This is one of the good things that God is calling us to do. We do not only demand justice with our words, we need to act in a manner that establishes justice.

Make straight: Correct

Ruthless one: This one is far removed from, he is in opposition to, the things of God.

Note: When we are willing to do these things mentioned above, we are going to see God move in such a way that His anointing comes upon His people. It is only then that the ruthless ones are going to be changed. When we do not contend for the widow or look out for the orphan (the least of our brethren) then we work to empower the wicked behaviour of those who are ruthless, and we let them take over the leadership in our midst. The offering of God’s salvation is always accompanied with a command from God to change. We are not saved by our ability to change, but we won't be saved if we do not believe that God is calling us to change. We have to agree that sin is wrong, and we have to have the desire to turn away from it. We will never find the power to do that until we're saved. The proclamation of salvation, the offering of the good news of God's forgiveness, grace and mercy, is always attached to a call to repentance - this desire to turn away from evil and embrace that which is good.

Chapter 1

Part 2: Isaiah 1:18-31

When God enters a situation that situation is transformed - and always for the better. This first chapter in Isaiah gives us a great (summary) overview of the entire book. We learn that God is displeased with His people because they are unholy, wicked and far removed from His will, His purposes and His character. However, through God's forgiveness, His grace and His mercy Judah will be transformed and will become an instrument of righteousness. God's people become an instrument whereby God accomplishes His purposes through them.

Verse 18: *“Come, please, let us argue together,” says the Lord. ‘Since your sins are like scarlet, as snow they shall be. Though they are red like crimson, as wool they shall be.’”*

Come, please: A strong request made in very polite terms. God wants to do a work of grace and mercy in the lives of His people. He wants to forgive them. He beseeches them, in a very polite way, to receive His kindness.

Argue: Reason. A word of argument. Biblically, this kind of argument is talking about arriving at the proper or right conclusion to a matter (arriving at truth). It is not a word of rejection or contention.

Your sins are like scarlet, as snow they shall be: This is a picture of the transformation or change that is going to take place. That which is unholy can become holy. That which is stained with sin (as the term ‘scarlet’ conveys) can be made pure (white like snow). God is the One who does this work in us. We cannot do it for ourselves.

Verse 19: *“If you intensely desire and if you will listen, the good of the land you will eat.”*

Listen: This change begins because people are listening to God, hearing His revelation. We listen to God through His Word. It is when we hear the Word of God that transformation can take place in our lives (Romans 10:17).

Note: In this verse God is revealing an important truth about who He is and how He behaves. Although the people have been rebellious, God, who is rich in mercy and grace, has extended an invitation of mercy to them. Those who intensely desire this transformation, that only God can bring about, and those who listen and are obedient are not only forgiven, are not only changed, but they also become partakers of the goodness of God and of His creation.

Verse 20: *“But if you refuse and rebel, the sword will devour.’ For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”*

If you refuse and rebel, the sword will devour...: God’s forgiveness, mercy, partaking of His goodness etc is conditional on our response.

The mouth of the Lord has spoken: God is serious about this. God is willing to forgive. He has invited us to repent. He is capable of cleansing us. He is generous and He loves us. We, however, need, with great desire, to be willing to respond to Him.

Verse 21: *“How has this faithful city become a harlot? I have filled her with justice; Righteousness dwells in her, But now murderers.”*

Note: In this verse God reminds the people of their current state. This is His perspective, how He sees them. It is important for us to understand sin from God’s perspective. If we do not understand that we are sinners in need of mercy, then we are not candidates for salvation. This doesn't mean that we need to be experts and understand everything about sin, but we do need to know what kind of behaviour God considers sinful and what He considers righteous. Before salvation we can agree that certain behaviours are sinful, but it is only after salvation, when the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in us, that He gives us the strength to turn away from it.

Faithful city: Referring to Jerusalem.

Harlot: The core of harlotry, in the prophets, is the issue of idolatry. Even in the city of Jerusalem there was much idolatry.

But now murderers: Instead of justice and righteousness, which God had placed in that city, there was murderous activity. Murderers were welcome there.

Verse 22: *“Your silver has become dross, your drink has been polluted with water.”*

Dross: Very inadequate, of a poor quality, impure. When metal is refined the dross is removed and thrown away. This was not the case with Jerusalem. They were happy to live with the impurities and did not remove them.

Drink: This is not the word for wine but is the word for liquor or hard drink.

Polluted: Lessened

Note: Things have changed. This city is now full of impurity. There is a lessening. The measure being used here is not the measure that God says is proper among the children of Israel.

Verse 23: *“Your leaders are rebellious, a band of robbers. Each one of them loves a bribe, and pursues payments. The orphan you do not judge, and the contention of the widow you do not plead for.”*

Leaders: The word for a high-ranking official in the government.

Rebellious: This word is found in Deuteronomy 21:18-21 regarding a stubborn and extremely rebellious son. This son refuses to take correction or listen to truth. He is wholly committed to that which is sinful. As a result of this rebellion the community would stone this son to death. This same word is used here to describe the leadership of Judah.

Loves a bribe: They are not interested in reflecting the character, the truth, the justice of God. They just want money through whatever means they can get it.

Pursues payments: This is written in the plural. It is not a one-time sin. This leadership is committing the same sin over and over again.

Orphan you do not judge: They do not provide justice for the orphan, nor do they plead his cause.

The contention of the widow you do not plead for: They exploited and oppressed the widow when she came seeking justice. They did not contend for her.

Verse 24: *“Therefore declares the Lord God of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, ‘Woe, I will be comforted from my enemies, and I will exert vengeance on my enemies.’”*

Lord God of hosts: Usually we find the expression ‘Lord of Hosts’ or the ‘Lord God’ in the Bible but the expression used here is a very rare one. This is a very strong term for the Supreme God who is totally able and who is totally in control.

The Mighty One of Israel: This is a term of great respect. Like for a knight of the round table, it is a term that speaks of One who has great character, great ability and of someone who has done something truly wonderful.

Woe: This is a word used for capturing our attention. If something does not happen, how awful the consequences are going to be.

Comforted: In Scripture this comfort is usually tied to the work of Messiah, and it relates to redemption. There is, however, another aspect related to comfort, and it is this aspect that is being referred to here – God’s judgment brings comfort to Him. When an unrighteous situation has been dealt with it results in a change to the situation, a new status. This new status, this righteous change, brings comfort to God.

Enemies: Those who are in opposition to the things of God.

Vengeance: Often we think of vengeance as an act of revenge (getting even – an eye for an eye...). This is not the kind of vengeance that God exacts on His enemies. Vengeance, for God, is not an act of revenge or retribution. This kind of vengeance means that God acts/behaves in such a way that righteousness is manifested. Because there is a righteous outcome to this vengeance, God takes comfort in it.

Verse 25: *“I will turn My hand upon you, and I will refine in purity your dross, and I will remove all your alloy.”*

I will turn My hand upon you: God knows the spiritual condition of Judah, His covenant people, and He is the One who does the work that is needed to redeem them. ‘Turning His hand’ does not mean that He smacks, punishes, or strikes them. When God turns His hand upon them, He works in a way to purify and refine them.

Dross: Impurities found in a metal. When metal (eg silver) is melted down the dross and the good quality metal separate from each other. All the impurities rise to the top of the ‘pot’ and they can be scooped out and thrown away. This is what the hand of God is going to do to Judah. His activity is going to produce righteousness.

Alloy: Although an alloy has some metal in it, it is inadequate and inferior to pure metal. God wanted to remove anything in Judah that was impure, and anything in Judah that was not of the highest quality.

Verse 26: *“I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as the beginning. And afterwards ‘This righteous city’ you shall be called, ‘a faithful city’”.*

At the first...as the beginning: The image here is that of restoration.

Judges...counselors: Justice and righteousness are going to be restored. Counselors have wisdom – they understand what righteousness and unrighteousness are – and they are able to impart that wisdom/understanding to others.

Afterwards: After God’s activity has been performed. It is only God who can bring this about.

This righteous city you shall be called, a faithful city: Referring to the city of Jerusalem.

Verse 27: *“Zion, with justice, will be redeemed, and her captives (will be redeemed) with righteousness.”*

Zion: Although Jerusalem and Zion are referring to the same location, there is a significant difference between these two identifying names. When the name ‘Zion’ is mentioned in the Bible it is referring to Jerusalem in her redeemed state (as she will be when the Kingdom of God is established, and not as she currently is). By referring to Jerusalem as Zion in this verse it gives us an indication that God is speaking about what He is going to do. A transition is going to take place – a final transformation from this world into the Kingdom of God.

Note: In Hebrew, cities, countries etc are predominately referred to in the feminine, hence referring to Jerusalem as ‘she’, ‘her’, etc)

Justice ... righteousness: These are two adjectives that describe the Kingdom of God. Not only should these be predominant features of the Kingdom, but they should also be adjectives that describe us – we who have received redemption through the blood of Messiah. We have been called to live righteously, and to execute justice (Micah 6:8). This is the transformation, the change, that God wants to bring upon His people.

Verse 28: *“The destruction of the transgressor and the sinner will be together, those who abandon the Lord will be consumed.”*

Destruction: Those who are unrepentant, not receiving the grace, forgiveness or mercy of God, are going to be crushed.

Verse 29: *“For shameful is the tree that is used for idolatry, those who covet will be embarrassed. They will be ashamed of their gardens which they have chosen.”*

For shameful is the tree that is used for idolatry: Those who practice idolatry will be made ashamed.

Their gardens: Their places of idolatry.

Verse 30: *“For you shall be as an oak tree whose leaves wither up, and whose garden has no water.”*

An oak tree: The tree that was used for idolatry.

Verse 31: *“It shall be that the one who is strong is going to be made like tinder, and the work of it like a spark; both will burn together, and no one shall quench them.”*

Tinder: Tinder (stubble or hay) helps a fire to start quickly and easily.

The work: The actions of the strong man are going to be like a spark. His actions/works ignite the fire that is going to consume him.

Both will burn together: Referring to the man and his works.

No one shall quench them: No fireman will be able to put out this fire. The judgment or wrath of God, toward those who reject Him, will go on forever and forever. God is holy, righteous, forgiving, merciful, gracious, faithful, etc. But because He is all of these things He cannot wink at sin. Those who reject Him and His plan for redemption/salvation will be ashamed, embarrassed, and consumed for all of eternity.

Chapter 2

The only way to avoid God's judgment is through receiving the gospel message - that invitation to salvation – Messiah Yeshua. God's vengeance and judgment is not only an Old Testament concept. Prophetically, in the Old Testament, His judgment is seen as a last day event. In the New Testament we are taught that God the Father has given all judgment to Yeshua (John 5:22-24, Revelation 6:16-17). The wrath of Yeshua is going to bring about destruction on this earth. However, this destruction is going to give birth to the establishment of God's Kingdom! It is God's judgment that makes visible His righteousness. This chapter in Isaiah begins with a prophetic revelation concerning the Millennial Kingdom – a period of 1000 years when Messiah reigns on this earth (Revelation 20:1-6). It is after this period of time that the New Jerusalem will be established (Revelation 21:1-5).

Verse 1: *“The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.”*

Word which Isaiah...saw: This was not a word that he heard, but it was something which he saw – another vision.

Judah and Jerusalem: In Isaiah's day there was the division of the monarchy into two kingdoms - the North (referred to as 'Israel' – and consisting of nine and a half tribes. This Northern kingdom went into captivity earlier than the Southern kingdom did), and the South (referred to as 'Judah' and consisting of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and half of the tribe of Levi).

Verse 2: *“And it will come about in the last days that the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established on the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.”*

It will come about: This should be understood as revealing a promise from God. He has said this will happen so it will happen.

The last days: When we see this phrase, 'the last days', Daniel's final week, his 70th week, should come into our minds (Daniel 9:25-27).

Mountain: Mountain, prophetically, speaks of a government/kingdom – Daniel 2:44-45. When Messiah returns to Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:3-9) He is going to set up the government of God in this world (Revelation 19:15). This government will be in effect on this current earth for 1000 years, when Messiah and His saints (those, in our dispensation, who have accepted Yeshua) will rule – Revelation 2:26-27; Revelation 5:10; Revelation 21:4

House of the Lord: Referring to the temple. There will be a correctly functioning temple in Jerusalem at this time.

Be exalted above the hills: This means that the government (Messiah's government) that will be functioning out of Jerusalem at this time will be the main or chief government. There will be other governments ('hills'), but they will be in submission to this government ('mountain'). Jerusalem is going to be the place of God's Authority. His authority will be manifested and maintained from Jerusalem because Messiah will be ruling there.

Nations: Gentiles

Flow: Stream. People from the nations will stream to Jerusalem to worship God, submit to Him and to be faithful to Him.

Verse 3: *“Many peoples shall come and say, ‘Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us from His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.’ For from Zion the law shall go forth, from Jerusalem the Word of the Lord.”*

Many peoples: Referring to those in the nations.

Mountain: Government

Jacob: The name ‘Jacob’ has great significance. In English we have been taught that it means ‘deceiver’ or ‘supplanter’, ‘one who behaves incorrectly’. However, in Hebrew this is not the understanding of the name Jacob. In Hebrew this is a word that means to follow after, to pursue (eg a reward) relentlessly/without giving up – taking hold of something and not letting go until the desired outcome has been achieved. This is confirmed in Jacob’s behaviour – Genesis 25:26, Genesis 32:24-31. Jacob is an example of how we need to whole-heartedly pursue the Lord. God rewards those who pursue His purposes and will like Jacob did. That is why God said of Jacob: “Jacob I have loved” (Malachi 1:2). Jacob was a man who followed hard after the will and purposes of God.

Zion: Jerusalem in its redemptive state – ie after Messiah returns.

The law... the Word: Another example of parallelism. This teaches us that there is a relationship between the Word of the Lord and the law. The law does not save us, but it defines what is right and what is wrong, what is righteousness and unrighteousness. The constitution in Messiah’s government will be His law.

Jerusalem: Jerusalem is important - not only in the past but also in the future. It is going to be God’s capital city when Yeshua reigns on earth for those 1000 years.

Verse 4: *“He will judge between nations, and He will reprove many peoples; they will beat their swords into shovels, and their spears they will beat into pruning shears. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, and they will no longer teach warfare anymore.”*

Nations: There will be Gentile people alive on earth during the Millennial reign of Messiah. The purpose of God has always been to bless the nations (Genesis 12:3).

Shovels... pruning shears: Tools to produce fruitfulness. There will be no need for weapons in this millennial kingdom. War will be a thing of the past because the Torah (the law) is going to establish justice and bring about a righteous Kingdom where there will be fruitfulness.

Verse 5: *“O house of Jacob, let us go and walk in the light of the Lord.”*

Light: We need to have revelation (light, illumination). Revelation is the basis for how we behave, our walk, our lifestyle.

Verse 6: *“For Your people, the house of Jacob, You have abandoned, for they are full from the East with sorceries like the Philistines, and with foreign children they doubt.”*

Abandoned: Israel, the house of Jacob, was far removed from the call of God. Because of that they were going to go through a period of hardship or judgment. In Israel’s history there have been many times of hardship, but the most difficult period for them is yet future (Jeremiah 30:4-9, Zechariah 13:8 - 9).

Full from the East: Instead of filling themselves up with the Word of God they had filled themselves up with Eastern influences and practices – the occult and idolatry.
Doubt: They have no assurance and therefore no confidence.

Verse 7: *“His land has been filled with silver and gold, there is no end of his treasures. He has filled his land with horses, there is no end of his chariots.”*

His land has been filled with silver and gold: Wealth and prosperity are no assurance, they are not proof, that a person has a lifestyle that is pleasing to God. At that time the Jewish people were exceedingly wealthy and powerful. However, this was temporary. God was going to bring about a change – He was going to abandon them to the nations so that the nations could deal with them (be instrumental in their discipline) as a consequence of them forsaking the Word of God.

Verse 8: *“You have filled this land with idols, you bow down to that which your hands have made, that which your fingers have formed.”*

Verse 9: *“A man will bow down, a man will humble himself, therefore do not forgive them.”*

A man will bow down: Referring to idolatry.

Humble himself: They are not bowing down to God but are humbling themselves before idols.

Do not forgive them: This is a call from God for their punishment or judgment.

Verse 10: *“Go into the rock, hide yourself in the dirt, because of the terror of the Lord, because of the glory of His majesty.”*

Go into: Hide themselves.

Terror: This is not referring to the fear that results in the respect, honouring or reverence of the Lord. This is speaking of a negative kind of fear – being terrified. God, knowing all things, is acquainted with their sinfulness and He's going to move against them.

Verse 11: *“The haughty eyes of man He is going to humble. The people who exalt themselves are going to bow down and be humbled. The Lord alone shall be lifted up on that day.”*

Haughty eyes: Eyes that are prideful.

That day: The phrase used in Hebrew is a phrase that is used to reference the Day of the Lord, the day of judgment. Israel is going to go through her greatest suffering during this time.

Verse 12: *“For the day of the Lord of Hosts concerning all those who are proud and exalted, concerning all who have lifted themselves up, they are going to be made low.”*

Verse 13: *“Concerning every cedar of Lebanon who has exalted and lifted themselves up, concerning every tree of Bashan.”*

Every cedar...every tree: Referring to the trees whose wood was frequently used to make idols. God is going to deal with, and bring low, everything related to idolatry, everything which exists to exalt itself or is established in pride.

Verse 14: *“Concerning all the mountains that have exalted themselves, concerning every hill that is lifted up.”*

Mountains: Mountains were also a place of idolatry.

Verse 15: *“Concerning every high tower and concerning a wall that is a fortress.”*

High tower ... a wall that is a fortress: God is going to move against everything that personifies power and earthly splendour.

Verse 16: *“Upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all the beautiful sloops.”*

Ships of Tarshish: Tarshish was known for sea transportation. Their ships transported many possessions and great wealth.

Upon all the beautiful sloops: God is going to bring down and judge all the human wealth and splendour.

Verse 17: *“The high-minded man will be made low; those who exalt themselves are going to be made low. On that day it will be the Lord alone who is lifted up.”*

Made low: Philippians 2:10-11

On that day: On the day of judgment

The Lord alone ... is lifted up: The judgment of God ultimately manifests God's glory.

Verse 18: *“The idols, all of them, will pass away.”*

Verse 19: *“Let them go into the caves of rocks and into the holes of ground let them go. Let them flee in terror of the Lord and because of the glory of His majesty.”*

Go into the caves: Revelation 6:15-17

Verse 20: *“On that day a man will cast away his idols of silver and his idols of gold which he made for himself to bow down to. To the moles and bats.”*

That day: Repetition shows emphasis. Over and over we see this phrase being used. It is only after judgment that the Kingdom of God can be established on earth.

Cast away his idols: People are going to realise how worthless their idols are.

Moles and bats: Unclean animals.

Verse 21: *“Go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the crags of the boulders, because of the terror of the Lord, because of the splendor of His majesty when He rises up to bring terror to the earth.”*

Note: These verses punctuate, over and over again, that God's judgment is going to come.

Verse 22: "Cease from a man, whose breath is in his nostrils. With what will he be thought of?"

Cease from a man: The implication is that we should get away from an idolatrous man. We should separate ourselves from him – 2 Corinthians 6:17

Breath is in his nostrils: This is a Hebrew idiom for one who is very angry. When cartoons are drawn of an angry man, he is depicted with smoke coming out of his nostrils. This is the same concept here. This is speaking about an individual who has an angry spirit. The joy of the Lord is not in him. They are angry because they are frustrated. They are trying to exalt themselves, but it has proved to be futile.

With what will he be thought of?: This kind of man will be given no consideration in the Kingdom. He will be a forgotten man among the congregation of the Redeemed. When we understand the reality of the Kingdom of God we are going to live very differently. We will pursue the things of the Kingdom and will not engage in anything that is false or idolatrous. The praise (exaltation) should never go to us, but all glory and praise needs to be given to God.

Chapter 3

Part 1: Isaiah 3:1-12

God was not pleased with His people as they were not committed to the things of God. They had no desire to hear from the prophets and nor were they interested in Godly leadership. They had no desire to fulfil the purpose of God or carry out His will. This was going to result in their punishment.

Verse 1: "For behold, the Master, the LORD of hosts is removing from Jerusalem and Judah support, the whole support of bread and water."

Behold: This is a word that encourages us to pay attention and to anticipate that something significant (a proclamation of great importance) is about to take place.

Master: This is not the same word for 'Lord'. It is a word which means the Master. This is a word of authority, a word of power, and it is used commonly as a term of respect.

LORD: The name of God used here is a name referring to the transcendent God – the God who is over all.

Hosts: Armies. 'The Lord of hosts' is a very common prophetic name. When this name of God is used it usually foreshadows a judgment that is coming. God is not pleased with His people and there is going to be a consequence for their behaviour, their thought processes etc.

Removing: Written in the present tense which is a rare tense used (the past tense and future tense are much more common throughout the prophets). This grammatical construction shows significance (due to its rarity) and it indicates to us that something significant is happening.

Support: This word is written in the masculine and then repeated in the feminine. This reveals to us that God is taking away His support of Jerusalem in a full or in a complete manner.

Whole support of bread and water: God is removing their sustenance, what sustains their lives. He is emptying out the stores of their provisions. Bread and water are the necessities of life. Because God is not pleased with His people (they are rejecting His authority, not interested in His ways, not committed to His Commandments, not worshiping Him as they should) He is removing all blessing from them. Instead of being active in their lives or in their situations He is retreating from them. When God retreats from His people it opens them up to enemy attack.

Verse 2: *“The mighty man, the man of war, the judge and the prophet, the diviner and the elder.”*

Note: This verse speaks about the leadership in Judah who are going to be affected by God’s judgment. Even the judges, prophets and elders have allowed this corruption to be present within the society. They did not seem to have a problem with it. When God removes Himself Godly leadership evaporates. Except for the diviner, all the leaders mentioned here are acceptable. The problem is that the diviner has got a foothold in this leadership, and he brings problems into it.

Mighty man: The hero. A male who is powerful.

Diviner: The magician, the person who uses the occult. These people do not worship God but instead use what is forbidden for spiritual purposes.

Verse 3: *“A ruler of a fifty, also the honourable man, the counselor, the skillful artisan and the expert enchanter.”*

Note: This verse is referring to those leaders who are looked up to, honoured, in a society.

Counselor: The wise one

Skillful artisan: A skilled labourer. Those who can produce things which are a great asset in a society, in a culture or in a community.

The expert enchanter: A little bit of arsenic ruins a perfectly good meal. Like we saw in Isaiah 3:2 with the diviner being the “bad apple” amongst the leadership, so too do we find the enchanter being given a foothold into the ranks of these honourable leaders. The resulting outcome: it leads to their corruption. An enchanter does that which is improper. He also uses the occult and idolatry – two spiritual practices that the Torah (law) forbids. When we allow forbidden things to function in our society then we are opening wide the doors for our destruction.

Verse 4: *“I will set young ones to be their rulers, pranksters shall rule over them.”*

Young ones: The youth. Instead of elders, experienced people, God is going to give them inexperienced people to lead them.

Their: God has removed His presence from them, but even in His language He is distancing Himself from them. He is not speaking to them directly but is speaking about them.

Babes: Literally: Prankster. A jester. Someone who behaves very immaturely and someone who does not take things seriously.

Verse 5: *“The people will be oppressed, a man against a man and a man against his neighbour; the child will be insolent toward the elder, and frivolous toward the honourable.”*

Insolent: Not showing respect or honour. This leadership does not recognize the qualities that the Torah sees as significant or as preferable, that which has value. They set aside the standards that God has set for a society. As a result, this society becomes one that is in conflict with the righteousness of the law (Romans 8:4).

Frivolous toward the honourable: This society is going to plummet into chaos.

Verse 6: *“For a man will see his brother in the house of his father and will say: ‘You have a garment, you be our ruler, let this stumbling block be under your hand’.”*

See (and take hold of) his brother in the house of his father: Within the individual households there is going to be desperation. When there is improper leadership in a society it is going to affect individual homes, it will impact family.

Garment: A mantle. This mantle was an instrument or a symbol of authority (2 Kings 2:8-14).

Ruler: A word in Hebrew today that refers to a military officer.

Stumbling block: Society (In Jerusalem and Judah) was spiritually, socially and economically failing.

Verse 7: *“He will lift up, on that day, an objection saying: ‘I cannot cure your ills. For in my house there is neither bread nor garment. Do not put me as an official of the people.’”*

Lift up... an objection: He is going to protest. He will not want this leadership position as he will not want to be the one to solve this problem.

Do not put me as an official: The situation is so dire that no one wants to run for office, so to speak. Those who could have been leaders in the past feel that have nothing to give (no bread) and that they have no authority (no garment/mantle). Why is the situation so dire? Because God, the Lord Almighty, has removed Himself from society. These people are now making their decisions on what they think is right, but it is not based on revelation from the Lord. As a result, chaos ensues.

Verse 8: *“For Jerusalem has stumbled and Judah has fallen, because their tongue and their deeds before the Lord are rebellious before the eyes of His glory.”*

Tongue: This relates to their words.

Rebellious: They are acting in opposition to God in their words and by their deeds.

Before the eyes of His glory: God sees what they are doing and it is an affront before His glory.

Verse 9: *“The look on their faces testifies against them of, their sin which is like Sodom they announce; they do not hide it. Woe to their soul! They have brought evil upon themselves.”*

Their sin ... they announce: They enjoy their sin. They are not ashamed of it and nor do they cover it up.

Woe: How awful it is going to be for them if they do not change. This is a word of Divine threat or warning.

They have brought evil upon themselves: God is not acting out of revenge but out of retribution (payback). He is giving them the wages that they have earned. Their behaviour has natural consequences. Their offenses affect their own bodies, they receive in themselves the penalty of their error (Romans 1:27).

Verse 10: *“Say to the righteous: ‘For it is good for the fruit of your deeds to eat.’”*

Righteous: God makes a distinction between those who behave righteously and those who do not. For those who think and behave righteously their retribution (payback) will be blessing – those things which are in line with God’s will i.e good.

Verse 11: *“Woe to the wicked! Evil (to them). For the retribution of his hand will be done unto him.”*

Evil: The wicked ones can expect death and curse – those things which are not in God’s perfect will (i.e evil things).

Retribution: Payment. Reward. What he has earned.

His hand: Referring to his deeds or actions.

Verse 12: *“My people, youth are their oppressors, and women will rule over him. O My people! Those who lead you cause you to err and swallow up the way of your paths.”*

Him: Written in the masculine. Women rule over the people.

Note: The leaders in this society are immature people and women.

Cause you to err: These improper leaders are taking the people in the wrong direction. God is revealing to the people of Judah that the path they are heading down is a path of destruction. It is a path where they make poor decisions and have no spiritual discernment. Biblical culture has been overtaken. It is a thing of the past.

Chapter 3

Part 2: Isaiah 3:13-26

Scripturally speaking, men are called to be the spiritual leaders. Women, however, historically and even Scripturally, tend to be foundational in the spiritual well-being of a society. When women live in obedience to God’s Word, it has a great influence on society and on men being faithful to their role. When women turn away from what God has instructed them to do, society plummets. Historically, sociologists have proven that when modesty, of women, in a society is done away with, that society enters a decline politically, economically, and socially. The Bible places emphasis on the modesty of women. We are not called to attract attention to our physical features, but what should stand out in a woman is her inner characteristics (1 Timothy 2:9-10).

Verse 13: *“The Lord stands to contend. He stands to judge the people.”*

Lord: The name used for the transcendent God.

Stands: God positioned Himself in a specific location. The word used here is word that carries the connotation of stability. God takes a stand. He is stable, and the purpose of this to bring stability into society.

Contend: This is not the word 'plead'. God has a contention. He is standing against the behaviour of the people.

People: The context around this word tells us that this is not speaking about the nations but is referring to Israel – specifically the southern kingdom of Judah.

Verse 14: *"The Lord will enter into judgment with the elders of His people and his princes: For you have consumed the vineyard, the plunder of the poor is in your house."*

The Lord: The same word used for the transcendent God.

The elders of His people: This prophecy is geared toward Israel. Therefore, giving context to 'people' in Isaiah 3:13.

Princes: Cabinet members of a government. Those who are in high positions of leadership within a country.

Consumed the vineyard: Instead of being a blessing, they used their positions of leadership for their own benefit and financial gain.

Vineyard: Isaiah 5:7 tells us that this vineyard is (symbolic of) the house of Israel – Israel collectively as a people, as a nation.

Plunder: They took the goods of the poor by force.

In your house: They took, and are utilising, goods from the poor for their own personal enjoyment. Exploitation is evidence of improper leadership.

Verse 15: *"For what have you crushed My people? The faces of the poor ones you have ground up," says the Lord God of hosts."*

Crushed...ground up: Violent exploitation of the people and of the poor.

Lord God of hosts: We need to always pay attention as to how God reveals Himself in a passage. This is a term that relates to God being powerful. This term exudes power, authority and the ability to carry out judgment.

Lord: Master. The One who has authority.

God: The transcendent name of God.

Verse 16: *"And the Lord said: 'Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, they walk with their necks outstretched and they have wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, making a jingling with their feet.'"*

Note: Improper leadership manifests itself in immorality.

The daughters of Zion: These young women are marked for the Kingdom, but they are not behaving like the daughters of the Kingdom.

Haughty: They elevate themselves. Haughtiness is rooted in pride. They believe that they are superior. Instead of walking in modesty and humility (that which expresses a Godly character and faith) they are exalting themselves.

Necks: Literally: throats

Necks outstretched: A posture of pride.

Wanton eyes: The implication is that they are seeking, searching, looking for that which is improper. They want their own desires to be fulfilled – self-gratification.

Walking and mincing: This is not a normal way to walk, although it is a walk that has a purpose to it.

A jingling with their feet: Ankle bracelets are not jewelry for attracting the eye to something beautiful, but instead their purpose is to capture a person's ears through the noise that they make. Once the ears have been captured the eyes follow.

Verse 17: *“The Lord will strike the top of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will uncover their secret parts.”*

Lord: The Master God.

Uncover: Expose or make naked. Immodesty produces shame.

Secret parts: The areas of their bodies that should be kept private.

Verse 18: *“In that day the Lord will remove the splendour: the jingling anklets, the scarves and the ornamentation.”*

Note: This society emphasized and was obsessed over the outward appearance - putting attention upon the physical body, especially the bodies of women.

In that day: This is an expression that speaks about judgment. Assyria were going to come against this southern kingdom but because Hezekiah repented (2 Kings 19) God held off His judgment for a longer period of time. Therefore, it was eventually Babylon that captured this southern kingdom (2 Kings 24).

Splendour: Glory. There was a call and an anointing upon Judah but because they were not faithful to God He promised to remove all of the things that they held dear – all of the things that emphasised their outward appearance.

Jingling anklets: God does not want us to call attention to ourselves. He wants us to rather call attention to His holiness, His righteousness, His purposes so that people might receive His truth.

Verse 19: *“And the necklace, and the bracelets, and the veils.”*

Veils: Veils could be used for modesty (covering up), but they could also be used for seduction. Context tells us that these veils are being used inappropriately, that is why God is going to remove them.

Verse 20: *“The headdresses, the leg ornaments, the headbands; the boxes of fragrances, the various charms.”*

Headdresses...leg ornaments: These objects call attention to different parts of a woman's anatomy – her physical appearance. The commentators say these things lend themselves to a degrading of women, making them simply physical/visible objects for man's pleasure/fleshly purposes.

Verse 21: *“The rings and the nose rings.”*

Rings: Referring to finger and toe rings.

Verse 22: *“The festival garments, and the mantles, the outer garments and the purses.”*

Note: In this verse we move away from ornamentation, jewelry, and focus on the clothes themselves. There are many things that we latch onto in life – shoes, bags, etc Even these things we need to bring captive into the obedience of Messiah. We should not use our things for self-exaltation, but we need to use everything we have to glorify God.

Festival garments: This was a garment that related to the redemption, the freedom, the release that God had given the Israelites from the bondage of sin. These garments were not being used for the purpose of praising, thanking or worshipping God. They were being used by the women for their own purposes and desires.

Verse 23: *“And the mirrors, and fine linen, the turbans and the robes.”*

Verse 24: *“And so it shall be that instead of a sweet smell there will be a stench, instead of a sash there will be a rope. Instead of well-groomed hair there will be baldness; instead of a fine coat there is going to be sackcloth, and branding instead of beauty.”*

Note: The measure that we use will be measured back to us. When we walk in obedience God blesses us. When we walk in disobedience (and disobedience is always rooted in selfishness) God removes from us and judges us.

Stench: A word in modern Hebrew that is related to gangrene.

Sash: Belt. Some of the commentators point out that this speaks of poverty.

Baldness: In this context, baldness speaks of shame.

Branding: Branding speaks about ownership. Branding produces scars that are very difficult, if not nearly impossible, to get rid of.

Verse 25: *“Your young men will fall by the sword; your mighty men will fall in the war.”*

Note: This verse foreshadows war and the exile to follow it.

Mighty men: Heroes.

Verse 26: *“Her gates shall lament and mourn, and she will be desolate and will sit on the ground.”*

Her: Referring to Jerusalem.

Desolate: Made empty.

Chapter 4

In Isaiah 3 the women were walking in a spirit of harlotry. They were carnal and sensual. They wanted to call attention to their physical characteristics, and not to morality. In this chapter we see a change that comes about because of judgment.

Verse 1: *“Seven women will seize one man, on that day, saying: ‘Our bread we will eat and our own clothes we will wear, only let your name be called upon us to take away our reproach.’”*

Seven: The number of holiness, sanctification and the purposes of God.

One: This is a number that often refers to God. There is a hint in this verse that this is referring to a man of God, someone who submits to Biblical instruction.

Seven women will seize one man: This is an example of repentance. They are turning away from their own paths, desires etc and are embracing the purposes of God. When Israel sees the judgment of God it is going to bring about repentance.

Let your name be called upon us: This speaks of a marital covenant. What God is saying here, through the prophet Isaiah, is that a day is coming when Israel will have a change in her spiritual condition. They will turn away from living in rebellion and they will embrace the purposes of God. They will want a different reputation, a different testimony.

Verse 2: *“In that day, the Branch of the Lord will be beautiful and glorious. And the fruit of the land will be for majesty and splendour for those of Israel who have escaped.”*

In that day: This is a hermeneutical clue that this phrase ties this verse back to Isaiah 4:1. There is a connection between these verses.

Branch of the Lord: This is one of the names of Messiah (Jeremiah 23:5-6, Jeremiah 33:14-18, Zechariah 3:8)

Beautiful and glorious: This is a description, a prophetic revealing, of the Kingdom of God.

The words used here are words that are usually used to refer to the beauty and splendour of the land of Israel (e.g Daniel 8:9). However, in this verse they are being used in relationship with Messiah. Proper hermeneutical methodology would cause us to draw the conclusion that there is a close relationship between Messiah (Christ) and the land of Israel. What we can infer from that is that the character of Messiah (His beauty, His glory) is going to transform the land of Israel so that the land itself will manifest His character, His beauty, His glory.

Those of Israel who have escaped: See Joel 2:32

Escaped: They are survivors, refugees.

Verse 3: *“And it shall come about that those who remain in Zion and those who are left over in Jerusalem will be called holy – all the ones who are written for life in Jerusalem.”*

Those who remain: Before the wrath of God falls, the church (who is not going to experience the wrath of God – 1 Thessalonians 5:9) is going to be raptured - experience their blessed hope (Titus 2:13, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2, 1 Corinthians 15:51-52). The rapture and the second coming of Messiah are two separate events (they even have different signs that announce them). The believers, who are raptured before the second coming of Messiah, return with

Messiah for His second coming (1 Thessalonians 3:13). When the believers are raptured, unbelievers are left behind. A remnant, of these unbelievers, is going to come to faith in this period of time after the rapture, in this period when the wrath of God falls on the earth (from Revelation 8 onwards).

Those who are left over in Jerusalem: This is not speaking symbolically about the church but is speaking about those people who are literally left over in Jerusalem – Jerusalem is a real city, in a real land and God still has a plan for it.

Holy: The minute we believe and are saved we are called ‘holy’ (Hebrews 3:1, 1 Peter 2:9-10). It is interesting to note that this is taking place in the last days. People are coming to faith (Zechariah 13:1-2, Zechariah 13:8-9). Messiah’s work, in the last days (once the time of the Gentiles has ended and the church has been raptured – Luke 21:24) is to deliver Israel and show His faithfulness to the Davidic covenant (2 Samuel 7:8-16).

Written: Inscribed. People are only inscribed in the book of life by faith in the blood of the Lamb – through the redemptive work of Messiah Yeshua (Exodus 32:32-33, Daniel 12:1, Luke 10:20, Phillipians 4:3, Revelation 20:15).

Verse 4: *“If the Lord washes the filth of the daughters of Zion, and the blood guilt from Jerusalem He cleanses - with the spirit of judgment and with the spirit of burning.”*

If: This is not the word ‘when’. It is a word that foreshadows a specific outcome (if this...then that...). We can however understand it to mean ‘when,’ as it is something that God is going to do...it is just a matter of time.

Filth: Something very, very dirty. A word also related to human waste.

Washes...cleanses: If God does this there is going to be an outcome. We should anticipate God doing this because He's promised to do so.

Spirit: This word carries with it a sense of order.

Spirit of judgment: It is judgment that is going to bring about the order of God.

Spirit of burning: Burning destroys all those things that are unclean.

Verse 5: *“Then the Lord will create over every habitation of Mount Zion, and upon her assembly a cloud by day and smoke, and the shining of a flaming fire by night. For over all is going to be the glory as a covering.”*

Habitation: This is a word referring to an established place, a place which has a degree of strength and power attached to it.

Assembly: In Hebrew this is an important word that has to do with calling people together – a convocation. These people are going to be assembled based on God’s proclamation/instruction – what He has prophetically proclaimed and promised.

A cloud by day and smoke: This is reminiscent of the exodus from Egypt. God sheltered the people with a cloud by day (Exodus 13:21-22).

Shining of a flaming fire: These words refer to a very bright light. This is imagery reminding us about what took place at Mount Sinai and the change that God was going to bring about (Exodus 19:16-19).

Covering: (Huppah): The Huppah is a marriage canopy under which a Jewish bride and groom stand during their wedding ceremony. Every Jewish wedding, by Jewish law, takes place under a Huppah. The choice of this word here reminds us of a marriage, it reminds us that the glory of God is going to be over them through a covenant that is being established.

In Isaiah 4:1 we read about seven women wanting to enter into a covenantal marriage with the man of God. Isaiah 4:2 speaks of this man as Messiah. Now in this verse we see a marriage taking place, under the Huppah, between Messiah and the remnant (those that remain) of the children of Israel.

Verse 6: *“There will be a tabernacle for shelter in the daytime from the heat, for a shelter, and for a hiding place from the storm and rain.”*

Tabernacle: Sukkah. At the Feast of Tabernacles booths are set up which the people live in over that period of time (Leviticus 23:33-43). These shelters were to remind the children of Israel that they were dependant on God and needed to trust in Him.

Heat: Interestingly, this word in Hebrew is pronounced ‘mê-ḥō-reḇ’. Horeb is another word for Mount Sinai (Malachi 4:4).

A hiding place from the storm and rain: This is talking about the raining down of God's judgment. The only way that this remnant can escape the coming storm of God's judgment is by taking refuge, by entering into His hiding place, by going under His marriage canopy, entering into an eternal relationship with the Man of God – Messiah Yeshua (God with us, Immanuel).

Note: This chapter reminds us of the faithfulness of God - how God is going to act in accordance with His prophetic truth. He is going to bring a change to Israel. He is a covenant keeping God, and He will fulfil the promises that He gave to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David. If God does not keep His Old Covenant promises, how could we be sure that He would keep His New Covenant promises? The promises of the covenant that God made with Israel are glorious, but the promises of the New Covenant are even greater because they are made with the very blood of the Son of God.

Chapter 5

Part 1: Isaiah 5:1-12

Are we fulfilling God's expectations that He has for us? Is He pleased with us? In Ephesians 2:10 we are told that we are created in Messiah for good works, works which God prepared beforehand (in advance) for us to do. We are not saved by our works, but, once we are saved, good works give testimony of our salvation. As believers, our works are not judged for our eternal destination (i.e. our works do not determine if we go to heaven or to hell), but as believers, our works are judged for reward. If our works are NOT pleasing in God's sight, then they are consumed, and we suffer loss – in this age, as well as in the age to come (1 Corinthians 3:12-15). If our works ARE pleasing in God's sight, then we receive a reward (Many of these rewards are mentioned in Revelation 2 and 3). Do we know what good works God has created for us to do, and are we doing them?

Isaiah 5 is written as a song or as a poem. God uses songs and poems in the Scripture to convey revelation to His people. Songs and poems help us to more easily remember the important things that He wants to convey to us.

In the Gospels, Yeshua told a parable about a vineyard (Mark 12:1-12). Once this vineyard had been established by the owner, he leased it out and went away to a far country. At the time of the harvest, he had an expectation, but unfortunately those vineyard workers did not faithfully carry out his expectations. There was a consequence as a result of their disobedience.

In the first section of Isaiah 5 the cause of God's displeasure is revealed to us (Isaiah 5:1-4). The main cause was due to the fact that His people failed in fulfilling His expectations. The second section of Isaiah 5 (Isaiah 5:5-30) deals primarily with the consequences of this failure.

Verse 1: *"I will sing to my Beloved: A song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard: A vineyard was to my Beloved in the horn of Ben Shamen."*

Beloved: This is a term of endearment. We can be assured that God is a God of love. God is the Beloved One and He gives and demonstrates great love to His people. The problem was that the people had not responded to God's love. There are consequences for not responding to His love (John 3:16-18).

His vineyard: Referring to God's people (see Isaiah 5:7). God is invested in His people (they are 'His').

Horn: A horn speaks of something good e.g. horn of salvation (Psalm 18:2, Psalm 89:24). It refers to something that reflects the blessedness or goodness of God.

Ben Shemen (Literally: Oil): A very rich and fertile location. This was a place of great fruitfulness. God's covenant people were placed in a fertile location, in a place where God expected much fruit.

Verse 2: *"He cultivated it and removed the stones; He planted a fine vine. He built a tower in the midst of it, and He made a winepress in it; He expected it to bring forth grapes, but it produced something worthless."*

Cultivated it: God prepared the land.

Removed the stones: If we want to have a fruitful vineyard not only does the ground need to be softened and broken up, but all the obstacles (rocks, stones etc) have to be removed. God did this. He prepared His people. He removed those things that would inhibit fruit from being produced.

Fine vine: This was one of the best quality vines that could be had. God spared no expense. He provided the very best for His people – for Judah.

A tower: It was well protected.

He expected it to bring forth grapes: This vineyard had everything it needed to be successful, everything that it needed to fulfil the expectations of the vineyard owner.

Grapes: The first word used for 'grapes' refers to normal, useable grapes. These grapes were fitting (appropriate) for producing good wine.

Worthless: There was nothing that could be done with the fruit. It was worthless and as a result was rejected. God's people, despite having everything they could have desired at their disposal, produced worthless/inferior fruit.

Verse 3: “*And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, O men of Judah, please judge Between Me and My vineyard.*”

Now: This word carries with it a degree of urgency.

Judge: God wants them to make an evaluation. He wants them to consider all the facts and reach the correct conclusion. He wants them to consider whether their works are fulfilling or meeting His expectations. Do their works please Him? Do ours?

Verse 4: “*What more could have been done to My vineyard that I have not done in it? Why did I hope for the yielding of grapes, but it yielded only bad ones?*”

What more could have been done to My vineyard that I have not done in it?: God is asking an important question. He wants to know what else He could have provided, prepared etc in order that this vineyard would have been better equipped to fulfil His expectations.

Hope: There is an inherent relationship between hope and the promises of God. God has been faithful and true to His promises. He has done everything that was necessary to be done so that there would be good grapes/produce. He wanted to experience joy in His people, and He wanted them to experience joy (wine is related to joy - Ecclesiastes 9:7), but He was not able to rejoice in them and nor did they experience the joy and satisfaction of a good and pleasing harvest.

Verse 5: “*And now I will inform you of what I am doing to My vineyard; I will take away its hedge, and it shall be burned; and a bursting of its fence so that it will be trampled.*”

I will inform you: God speaks to the people with great sorrow. He loves them, but He is disappointed in what they are doing. God now begins to speak about the consequences His people are going to face.

Take away its hedge: A hedge is a border. God had marked out the boundaries of His vineyard (Psalm 16:6). However, now, God is going to remove His protection from them. When we are walking in obedience and are fulfilling God’s expectations, we can expect His protection. But the converse of this statement is also true: when we are walking in our own expectations, rebelling against the will of God, He is going to remove His protection from us. Throughout Israel’s history, whenever God removed His protection Israel’s enemies moved to attack them.

It shall be burned: A reference to judgment.

A bursting of its fence so that it will be trampled: They have an enemy who is just waiting for the opportunity to attack – bringing sorrow, despair, adversity etc

Trampled: We see this same thing happening in the last days. The enemy, under the leadership of the antichrist, is going to trample the holy city underfoot for 3½ years (Luke 21:24, Daniel 8:13, Revelation 11:2).

Verse 6: “*I will set it as a wasteland, and it will not be pruned or dug. But there shall come up briars and thorns. I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain on it.*”

Pruned: No one will care for it or tend it.

Dug: Neither will anyone soften the land – the ground will be too hard for any plants to receive water or nutrients.

Briars and thorns: It is always a good idea to evaluate what we are producing in our lives (Haggai 1:5-7). Are we producing grapes, or are we producing thorns and thistles? How do we know? If we have joy in our lives, despite any circumstance we find ourselves in, then we know that we are in the midst of God's will. If we are not experiencing joy, then we need to consider carefully that we might be outside of His will. Outside of His will we feel the pain of those thorns and thistles around us.

The clouds...rain no rain: Biblically, rain is seen as a blessing (Acts 14:17, Leviticus 26:4). Not only was their protection removed, but also their ability to be fruitful, their ability to bear fruit that is pleasing to God.

Verse 7: *"For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are His pleasure plant. He hoped for justice, and behold there was striking. Instead of righteousness, behold there is crying out."*

The house of Israel: When Isaiah speaks of the 'house of Israel' he is talking about all the Jewish people in general and not just the house of Judah. Many of the rabbinical scholars say that when Isaiah uses this phrase it has an end times context. In the last days Israel is going to be far removed from the expectations of God. This is why they are going to go through the time known as 'Jacob's trouble' (Jeremiah 30:7).

The men of Judah: Now Isaiah is specifically referring to that southern kingdom.

Pleasure: In modern Hebrew this word refers to an amusement park – a place where children play and laugh and enjoy themselves. God had found great delight and enjoyment in creating, blessing and placing a call upon Judah. They however did not find delight in this and, instead, rebelled against the calling of God in their lives.

Hoped for justice: God's expectation of them was that they would be a people who administered righteous judgments in the land (pleading the case of the widow, orphan and stranger). God did not expect them to be people who oppressed others. Israel used the blessing, anointing, provision etc from the Lord to manifest their power against others.

Striking: They used their power to oppress others.

Crying out: People yelling out for help.

Note: God was displeased because instead of justice there was oppression, instead of righteousness there was the crying out of those in turmoil, those in pain.

Verse 8: *"Woe to the one who joins house to house and field to field until there is no more room, that you can dwell by yourselves in the midst of the land."*

Woe: A word which implies how awful something's going to be unless there is a quick change.

Joins house to house and field to field: Talking of those who brought home after home and land after land in order to make their own estate large.

Dwell by yourselves: Dwelling in isolation is not good for us.

Verse 9: *"In the ears of the Lord of hosts: There will be many homes that are for desolation, and those that are big and good there will be none dwelling in them."*

Many homes ... are for desolation These people took home after home away from the poor – ignoring their poverty.

As a result, a time is coming when the big and beautiful homes are also going to face God's judgment and they are going to stand empty. No one will dwell in them (the homes in Israel were emptied when the people went into exile, into captivity).

Verse 10: *"For ten acres of a vineyard will only make one bath, and a homer of seed shall yield one ephah."*

Acres...bath...homer...ephah: These are all units of measurement.

Note: Although they planted much only a very small measurement of the produce was able to be reaped.

Verse 11: *"Woe to those who get up early and pursue after drink, who continue until night until wine inflames them."*

Verse 12: *"And there shall be the violin and the harp and the drum and the flute, and there will be wine at their banquet; but to the activity of the Lord they do not look, they do not notice the work of His hands."*

The violin and the harp and the drum and the flute: These instruments were supposed to make music unto the Lord – to glorify, praise and thank him. Instead, they were being used for personal parties and self-gratification.

Banquets: This is not referring to the Biblical feasts, but to personal parties or banquets.

Do not look: They do not pay attention to what God is doing.

They do not notice the work of His hands: They are not interested in God – they are neither interested in what He is doing nor in what He has done. What motivates these people is their strong drink, their wine, their parties. They delight in doing what pleases themselves, rather than doing those things which are pleasing to God.

Chapter 5

Part 2: Isaiah 5:13-30

Although Isaiah's prophecy first and foremost affected the people in his day it still has ramifications for us, as it teaches us principles that will be most relevant in the last days.

Verse 13: *"Therefore My people are exiled without knowledge; their honourable men are dying of hunger, and their multitude dried up with thirst."*

Therefore: This is going to happen to them as a consequence of God's displeasure with them.

My people are exiled: Although this was yet future in Isaiah's day it is written in the past tense. God had already made His decision (based on their rejection of His Word, their assimilation into the ways of the nations etc) and was not going to change His mind. This exile was as good as done.

Exiled: This meant that the people would be leaving the land of Israel. When Israel is in the land, obeying God's Word and serving Him, His program goes forward.

When Israel is disobedient or rebellious then God causes them to leave the land and His program goes on hold. For almost 2000 years Israel was out of the land of Israel. After 2000 years they once again became a nation – on the 14th May 1948 (Isaiah 66:8)

Knowledge: This implies knowledge that is provided or given to a person as a result of serving, as a result of obedience, as a result and outcome of faithfully carrying out the will of God. They were going to go into exile without this understanding.

Honourable men: God's purpose for them was that they would be instruments of His truth and demonstrate His glory.

Dying of hunger...dried up with thirst: God had a different call for these people, He had a different purpose for them, and He wanted a different result. However, their rebellion, lack of faithfulness and rejection of His call, caused what should have been glorious to die – the exact opposite of what God intended to place upon them.

Verse 14: *“Therefore Sheol is going to be made broad and she will open her mouth beyond measure; Their glory and their multitude and their pomp, and he who is jubilant, shall descend into it.”*

Note: Disobedience and faithlessness have eternal consequences for Israel as a people. Israel will come to faith (Romans 11:26-27), but not these individuals. They were going to die in exile. They were going to reap the consequences of their sin.

Sheol: This is a place of death. Sheol, it is thought, had two compartments that all people, who died before Messiah's death and resurrection, went into when they died. The one compartment was called Gehenna or hell. This is commonly thought of as a place of torment. The other compartment that made up Sheol is called Abraham's bosom and is also sometimes translated 'paradise' (Luke 16:22-23).

Going to be made broad: Enlarged itself. A future change is going to happen in Sheol – it is going to be expanded, made broader (Matthew 7:13).

She will open her mouth: Sheol is written in the feminine.

Beyond measure: Without measure. The point here is that those who choose the 'broad way' are beyond what anyone can think. Although God's desire is that all be brought to repentance and find life (2 Peter 3:9) it does not mean that all will. Many, many people have chosen, are choosing and will choose to reject the salvation that God has provided for them.

Jubilant: They rejoice in the things that bring about God's judgment.

Verse 15: *“Man is going to bow down, each man is going to be humbled, and the eyes of the haughty ones will be brought to humility.”*

Bow down: A word of being made submissive.

The haughty ones: Those who are high-minded. They think too much of themselves.

Verse 16: *“But the Lord of hosts will be exalted in judgment, And God, who is holy, shall be hallowed in righteousness.”*

Exalted: Made high.

Lord of hosts...God who is holy: These two are parallel, showing that there is a relationship between these two concepts.

Judgment...righteousness: These two concepts are also parallel. It is through God's judgment that righteousness and holiness are established.

Verse 17: *"And the lambs will graze in their pasture, but in the remnants of destruction of the fat, slothful sheep foreigners will eat."*

Note: This verse gives us a clue as to what to expect through God's judgment.

Lambs: The rabbis interpret this word to be referring to the righteous ones.

Pasture: They are in their right location. They are where they are meant to be, doing what they are meant to be doing.

The fat, slothful sheep: Referring to the unrighteous people, ungodly individuals.

Foreigners will eat: This is a matter of interpretation because there are no clear grammatical clues that lead to a sure conclusion. One possible interpretation is that 'foreigners' refer to believers who are also called 'strangers, aliens, pilgrims' just passing through this world. If we are going to inherit the earth (Matthew 5:5) then this could mean that the prosperity that the wicked have accumulated in this world will be transferred over into our account – leaving them desolate – 'remnants of destruction'.

Another interpretation is that foreigners (Babylon etc) are going to partake of the destruction of Israel – the Israel that had grown fat and sinful through her rebellion.

Verse 18: *"Woe to those who draw iniquity with cords of futility, and sin as if with a cart rope."*

Woe: How awful it will be if there is no change.

Draw iniquity with cords of futility: These people are pulling sin towards themselves with ropes of vanity. When things are done in vanity or futility then it means that there is no positive or pleasing outcome from it.

Cart rope: This would be a very thick, very strong, rope. Those who believe that their business can thrive and prosper through deceit, iniquity and sin are going to find that all those things are futile.

Verse 19: *"The ones who say: 'Let Him make speed and hasten His work, that we might see; and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near and come, that we will know.'"*

Note: Some interpret this verse to say that they are mocking. They are scoffing and mocking God's judgment as they do not believe it is really going to happen as God has held it off for so long (2 Peter 3:3-9).

Verse 20: *"Woe to those who say that evil is good and good is evil, they set darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter."*

Evil: That which is not God's will.

Good: That which is according to God's will.

Note: These people do not have the right perspective. They have a different definition to God as to what is right and what is wrong, what is good or what is bad. When God says one thing, they say the opposite. This kind of behaviour and thinking is going to be very characteristic, manifested in a very prevalent way, in the last days (Romans 1).

Verse 21: “Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight.”

Wise in their own eyes: From their own perspective they think they are extremely intelligent. How awful it is going to be for those who are dependent upon their own revelation. We can never make wise and right decisions in our lives if we are not basing our decisions on God’s revelation.

Verse 22: “Woe to the strong ones who drink wine; Woe to the men of valour who mix intoxicating drink.”

The strong ones: They are called to be a blessing to others.

Drink wine... mix intoxicating drink: Instead of being a blessing to others, instead of being committed to and working for the things of God, these men are sitting at leisure and taking their own pleasure. This all speaks about a rejection of the things of God. When alcohol is mentioned in the Scripture, more often than not, it is alluding to an escape from reality.

Verse 23: “Who justify the wicked on account of a bribe; they take away justice from the righteous man.”

Note: This verse speaks of corruption. The prophecy of Isaiah gives us a lens, a proper perspective, for seeing what the end days are going to be like. One of the characteristics of the last days is the rapid acceleration of corruption (see 2 Timothy 3:1-9)

Justify the wicked: They call wickedness righteousness.

Take away justice from the righteous man: Instead of punishing the wicked ones they reward them. To add to that, they want to remove the righteousness of righteous individuals from them.

Verse 24: “Therefore as straw is devoured by tongues of fire and the chaff by a flame, so their root will be let go of and it will become as rot, and their blossom will be as dust that goes up because they loathed the law of the Lord of hosts, and despise the Word of the Holy One of Israel.”

Tongues: A synonym for flames.

Root: Foundation.

Rot: Utter decay. Governmental corruption led to spiritual decay. Spiritual decay was the basis for judgment.

Loathed...despise (blaspheme): This word in Hebrew means more than just rejecting or saying no to something. It is a word that carries loathing, despising, repulsion etc.

The law...the Word: This was their biggest problem. They were repulsed by the Word/law of God. This loathing of the law of God will be one of the characteristics of the antichrist. He will be a man of lawlessness – against or opposed to the law/Word of God (2 Thessalonians 2:3-12).

Verse 25: *“Therefore the anger of the Lord was kindled against His people, and His arm was stretched out against them, and He struck them. And the mountains trembled, their corpses were decaying in the midst of the streets. Nevertheless, His anger was not turned away, nor was His outstretched arm brought back.”*

Mountains: Prophetically mountains are governments. All of this shows that when God pours out His judgment on Israel it will have a ripple effect throughout the world. When Israel is blessed, it has a blessed effect on the nations. When Israel is punished it has an adverse outcome on all the nations of the world.

His anger was not turned away, nor was His outstretched arm brought back: God is going to pour out a harsh judgment in the last days. God is going to use the antichrist empire (just like He used Babylon) to bring this judgment upon His people (Israel).

Verse 26: *“And a banner will be lifted up to the nations from afar, and He will whistle to the ends of the earth and behold swiftly and quickly they shall come.”*

A banner will be lifted up to the nations from afar: This is one of the verses that alludes to God using other nations to bring judgment against His people. Although the Babylonians executed judgment shortly after Isaiah’s time, it will be the antichrist empire that brings it about in the last days (Zechariah 14:1-2, Luke 21:20).

Verse 27: *“No one among them will grow tired or stumble, no one will slumber or sleep, nor will the belt on their loins be loosed, nor the strap of their sandals be broken.”*

Stumble: None of them will fail.

Nor will the belt on their loins be loosed: They will not need to take a break or relax. This enemy is going to keep going harshly and continuously for an extended period of time. Nothing will interfere with this judgment until it comes to an end.

Verse 28: *“Whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent; their horses’ hooves will seem like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind.”*

Sharp... bent: Their weapons are well prepared and are ready to fire.

Flint: The horses’ hooves are hard. They will not need to exchange horses or reshoe their horses as these hooves are going to endure throughout this period.

Their wheels like a whirlwind: Their judgment is going to come swiftly, with very little warning.

Verse 29: *“Their roaring will be like a lion, they will roar like young lions; yes, they will roar, and grab hold of the prey; they will carry it away safely and no one will deliver.”*

Young lions: Powerful and glorious lions.

No one will deliver: Israel is going to be alone until the proper amount of judgment, that God is going to allow, is completed. Before that allotted time is up, no one will be able to deliver or save Israel.

Verse 30: “They will roar against them, in that day, like the roaring of the sea. And if one looks to the land, Behold, darkness and sorrow; and the light is darkened by the clouds.”

Roar against them like the roaring of the sea: Israel’s enemies are going to seek to intimidate them.

In that day: Referring to the day of Judgment.

Darkness: This darkness is oppressive. Darkness brings pressure or stress.

The light is darkened by the clouds: This is a major change that happens. It is a change that is physical, it is visible.

Note: We need to remember that judgment brings about a righteous outcome. Israel will only understand the consequence of her sin through judgment. It is only after she understands that she is sinful that she can repent and begin looking for Messiah – her salvation.

Chapter 6

It is through prophecy that we can learn a great deal about the nature and character of God. In many ways, Isaiah 6 is an overview of the work that God was going to bring about through Messiah.

Verse 1: “In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, exalted and lifted up, and the hem of His robe filled the temple.”

King Uzziah: See 2 Chronicles 26. King Uzziah became proud and rebellious. Even though he was not a Levite and was not authorised to burn incense to the Lord on the altar of incense he went ahead and burnt it anyway. Because he was king, he thought he could do whatever he wanted to do. He did not recognize the authority of God and nor did he submit to His instruction. As a result, he was struck with leprosy - bringing physical uncleanness and spiritual impurity into his life. This leprosy side-lined him, to the degree that he was even unable to rule his kingdom, his son ruling in his stead. Leprosy was a badge of shame and dishonour. It was when Uzziah died that a change happened in the kingdom – Isaiah received his call to be a prophet.

I saw: Isaiah saw.

Lord: Master.

Exalted and lifted up: This speaks about the glory and superiority of God. He transcends all things. He is over all things - not only on Earth but also in the heavens.

Temple: This is a word that more specifically relates to the sanctuary (the Holy of holies). Oftentimes prophetically when we deal with the Kingdom of God the emphasis is not on the temple in a general sense but on the Holy of holies. The throne of God is related to that most holy place. The Holy of holies is an image of the holiest place within creation.

Verse 2: “Above it stood seraphim. Each one of them had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet and with two he flew.”

Above it: Above the throne in this Holy place.

Seraphim: This is a word which means ‘to burn up’. The tradition in Judaism is that these beings that paid glory to God would burn up as they praised.

As a result, more would be created, so that these beings are being constantly created. From the rabbi's standpoint they see this as a picture of God's creation being temporal and the purpose of His creation is to exalt, glorify and praise Him.

Six wings: Six is a number related to grace. Forgiveness only comes about through God's grace.

Covered his face: They cover their faces so as not to look upon God.

Covered its feet: This shows modesty.

Verse 3: *"And each one called to the other, and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole Earth is full of His glory.'"*

Holy, holy, holy: The fact that 'holy' is repeated three times has caused some to interpret this as a revelation of God as three-in-One (Father, Son and Holy Spirit – three persons, but One God. Each One is God, but there is only One God and not three).

The whole Earth is full of His glory: For the earth to be full of God's glory would be amazing, but in our natural, unholy, states we cannot yet glorify Him to the full extent. This is something yet future.

Verse 4: *"And the pillars of the threshold were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke."*

The pillars of the threshold were shaken: It was the voice of the one who called out that caused these pillars of the Heavenly temple (Psalm 11:4, Hebrews 8:5, 11, Revelation 11:19) to shake.

House: Referring to the temple.

Smoke: Used frequently (especially in the book of Revelation) in regard to God's judgment. God's glory is manifested through this smoke. In the last days this smoke is going to manifest God's righteous judgment.

Verse 5: *"Then I said: 'Woe is me, for I am going to come to an end. I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.'"*

I said: Isaiah, seeing the shaking of the pillars, hearing the voice and seeing the smoke responds to this manifestation of God's glory.

Woe: How awful it will be for me...

I am going to come to an end: The word used here refers to coming to an end, a failing, a destruction – like having heart failure and one's heart just stops. Isaiah, reflecting on his own personal condition or his natural state in light of the glory of God, realises that if the whole world is going to be filled with God's glory, he (in the state that he is in), cannot be a part of it as there is nothing glorious about him.

I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: Isaiah is left with the understanding that God's glory is going to fill this earth, but in doing so (without miraculous intervention and salvation), it is going to bring a cessation to humanity.

My eyes have seen the King: Isaiah knew that death occurred for those who looked upon God (Exodus 33:20) and he now believed that he was going to die, he is going to be silenced, he is going to come to his end.

Verse 6: *“And one from the Seraphim flew unto me, and in his hand there was a hot coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar.”*

Note: These next few verses are foundational for teaching us about the grace of God.

Altar: The place of sacrifice. A place of provision. Isaiah is in an unclean state. He is impure and unable to manifest the glory of God. In this state he cannot be tolerated in the Kingdom of God – this Kingdom that manifests the full glory of God on this earth (Isaiah 6:3). Isaiah is going to be made to be Kingdom material, Kingdom appropriate.

Verse 7: *“And he touched my mouth with it and said to me, ‘Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is removed, and your sin has been atoned.’”*

He: One of the Seraphim.

Iniquity is removed, and your sin has been atoned: This all speaks about the outcome of grace. The instrument being used here is one of the Seraphim (six being the number of grace). Only those who have had their iniquity removed (by the grace of God) are fitting for the Kingdom of God.

Verse 8: *“And I heard the voice of the Lord and it said, ‘Whom shall I send and who will go for Us?’ Then I said, ‘Behold, here am I! Send me.’”*

Whom shall I send and who will go for Us?: The Lord is speaking to Himself but Isaiah overhears what He is saying.

Us: A reference to the Trinity.

Send me: Isaiah wanted to be used for the purposes of God. When we understand God's Kingdom program - to fill His creation with glory - we will want to participate in His plan. However, it is only through redemption that we become appropriate or fitting to serve God, to play a privileged role (participate with Him) in establishing His Kingdom. Isaiah volunteers for this privilege.

Verse 9: *“And He said, ‘Go to this people and they shall certainly hear but they will not understand, they shall certainly see but they will not know.’”*

Go: Isaiah receives his call.

This people: The context is Israel.

Certainly hear ... certainly see: The words for hearing and seeing are repeated twice in the text. This means that they will completely and utterly hear and see.

Not understand... not know: They will not understand or know because they will be careless with what they have heard and seen. They misappropriate the significance of God's revelation in their lives. God was not displeased with His people because they lacked revelation. They had all the revelation from God that they needed. God was displeased with them because they did not want to see, they did not want to understand. They were careless with the revelation that God had given to them.

Verse 10: *“Fat is the heart of this people. Their ears are heavy, and their eyes are closed; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn and be healed.”*

Fat: That which is not functioning properly, that which is dull or heavy.

Heart: Proverbs 23:7 tells us that we think/understand with our hearts. These people do not want to think, they do not want to perceive what God is doing. They are dull in regard to the things of God. They are not listening. They are not watching. They are not thinking appropriately.

Closed: Dim.

Turn: This is a word of repentance.

Turn and be healed: The best way to understand this is to remember the parable that Yeshua taught on the seeds and the sower (Matthew 13:3-9, 13-23). One of the examples Yeshua gives is of seed that falls on rocky ground. This seed sprouted and started to grow but as soon as the sun came up (hard times, persecution) it shrivelled up and died without producing any fruit. Often people hear the message (or part of it) and they respond to it and say it is good, but they do not really understand what it means for their lives – they do not give it full consideration. When difficult times come, they quickly give up and walk away. This shows a lack of understanding and a carelessness with the Word of God. These people are only committed to the things of God for the short term, when the times are good. They thought responding to God was in their best interest. The instance they were called on to suffer a little for their faith they walked away.

This is what God was concerned about regarding the children of Israel. He wanted Isaiah to speak in such a way that the people heard that a massive commitment was required of them. God wanted them to know what His expectations for them were. God wanted them to bear fruit worthy of repentance (Luke 3:8). It is implied in Luke 3:8 that repentance is followed by fruitfulness. These people did not take repentance seriously. God does not want a half-way repentance, or a repentance based on selfish thoughts, He wants a sincere repentance.

Verse 11: *“Then I said, ‘Until when my Lord?’ And He answered, ‘Until the cities are utterly destroyed and without inhabitant, no man within the houses, and the land shall be utterly destroyed and desolate.’”*

Until when: The rabbis teach that this phrase always has last days significance.

Destroyed: In Hebrew this is the same word as the word we translate “holocaust” in English. It is a word that speaks of an unbelievably great disaster, complete and utter destruction. In the context of Isaiah this is referring to the Babylonian captivity - the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and being carried into Babylon. This also foreshadows the utter destruction that was going to occur at the hand of the Romans many years after Isaiah’s time. This also foreshadows the utter destruction that is going to happen in Israel at the hands of the antichrist – a time yet future (the time of Jacob’s trouble – Jeremiah 30:7). It is only at this final and end time that Israel will eventually respond rightly - as she is meant to respond.

Without inhabitant: No one living in the houses.

Verse 12: “*And the Lord will make far the man, and there will be a great departure.*”

Make far the man: An exile prophesied.

Departure: This exile was going to be characterized by the people departing, forsaking. They forsook the law and the Word of God (Isaiah 5:24) so they are going to also forsake and depart from the land of the Lord.

Verse 13: “*A tenth will be in it, and will return and be for devouring, as a terebinth tree or as an oak, which at the time that it casts forth its leaves a stump remains. The holy seed shall be its stump.*”

Note: This is a key verse in helping us to understand the end-time implications to this chapter.

A tenth: This tenth could mean that a tenth of Israel’s peoples remain in her (a remnant). However, the rabbis speak of this tenth as ten kings – from the time of Uzziah, 10 kings ruled in Judah until the Babylonian captivity took place (Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim and Zedekiah. Zedekiah was the last king of Israel. No other kings have reigned over Israel since this time. The next King of Israel is going to be Messiah).

Devouring: This is the word for being burnt up.

Casts forth its leaves: During the fall/autumn a tree drops its leaves and goes into a kind of hibernation. During this time, although the tree is still alive, it produces no fruit (there is no visible evidence of life in this tree). Like this tree, Israel was going to cast forth its leaves (shed her glory and her beauty) and she was going to go into exile. It was going to appear as if Israel was no more, but it was just that Israel was going to go into a season of unfruitfulness.

Stump: This is a word that speaks of a position or a stand. It is a word that implies stability. Something causes this to remain, to stand. It is also a word that is related to a memorial stone or to a tombstone. It is a marker that causes one to remember and not to forget.

Holy seed: Most of the rabbis agree that the ‘holy seed’ is a reference to Messiah. ‘Holy’ is a word that refers to the purposes of God. Messiah reveals the purposes of God to us – He is the Promised Seed of Abraham – Galatians 3:16)

The holy seed shall be its stump: Messiah brings life. He is the ruler who is going to bring a remembrance of the covenantal purpose and the promises of God to Israel and to the world (to fill the world with blessing and, through blessing, to manifest His glory). He is going to bring stability. Messiah is going to stand Israel in her position once more.

Chapter 7

Part 1: Isaiah 7:1-14

There is a big difference between tempting someone to do something wrong and having your faith tested. God never tempts, encourages, or puts anyone in a situation with the intent that they are tempted to sin. God is never part of anything that is sinful. At times, however, He allows us to be put into situations where our faith will be tested. He does this to mature us, and so that we can bear witness of our faith. When we are tested it helps us to understand where we are spiritually. When we are tested it provides us with an opportunity to act faithfully and to accomplish the will of God by being a Godly witness to others.

Verse 1: *“It came about in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to make war against her, but could not prevail against her.”*

King of Judah: The emphasis is on the southern kingdom of Israel (called Judah). The capital city of this southern kingdom was Jerusalem.

Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel (the northern kingdom – ie the other nine tribes of Israel and some of the tribe of Levi): These two kings banded together and went as one army to war against Jerusalem. This northern kingdom of Israel was more populated and had greater resources than the southern kingdom. They also had an alliance with this king of Syria.

Could not prevail against her: God did not allow these two kingdoms to defeat the southern kingdom.

Verse 2: *“And it was told to the house of David, saying, ‘Syria’s forces have formed an alliance with Ephraim.’ So his heart and the heart of his people shook as the trees of the woods are moved with the wind.”*

The house of David: This is a very important, prophetic term. The sages of Judaism says that it is a Messianic term. It speaks of those who believe in the Messianic promise – viz Redemption. If there is redemption it means that there is a Redeemer. This term refers to those who have faith in the promises of God.

Ephraim: The northern kingdom was known as Israel, but it was also known as Ephraim. This confederacy between Ephraim and Syria had already been established, but now this news was being broadcast to the southern kingdom, as they had previously been unaware of that alliance.

Shook: When King Ahaz and the people of the southern kingdom heard that this alliance had been made, they were terrified. They knew that they were outnumbered, and they knew that this powerful Confederacy was gearing up for war and, ultimately, for the destruction of their southern kingdom and of Jerusalem.

Verse 3: *“And the Lord said to Isaiah, ‘Go out and meet Ahaz, you and your son Shear-Jashub, at the end of the canal of the upper pool, which is on the road called the Fuller’s Field.’”*

Isaiah: His name means ‘God who is salvation’. God had a plan to save His people.

Shear-Jashub: This name means ‘A remnant will return’. In this passage God, through Isaiah, is reminding His people of His promise of redemption. Part of this redemptive promise is that there is going to be a remnant that returns back to the land in order for the establishment of the kingdom. The name of Isaiah’s son speaks about God’s promise of restoration. It speaks about a future reality of redemption.

The upper pool: Traditionally, the sages of Judaism say that this was where the people would go out and have their clothes washed. In the Bible, clean clothes speak about good deeds (Revelation 19:8). Good deeds are done as an outcome of faith. When faith is functional, its fruit is good deeds. When faith is dead, no works are seen (Faith without works is dead). Our works do not save us, but, once we are saved, our faith causes us to do good works and testifies to our salvation. It was significant that Isaiah was to meet Ahaz in this location. It is a location that speaks about a change, a clean garment, a new identity. God was wanting to bring change to Ahaz and to this southern kingdom.

Verse 4: *“Say to him, ‘Take heed, and be quiet; do not fear and let not your heart be faint in regard to these two embers that are smoking, for the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria, and the son of Remaliah.’”*

Say to him: God wanted Isaiah, His prophet, to go to Ahaz with revelation and with instructions.

Take heed: Guard yourself. This is also a word that can relate to paying attention in a spiritual sense.

Let not your heart be faint: Take courage. Prophecy has the ability to strengthen our hearts. It can cause us to have courage. When we are courageous, we can faithfully carry our God’s instruction.

Embers: As a large coal burns in the fire it gets smaller and smaller until it is just a little ember. This is how God sees these two invading kings and this is how He wants Ahaz to see them.

Smoking: The imagery that God is using here is that these two kings are like smoke – they are no longer burning with fire, but they are on the brink of being snuffed out or extinguished. God did not want Ahaz to fear these kings or this confederacy.

Verse 5: *“Because they have taken evil counsel against you - Syria, Ephraim and the son of Remaliah – saying,”*

They have taken evil counsel against you: These kings had discussed and reached an agreement to destroy the southern kingdom and Jerusalem. This, however, did not mean that this was God’s purpose for the southern kingdom at that time. It is always God’s purpose that will prevail.

Verse 6: *“Let us go up into Judah and let us trouble her and break through so that we can set another king in her midst – the son of Tabeel.”*

Note: This is the evil counsel of the kings of Syria and Ephraim.

Break through: This would imply breaking through the walls of Jerusalem – breaching them.

The son of Tabeel: This is the man they wanted to set as king over the southern kingdom. He would have been a puppet king who would have done the bidding of these other two kings.

Verse 7: *“Thus said the Lord God: ‘It shall not stand, nor shall it come to pass.’”*

Note: In this verse God starts to give them revelation.

Said: This is written in the past tense even though it was something that was going to happen in the future. This speaks of the assurance of prophecy. When God speaks about future events, from His perspective, they are as good as done. We need to accept God’s Word no matter how futuristic or how unlikely it may seem in our eyes.

It shall not stand: This confederacy is doomed. Despite their manpower and despite their resources they were not going to be able to do what they had planned (see 2 Kings 16:5).

Verse 8: *“For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin. Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be broken, so that it will not be a people.”*

Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be broken: This breaking up of the northern kingdom happened around 721/722 BC. That means that Isaiah possibly gave this prophecy to Ahaz around 787 BC.

Note 1: There are 2 thoughts concerning the prophecy of Isaiah 7:8. The predominant Christian view is that the prophecy was given at the beginning of Ahaz's rule and was fulfilled around 670 BC., when the last of those in the Northern Kingdom were carried off. This view, however, does not seem to fit the intent of Isaiah 7:8. When it says that Ephraim (the Northern Kingdom) shall be broken, i.e. is no longer a people, it seems to be a clear reference to the Assyrian exile in 721/722 BC. The simple solution is that this prophecy of Isaiah 7:8 was given previously at 787 BC and then restated in the days of Ahaz.

Note 2: In regard to dating, there is a more than small difference between the religious Jewish dating and the secular historians. Secondly, even for major events, there can still be a 20-30 year discrepancy on when an event happened. For example, in regard to the birth of Messiah, there is a 2-5 year discrepancy. In regard to the edict to rebuild Jerusalem in the days of Nehemiah, scholars allow for a 15-20 year discrepancy. In regard to Isaiah 7:8, the question is as to whether this is a restating or not. It seems unlikely that a prophecy that would have a fulfillment in 65 years would be given to Ahaz, who reigned less than 20 years.

Note 3: In regard to 2 Chronicles 28: No one is asserting that Ahaz did not have problems from the Northern alliance, but his reign did not cease. His kingdom did not fall due to the Northern alliance, and this is what needs to be emphasized.

Verse 9: *“The head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah’s son. If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established.”*

Remaliah’s son: Throughout this prophecy Pekah (he is only mentioned once by name) is called ‘Remaliah’s son’. He was not an individual who was going to be successful. He was an inadequate leader and was unable to carry out his own desires.

If you will not believe: Isaiah is now addressing Ahaz. Ahaz needed to have faith in the promises of God. He needed to take hold of the promises of God as it is faith that pleases God.

You shall not be established: If Ahaz did not take hold of the promises of God, then his kingdom was not going to be established, it would not be built on a firm foundation.

Verse 10: *“Moreover the Lord spoke again to Ahaz saying;”*

The Lord spoke again: God knows that faith does not come naturally for us. Having faith is supernatural. If we trust God, He will grow and build up our faith (Romans 10:17). Ahaz was not faithful (2 Chronicles 28). God, being faithful and wanting all to come to repentance, wanted to work in Ahaz’s life and grow him into a faithful man.

Verse 11: *“Ask a sign for yourself from the Lord your God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above.”*

Ask a sign ...in the depth or in the height above: God did not place a limitation on Ahaz. God wanted Ahaz to ask for any sign that would help him to overcome his unbelief, and that (when the sign was given to him) would help to strengthen his faith.

Sign: Something that is a supernatural or divine act that only God can do (eg: something that could relate to the sun, moon, stars etc. These things in the heavens are considered signs – Genesis 1:14)

Ask it either in the depth or in the height above: This is an idiom and meant that Ahaz could ask God for anything at all – from the depths of Sheol right up into the heavens. God was calling Ahaz to believe. He was calling him not to be terrified and not to panic. God was calling him to be a faithful man in front of the nation that he had been called to lead. God was willing to grant Ahaz any sign, as God wanted to encourage Ahaz to believe in Him.

Verse 12: *“But Ahaz said, ‘I will not ask, nor will I test the Lord.’”*

I will not ask: Ahaz did not want a Godly experience in his life. He did not want to respond or get involved or engage with the Lord. He was an utterly faithless individual who did not even want to give God the opportunity to manifest Himself to him.

Verse 13: *“Then He said, ‘Listen, O house of David! Is it too small a thing for you to weary men, that you think you can weary God?’”*

House of David: God is not addressing the people of Judah or the counsellors of Ahaz. Once again, He is addressing the house of David. ‘House of David’ is a Messianic term. It speaks about those who believe in the Messianic promise...those who are a part of the congregation of the Redeemed.

Weary God: Nothing makes God weak; nothing wears God out.

Verse 14: “Therefore the Lord Himself will give to you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”

Sign: In Hebrew this is the same word that was used for the supernatural mark that was placed on Cain (Genesis 4:15).

Virgin: אַלְמָה (al·māh): In Genesis 24:16 the word used for a young woman is the word אַלְמָה (al·māh) and the word used for ‘virgin’ is the word בְּתוּלָה (bə·tū·lāh). The writer of Genesis goes on to clarify that this is referring to a woman who had never known a man. The rabbis say that ‘batulah’ means ‘virgin’ but they deny that ‘almah’ also refers to a virgin. This is not an honest mistake, and we can prove it from Genesis 24:43. In this verse, when the story of Rebekah meeting the old servant at the well is retold, he refers to her as an ‘almah’ – a virgin. In Genesis 24:43 it does not emphasise that no man had ever known her. The word ‘almah’ was the accepted term for a young woman who was a virgin, so it did not need to be clarified. The word ‘batulah’ was not so well known and that is the reason why the author of Genesis had to clarify in Genesis 24:16 that ‘batulah’ was referring to a woman who had never known a man.

Immanuel: God with us. The rabbis teach that this name is the redemptive name for Messiah. Through redemption God is with us.

Note: A virgin conceiving by just a Word is a very supernatural or miraculous sign – something that only God can do. The rabbis do not teach that this is a supernatural sign – hence the need to scrub this text of the word ‘virgin’. However, this is a vital prophecy that helps us to understand the truth of how Messiah entered into this world – being born of a virgin. Those who deny the virgin birth are not saved as they do not know Yeshua. The virgin birth is also directly tied to the divinity of Messiah. If we do not believe that Yeshua is God, who came in the flesh and dwelt among us, then we cannot be saved. It is only through redemption, the work of Messiah, that we can have intimacy and a relationship with a holy God.

Chapter 7

Part 2: Isaiah 7:15-25

Verse 15: *“Butter and honey he will eat, that he may know to flee from evil and choose the good.”*

Butter and honey he will eat: This has a connection to the verse found in Exodus 3:8. God considered the land of Israel as a land “flowing with milk and honey”. Honey is mentioned in this verse, but instead of milk the word ‘butter’ or ‘cream’ is used. Butter is richer than milk. An infant would not be given butter as a baby (it would get milk), but, as he matured, butter would be introduced into his diet. Another application to the use of the word ‘butter’ rather than ‘milk’ is that milk becomes butter after churning it for a long period of time. This verse is alluding to a change that is going to take place over a period of time. A maturing process is going to happen.

Know to flee from evil and choose the good: This again speaks about a change, a maturing. A very young infant does not know evil from good and he cannot choose or make a decision to do either. However, as he matures, he is able to make these decisions.

Verse 16: *“For before he, the youth, knows to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land will be forsaken by the ones that you dread.”*

Youth: The word used here is a word that refers to a youth or to an adolescent. It is not the Hebrew word for a child or an infant. Time has passed and now the child/infant is being referred to as a youth/adolescent.

Note: In Isaiah 8:3-4 a child was also born to Isaiah. This was not in fulfillment of this verse, but it was a confirmation that this prophecy was going to happen.

The land: Referring to the land of Judah.

Forsaken: Abandoned

The ones: Speaking about the confederacy between Northern Israel and Syria.

Verse 17: *“The Lord will bring the king of Assyria unto you and unto your people and unto your father’s house – days that have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah.”*

The Lord will bring the king of Assyria upon you: Ahaz did not need to fear the Syria/Israel confederacy. God was going to allow Assyria (modern day Iraq and parts of Turkey, Iran, Kuwait and Syria) to take the Northern kingdom into captivity (722BC) but, at the same time, Assyria was also going to bring much suffering upon the Southern kingdom.

Days that have not come since the day: Referring to a unique time in the Southern kingdom’s history. Assyria tried to lay siege to Jerusalem around 701 BC (in the days of King Hezekiah) but their mission was aborted (we will study more on this in Isaiah 36 and 37). Although Assyria brought destruction to many cities in Judah, their king was not successful in bringing a fall to Judah.

Verse 18: *“And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord will whistle to the fly, which is at the end of the Nile River, and also to the bee which is in the land of Assyria.”*

In that day: This phrase is going to repeat itself in the next few verses. Usually this is an expression that refers to the day of God’s Judgment. In this chapter we have read about the birth of Messiah – a prophecy given at least 700 years before His birth (confirmed in the short-term by the birth of Isaiah’s son). Similarly, although this prophecy was given more than 2700 years ago, most scholars believe that it has implications for our future – and for that final Judgment Day. This passage teaches us how to be faithful in the last days. It teaches us how to trust God.

Note: Although this prophecy has long term implications it also had a short-term fulfilment in the days of King Josiah - a couple of generations after this prophecy was given [see 2 Chronicles 35:20-22 – God summoned Necho (‘the fly’ – God’s vessel/provision to defend Judah at the time of Josiah) from Egypt to fight for Him against Assyria (‘the bee’) around 609BC].

Nile River: The river in Egypt

Verse 19: *“And they shall come, and they shall encamp in the desolate riverbeds, and in the clefts of the rocks, and in every place that is full of thorns and in every pasture.”*

Riverbed: This is a place that is full of water in the winter, but dry in the summer (In Israel it rains in winter and is dry and hot in summer).

Clefts: Holes in the rocks.

Note: The armies are going to come and camp out in the land of Israel. They are going to gather for a large battle that will take place specifically in Judah (Zechariah 12:3-9, Zechariah 14:1-4). They have done this in the past, but they will do it again in the future.

Verse 20: *“In that day the Lord will shave with a razor the one that He rented in the far places of the River; for with the King of Assyria the hair on his head is going to be shaven and even the hair of his legs and also his beard.”*

Lord: Adonai. The Master.

The one that He rented (hired): Referring to the King of Assyria.

The River: Egypt is associated with the Nile River. Babylon is associated with the Euphrates River and Assyria is associated with the Tigris River. Therefore this is referring to the Tigris River.

Shave ... the hair on his head ... even the hair of his legs and also his beard: The king of Assyria is going to be shamed. Some commentators say that the head refers to the king himself, the legs refer to his armies and the beard speaks about his empire. All of these are going to be defeated and put to shame.

Note 1: What God is doing here is teaching the people about His ability to defeat their enemies. God is able to bring deliverance and victory. He is able to bring salvation for His people – for all those who trust in Him.

Note 2: God judged Assyria and brought victory to Judah. In the same way we should expect that in the last days God is once again going to bring victory – not only for His New Covenant people, but (as a fulfilment of His promises) for His Old Covenant people.

Verse 21: “*And it shall come about in that day that a man will have life with the calf of the cattle and with two flocks.*”

Note: Victory brings prosperity.

A man will have life: A man will experience life.

The calf of the cattle: Veal (calf meat) is very tender and good to eat. Most people would not eat the veal, however, as it did not make financial sense to do so. If a calf grew up it was a lot larger and therefore there was a lot more meat to eat. A wealthy man did not have to wait for the calf to grow up. Because he was prosperous, he could eat the delicacies of the veal without concern for the financial implications.

Flocks: This is not the word for a sheep but is a word that refers to flocks of sheep.

Note: This verse foreshadows the blessings (the promises of God) that God’s people experience after victory. This is not necessarily prosperity relating to and enjoyed in this earthly kingdom, but it will be enjoyed in the Kingdom of God.

Verse 22: “*And it shall come about from the abundance that is made of the milk that he shall eat butter, for butter and honey he will eat – everyone who remains in the midst of the land.*”

The abundance that is made of the milk: Milk will be so abundant that there will be enough of it to make butter (enough for luxuries).

Eat butter, for butter and honey he will eat: Repetition shows emphasis. This is tied to the Messianic prophecy read in the verses above and it is informing us that if we have faith, in the One who was born of a virgin, then we are going to enjoy future abundance.

Everyone who remains: Those who have endured.

Verse 23: “*And it will come about in that day that it will be in every place a thousand vines worth a thousand pieces of silver will be for thorns and thistles.*”

In that day: Although the scholars agree that this is a phrase that refers to the last days it does not mean that all of the prophecy spoken here is for the last days. However, all of this prophecy does have last days implications. It teaches us truth that we will need for the end days.

A thousand vines worth a thousand pieces of silver will be for thorns and thistles: Very good land is going to be made desolate. This foreshadows the land of Israel becoming desolate. This happened after the destruction of the second temple in 70AD, but this is also going to happen again during the time known as “Jacob’s trouble” (Jeremiah 30:7)

Verse 24: “*With arrows and bows he will come there, because all the land will become thorns and thistles.*”

Arrows and bows: This is an image of war. The land will be made desolate because of war. Before this time, Israel is going to be like a prosperous fig tree (Luke 21:29-31) but because of their rejection of the antichrist much war is going to take place in the land and it is going to become desolate because of this war.

Verse 25: “*And all the mountains which could be cultivated with the hoe, you will not go there for fear of thorns and thistles; but it will become a range for oxen and a place for sheep to trample.*”

Note: The land is going to be so bad that no one's going to come with a hoe and try to cultivate it.

Fear: Speaks of intensity.

A range for oxen and a place for sheep to trample: This not going to be a place that is fit for human sustenance or habitation. It is going to become a desolation.

Chapter 8

When does God consider us successful? When we walk in His ways. When we walk in God's ways, we make the right decisions. It is God's truth that causes us to make good decisions. When we are walking in God's ways and making the right decisions we will be in the position or location that God wants us to be in. This is success and is the only way we can find true joy and peace. The principles that God taught through Isaiah for his time are the same principles that we need in order to be prosperous (this does not necessarily mean financially) and successful in the last days. We cannot have any success (Biblically speaking) until we have a personal relationship with Messiah. This means that we need to understand the prophetic truth concerning Messiah – who He is, what He has done, what He will do – and we need to submit to this truth.

Verse 1: “*And the Lord said to me: ‘Take for yourself a large scroll and write upon it with a man's engraving instrument ‘Quickly the spoil, hasten with urgency the plunder.’”*

The Lord said to me: God is speaking directly to the prophet Isaiah.

Scroll: Rolled up parchment.

Engraving instrument: This prophecy did not only have implications for the near future (for the days of Isaiah) but God wanted it preserved for future generations.

Quickly the spoil, hasten with urgency the plunder: Most English Bibles do not translate this phrase, but they leave it in its original language as ‘Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz.’

Spoil ...plunder: The fruits of a victorious war. This verse foreshadows a war that is coming (this war is going to come quickly) and that spoil is going to be taken. This was a prophecy applicable to Isaiah's time, but it also has end time implications.

Verse 2: “*And I will testify to Me faithful witnesses, Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah.*”

And I will testify to Me faithful witnesses: This is a Hebrew expression which means that God is going to allow Himself to be brought under scrutiny.

Faithful witnesses: These were two individuals that the people would understand. They were Godly men, men of truth. These two were there to confirm (to say ‘yes’) that the words that Isaiah the prophet was saying were indeed words that he had received from the Lord Almighty.

Verse 3: *“Then I came near to the prophetess and she conceived and bore a son. Then the Lord said to me: ‘Call his name Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz.’”*

Note: Isaiah, by faith, acts out what God has commanded him to do. There is a response and an outcome to his actions. This outcome is going to be a source of revelation.

Came near: In an intimate way – for the purpose of conception.

The prophetess: Most scholars agree that this prophetess is the wife of Isaiah.

She conceived and bore a son: This is NEITHER a fulfilment of the prophecy found in Isaiah 7:14, NOR is it a dual fulfilment. Although it is related to the prophecy in Isaiah 7 it is entirely different to it.

Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz: Quickly the spoil, hasten with urgency the plunder. This child’s birth let the people know that in a short period of time war was coming.

Verse 4: *“For before the young man shall have knowledge to cry ‘My father’ or ‘My mother’ the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be taken away before the king of Assyria.”*

Note: What we know so far: war is coming. There is going to be a defeat and a plundering. The victor of this war will take all the spoils and plunder of war and he will do it quickly.

Before the young man shall have knowledge: See Isaiah 7:15. After the child was born, but before he became a fully grown man, a war was going to take place as a fulfilment of prophecy. This would serve to initiate faith in people – allowing them to believe the even greater prophecy concerning the virgin bearing a Son who would be Immanuel...God with us. The birth of Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz was used by God to build up the people’s faith.

Damascus: The capital city of Syria (Rezin was heading up Syria)

Samaria: This was the capital city of Northern Israel (the nine tribes and some of the tribe of Levi).

The riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria: Judah did not need to fear this coming war as it was not a war directed toward them. It was a war directed toward the Syrian/Israel confederacy (Isaiah 7:1).

Taken away before the king of Assyria: See 2 Kings 17.

Verse 5: *“And the Lord spoke to me more saying,”*

Verse 6: *“On account that these people have loathed the softly flowing waters of Shiloah, rejoicing in Rezin and in Remaliah’s son.”*

On account that: Because of this.

These people have loathed: They loathed the things of God. They loathed the Word of God. They loathed the promises of God. The tribes who made up Northern Israel loathed Jerusalem, and anything related to Jerusalem - going so far as to move their place of worship to Samaria. They did not want to worship God as He demanded to be worshipped, but they wanted to worship God on their own terms.

Waters of Shiloah: This is the same pool that is also called ‘Siloam’ – John 9:7. This pool was built during the reign of Hezekiah and is located in Jerusalem. Its name literally means ‘Sent’. The water in this pool was very slow moving.

Rejoicing in Rezin and in Remaliah's son: They rejoiced in the confederacy that was made up of Rezin (king of Syria) and Pekah – Ramaliah's son – king of Israel (northern kingdom). This confederacy (an ungodly coalition), rather than God and His promises, gave them confidence and a false sense of security.

Verse 7: *"Therefore, behold! The Lord is bringing up upon them the waters of a strong and abundant River – the King of Assyria with all his glory; he will go up over all his channels and go over all his banks."*

A strong and abundant River: Egypt is associated with the Nile River. Babylon is associated with the Euphrates River and Assyria is associated with the Tigres River. 'The River' Isaiah is referring to here is the Tigres River.

The King of Assyria: We do not need to guess that this river is being personified as the King of Assyria. He is coming to war against this coalition between Syria and Israel.

All his glory: He is coming with all of his power. He is not taking this war lightly but is taking it seriously.

All his channels: All the springs and streams of waters.

Go over all his banks: This means that there is going to be a total annihilation. Israel and Syria are going to be in total submission to Assyria. Assyria will have full control over all aspects of their land.

Verse 8: *"And he is going to pass through into Judah, He will overflow and pass over, He will reach to the neck; and will stretch out of his wings to the fullness of the breadth of your land, O Immanuel."*

He will reach to the neck: Being up to our necks in water is not good, but it means that we can still breathe (we remain undefeated by the water). This is the image that Isaiah is giving us here. Judah (the southern kingdom) is not going to be unscathed by the Assyrians, but they would not be as hard pressed as Syria or Israel.

Stretch out of his wings to the fullness of the breadth of your land: This does not sound good for Judah, but....

O Immanuel: These words usher in hope....God is with them through this time! Immanuel is the redemptive name for the Messiah, and it speaks of victory, the ability to overcome. Assyria was not going to be successful against Judah.

Verse 9: *"Be shattered, O you peoples, and be broken in pieces! Listen, all you from far countries. They girded themselves but they were dismayed. They girded themselves but were dismayed."*

Be shattered... be broken: The people were going to experience evil. It was going to be difficult for them and they were going to become dismayed about all that was going on.

They girded themselves: They strengthened themselves. They were ready for the conflict with Assyria.

They girded themselves but were dismayed: They were not called to go out into battle. They were called to believe in the deliverance of God (Exodus 14:13).

Verse 10: *“They will take counsel together, but it is going to be for nothing; They will speak the word, but it will not stand, for God is with us.”*

They will take counsel together: They ignore prophetic truth.

Nothing: In modern Hebrew the word used here is the word for breadcrumbs. Their counsel is going to crumble.

God is with us: Immanuel.

Verse 11: *“For thus says the Lord unto me, with the strength of hand He instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people saying;”*

Strength of hand...instructed: God gives power (power to be faithful etc), and that power comes through His instruction. It is only when we submit to the instructions of God that we will be recipients of His power.

Should not walk in the way of this people: We should walk in the way that God has instructed us to walk. Most often this is not in the way that everyone else goes. He instructs us through His Word and through the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 12: *“Do not say, ‘A confederacy’, for all the people will say a confederacy this is. Do not fear their threats nor be troubled.”*

Confederacy: An alliance. The people did not want to trust God, but they wanted to look to other nations (Egypt etc) to join with them and help them, fight for them etc. God did not want His people to even talk about enlisting the help of foreign nations.

Do not fear their threats: They do not need to be afraid – they can have confidence in God.

Verse 13: *“The Lord of hosts Him you shall sanctify. He is your fear and your dread.”*

Him you shall sanctify: Sanctification involves purpose. The way that we fear God and sanctify His name is by being committed to His purposes and participating in His will.

He is your fear and your dread: We need to give God priority.

Verse 14: *“And He shall become a sanctuary, or a stone of stumbling or a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, as a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”*

A sanctuary, or a stone: If we trust God and make Him our priority, He will be a sanctuary, a place of refuge and protection, for us. However, if we reject Him or are disobedient, He becomes like a stone/rock which can bring harm to us and cause us pain.

Both the houses of Israel: Referring to both Judah and Israel (all of Israel – Northern and Southern kingdoms).

Verse 15: *“And many among them shall stumble; they shall fall and be broken, be ensnared and captured.”*

Many: Although there has always been a remnant of faithful people in Israel, the majority did not trust God, did not believe His Word and did not respond to Him in faith.

Verse 16: *“Bind up the certificate, seal the law among My disciples.”*

Bind up: Hold on to it. Take it seriously. We need to base our lives on the promises of God.

Certificate: A witness or a testimony - something that is certified by God.

Disciples: Those who have walked with Him and learned from Him.

Verse 17: *“I will wait for the Lord - the One who has hidden His face from the house of Jacob. I will hope in Him.”*

The One who has hidden His face: Even though we cannot see God we need to have faith in Him, trusting and hoping in the prophetic promises of God.

Verse 18: *“Behold, I and the children which the Lord has given to me are for signs and wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, the One who dwells in Mount Zion.”*

I and the children ... are for signs and wonders: Isaiah and his two boys were prophetic signs confirming what was going to happen. The prophecies associated with them have Kingdom interpretations and implications.

Zion: This is a Kingdom term. Zion is the name for Jerusalem in her redemptive state.

Verse 19: *“For they shall say to you, ‘Seek those who are sorcerers and diviners, who whisper and mutter.’ Should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living?”*

They shall say to you: Isaiah warns them that they will be asked to seek counsel from evil sources.

Sorcerers and diviners: Those who engage in pagan or demonic practices, thinking that through them they will gain illumination/revelation.

Should not a people seek their God: Isaiah was encouraging them to trust the Word of God for illumination and revelation. He was encouraging them to seek and hope in the Lord.

Verse 20: *“To the law and to the certification! They do not speak according to this Word because there is no light in them.”*

To the law and to the certification: Those who applied the Torah to their lives found (had a testimony of) that they were blessed by God.

There is no light in them: Those who do not trust the full Word of God (The law, the prophets and all the writings) are in darkness. They have not received any revelation.

Verse 21: *“And it shall pass in it difficulty and famine. It shall be that they shall hunger, and they shall be angry, and they shall curse the king and his God, and look upward.”*

Shall curse the king and his God: When things in their lives are going badly (*difficulty and famine*) they perhaps curse the Messianic promise of a King Messiah. They reject God’s plan for salvation.

Look upward: The implication is that they look up in dismay.

Verse 22: *“To the land he shall look. Behold trouble and darkness, gloom and pain; and then they will be driven into a deeper darkness.”*

To the land he shall look: They trusted in their physical land.

Trouble and darkness, gloom and pain; and then they will be driven into a deeper darkness:

This is what is coming for those who do not trust in God.

Chapter 9

Part 1: Isaiah 9:1-8

Note: Isaiah 9:1 is Isaiah 8:23 in the Hebrew Bible. This verse has great Messianic significance. This chapter speaks about a change that was coming to a specific location – a location that was uniquely related to the work of Messiah 2000 years ago.

Verse 1: *“For not gloom to her who was in distress in the former time, when He cursed the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali. But in the latter portion He is going to honour the way of the sea on the side of the Jordan of the Galilee of the Gentiles.”*

For not gloom: There had been gloom (an absence of light) in this place, but the implication here was that this was going to change.

Her: Speaking of Israel – specifically the Northern kingdom. This would, however, have implications for all of the descendants of Jacob.

The former time: An earlier period of time before Messiah.

He: God

Cursed: This word can also mean that God thought little of this place and gave no preference to it.

The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali: Zebulun (Jacob’s tenth son, by Leah – Genesis 30:20) and Naphtali (Jacob’s sixth son through Bilhah – Genesis 30:8). These sons inherited land in the Galilee region (Joshua 19). Zebulun and Naphtali were part of the Northern kingdom (Israel). God brought judgment (the curse – Deuteronomy 11:26-28) on them, through Assyria, because of their disobedience.

In the latter portion: In the last days. This is not referring to the final seven years of the last days, but is referring to the general days of the end times (the same end time period spoken of by Peter in Acts 2:16-17. This time period can also be referred to as the time of the Gentiles – Luke 21:24, Romans 11:25).

The way of the sea on the side of the Jordan: The town situated between these two portions of land, which fits these criteria, is called Capernaum – Yeshua’s ministry ‘headquarters’ (Kefer-Nahum – which means ‘village of comfort’ – Matthew 4:13-16).

The Galilee of the Gentiles: Galilee is called by this name because it was a portion of land that was highly desired by the nations (Gentiles). Some scholars say it is called by this term as what Messiah brings about (His salvation) is highly desired by the nations.

Verse 2: *“The people, the ones who walk in darkness, have seen a great light – the dwellers in the land of shadow of death. Upon them a light has greatly shined.”*

Walk in darkness: They are devoid of illumination; they do not have the truth of God. They are confused and following after falsehood.

Seen a great light: A change has happened. This light relates to Messiah (John 8:12). The candlestick in the temple was always alight. When the people looked at this light, they were reminded of the fact that the presence of God was with them.

A light has greatly shined: This relates to the numerous miracles that Yeshua was going to perform among them. It also relates to the great truth and wisdom that Yeshua was going to share with them.

Verse 3: *“You have multiplied for Him the nation, and You have made great with gladness. They will rejoice before You, as the gladness of the harvest, just as they rejoice when they distribute the spoil.”*

You: Referring to God.

Him: Referring to Messiah

The nation: When this word is written in the plural it is mainly referring to the nations – the Gentiles. However, when it is written in the singular (as it is here) it is most often referring to the nation of Israel. Abraham was told that he was going to be a great nation (Genesis 12:2. Here, ‘nation’ is also written in the singular and is referring to the nation of Israel – Abraham’s natural descendants).

Made great with gladness: When the nation of Israel is made great by Messiah, and is offered up to God the Father, there is going to be great joy.

Harvest: This word has two implications:

1. It can be related to the resurrection – Messiah was considered the first fruit of the harvest (1 Corinthians 15:23).
2. It could also refer to the fullness of the end time harvest. Once the fullness of the Gentiles has been reached, God is going to once again turn His attention toward Israel (Romans 11:11-12, Romans 11:25-27).

Spoil: The plunder that is gathered up after a victorious battle – Yeshua is going to be the victor – He is going to defeat the antichrist – 2 Thessalonians 2:8 (This plunder is related to the meek inheriting the earth – Matthew 5:5).

Verse 4: *“For the yoke of His suffering, the staff on His shoulder, and the rod of the one who oppressed Him, has been broken, as in the day of Midian.”*

The yoke of His suffering: Messiah was going to suffer, but the one who brought about that suffering (the enemy – Luke 22:3) was going to be defeated.

The day of Midian: Judges 7. God, through Gideon and a few men, effected an incredible victory against a mighty and numerous enemy. This was a victory that served to strengthen their faith. This phrase reminds us of this victory. It reminds us that we can only find victory through faith. Without faith, the work of Messiah will have no effect in our lives.

Verse 5: *“For every boot that treads into noise, and the garment that is rolled up in blood, will be burned as with a devouring fire.”*

Boot: It is implied that this is a warrior’s boot or sandal, but the word ‘warrior’ is not in the text.

Noise: Again, the implication is that this is referring to a noisy battle.

The garment that is rolled up: Referring to a bandage.

Note: The implication of this verse is that neither boots for war nor bandages will be needed any longer, as a victory has taken place. How does this victory come about? How do we see our enemy defeated? Isaiah 9:6 answers this question for us. Victory comes through Messiah – the One who is born of a virgin – Immanuel.

Verse 6: *“For a Child will be born to us, and a Son is given to us, and the government shall be upon His shoulders. The name that He will be called is Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”*

Child: Written in the masculine. A male child.

Born to us... given to us: These words are both written in the passive voice. This teaches us that this was not something we could have done for ourselves. It was done for us. It was provided to us.

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace: There is a debate as to whether this is four names (as written) or if it is in fact 8 names (Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty, God...etc). Some scholars, wanting to move away from anything that could point to these names as referring to Messiah, say that these are words describing King Hezekiah. This is not an acceptable interpretation, as what we read here is not speaking about a mere man. In Isaiah 9:7 it speaks of this ‘Child’s’ government having no end. King Hezekiah’s government ended a long time ago.

Others, who dispute the divinity of Messiah, falsely interpret these names. They say that the first 6 name (if we go with the 8 name interpretation) all refer to God who then calls Messiah the Prince of Peace. These false teachers do not ascribe all of these names to Messiah. They do not want Messiah to be “God”, or “Father” etc.

This verse, and these names, all point to the Son of God – to Messiah Yeshua. Although He took on human flesh, He is divine. He is God.

Verse 7: *For the multiplying of His government and peace there is no end. Upon the throne of David and upon His Kingdom that He will prepare it and sustain it with justice and righteousness from now until forever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will accomplish this.”*

Multiplying: Making great

Of His government and peace there is no end: When Yeshua returns to earth (specifically Jerusalem), at His second coming, He will take His throne in the Holy of holies, as the King of kings and the Lord of lords and He will rule from Jerusalem – Isaiah 2:2-4. This millennial kingdom will be a reign of 1000 years on this earth as we know it. This millennial kingdom gives way to the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:1), over which Yeshua continues to rule and reign.

The throne of David: This is a clear Messianic reference.

Justice and righteousness: The millennial kingdom will be defined or characterised by justice and righteousness.

Verse 8: *“A word that the Lord sent to Jacob, and it will fall on Israel.”*

Note: This verse informs us that this truth or light (in regard to the Messiah) is not going to be received, by and large, by Israel.

A word: Referring to this word that God gave to Isaiah - this Messianic prophecy/revelation as revealed in Isaiah 9:1-7.

Jacob: Referring to God’s Old Covenant people – Israel. The revelation of Messiah was first sent to Jacob, to Israel.

It will fall on Israel: This word, although given to them, was not received by them. This is not going to be the permanent position of Israel. In the last days, a remnant of Israel is going to turn to the Lord – 2/3rds will be lost, but the entire 1/3rd remnant will be saved (Zechariah 13:8-9, Romans 11:26-27).

Chapter 9

Part 2: Isaiah 9:9-21

There are serious consequences to rejecting the Word of God and making poor decisions (Galatians 6:7-8). It is only through receiving revelation from God that we can make wise decisions. This second part of Isaiah 9 gives us an example of what happens when we reject the truth of God - the gospel message of Messiah.

Verse 9: *“All the people will know - Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria – who say in pride and arrogance of heart:”*

Pride: The message of Messiah failed in Israel because of pride. That pride was personified in Ephraim (the Northern kingdom). Israel fell into idolatry. She behaved selfishly - thinking about her own desires - and that led her into rejecting the truth of God.

Ephraim: Although this was the name of one of the tribes, it became the prophetic name for the tribes that made up the Northern kingdom of Israel (nine tribes plus some of the tribe of Levi).

Arrogance: They exalted themselves, they had inflated thoughts about themselves.

Verse 10: *“The bricks have fallen, but we will build with hewn stones; the sycamores are cut down, but we will replace them with cedars.”*

Bricks ... hewn stones; the sycamores...cedars: God was going to bring judgment, but they were going to say that they were going to come out of God’s judgment better than when they went in.

Hewn stones: Stones properly cut.

Sycamores...cedars: Their mindset was that in the past what seemed good (sycamores) was going to be even better in their future (cedars). They did not acknowledge that there was going to be consequences for their sin.

They expected to pick themselves up, dust themselves off and make things better in spite of God's displeasure with them. This attitude smacked of arrogance and rebellion.

Verse 11: *"Therefore the Lord will raise up the enemies of Rezin against him, and his opponents he will have to contend with."*

Raise up: Elevate. Give power to.

Him: Referring to the Northern kingdom.

Contend: He will have conflict with his enemies and with his opponents - those who stand in opposition to him.

Note: This is a Biblical principle: When we say 'No' to God, when we do not want to receive His revelation or implement His truth in our lives, He empowers our enemies to come against us.

Verse 12: *"Syria beforehand and the Philistines after; they will eat Israel with every mouth. Nevertheless, His anger was not turned away, but still His hand is outstretched."*

Syria ... and the Philistines: Historically these nations have caused Israel much suffering.

Eat Israel with every mouth: Meaning they devoured Israel in every way.

His anger was not turned away: The Northern kingdom suffered greatly. Once they were exiled, they were destroyed and never went back to the land of Israel. In the last days God will allow the descendants of the Northern kingdom back into the land of Israel.

Still His hand is outstretched: Even though He was punishing them, God still extended His hand to them. He was still willing to receive them - if they repented, turned and embraced His truth.

Verse 13: *"And the people did not repent unto the One who struck them, and the Lord of hosts they did not seek."*

Did not repent unto the One who struck them: God was discipling them, but they did not respond to Him. They knew who was striking them. They knew God was displeased with them. However, they did not repent and nor did they seek God.

Seek: This is a strong word which means to utterly and completely, with great intensity, beseech the Lord. They did not do this. The people were simply not interested in having a relationship with the Lord. This was because they wanted their own way. The problem is that we cannot have God's way and our way at the same time. One way will always give way to the other.

Verse 14: *"The Lord cut off from Israel the head and the tail, the palm branch and the bulrush in one day."*

Note: Believe it or not, but this is actually a message of hope. Although God was going to bring judgment upon them the judgment had a purpose – and that purpose was to bring about change.

Cut off: 'Cutting off' is a judgment. It is a consequence which is tied to a covenant. The Old covenant had blessings and cursings attached to it.

Because they did not respond faithfully to that covenant they were not going to be blessed – they were going to be cursed. This is what is being referred to here.
In one day: God can make a change happen very quickly.

Verse 15: *“The elder and honorable one is the head, and the lying prophet and false teacher are the tail.”*

Elder ...honorable one ...lying prophet and false teacher: God was going to cut off this ungodly leadership. The prophets and teachers had been held up by the people as honourable, but these leaders had actually led the people into judgment.

Verse 16: *“For the guides of this people caused them to err, and those who are guided by them are swallowed up.”*

Guides ... caused them to err: Their leaders misled them and caused them to go astray.
Note: The principle we learn here is this: we need to follow proper leadership. Faithful leaders faithfully teach God’s Word. False teachers do not put much emphasis on the Word of God. When we follow improper leadership, it is going to cause us to be led astray. When we go astray the enemy is able to swallow us up.

Verse 17: *“Therefore concerning its young men the Lord will not rejoice, and concerning the orphans and the widows He will not have mercy; for everyone is a hypocrite and an evildoer, and every mouth speaks decay. Nevertheless, His anger was not turned away, but still His hand is outstretched.”*

Young men: The next generation.

The Lord will not rejoice: God's not going to be pleased with the new generation.

Concerning the orphans and the widows He will not have mercy: God takes His hands off them and does not get involved in their lives. One of the greatest promises in the New Covenant is that God will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5).

Hypocrite: Someone who says or gives an impression of one thing but does the opposite.

Evildoer: Someone who delights in wickedness.

Decay: This is a word that means more than ‘folly’. It comes from the same root as the word used to describe a dead animal that has been left out in the sun to rot. It is something that is repulsive. If we follow improper leadership and we go astray we turn into hypocrites, evildoers and everything we say will be repulsive. We will not be people who are pleasing to God.

Nevertheless, His anger was not turned away, but still His hand is outstretched: This phrase is repeated from Isaiah 9:12. Even though God is punishing them for their disobedience and rebellion He still holds out His hands to them. God is still willing to extend mercy to them if they repent.

Verse 18: *“For wickedness burns as fire, and the thorns and thistles are consumed. He kindles the thicket of the forest, and it goes up as a haze of smoke.”*

He kindles the thicket of the forest, and it goes up as a haze of smoke: Perhaps what this verse is saying is that God shows His majesty in judgment.

When smoke goes up from God, judging and destroying those who reject Him, it is indeed a source showing that He is God Almighty that He is the only majestic God.

Verse 19: *“The wrath of the Lord of hosts burns up the land; the people shall be as fuel for the fire; a man to his brother they do not have pity.”*

The land: Referring to the land of Israel.

Fuel for the fire: What the fire consumes strengthens the fire.

A man to his brother they do not have pity: They have no love for their neighbor. They have no thought within them to be merciful or kind. Everyone is driven by what they want. This same type of self-centeredness is going to be one of the characteristics that mark people in the last days (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

Verse 20: *“He shall snatch on the right hand and be hungry. He shall devour on the left hand and not be satisfied. Every man shall eat the flesh of his own arm.”*

Hungry: Hunger pains are uncomfortable.

Devour ... and not be satisfied: They are going to be utterly frustrated, empty and will find no satisfaction in anything.

Every man shall eat the flesh of his own arm: This phrase speaks of desperation. The people who do not give to God what rightly belongs to Him are going to be in a miserable situation.

Verse 21: *“Manasseh shall devour Ephraim, and Ephraim Manasseh, and they together shall be against Judah. Nevertheless, His anger was not turned away, but still His hand is outstretched.”*

Manasseh ... Ephraim: Joseph’s two sons (Genesis 46:20) – i.e. the next generation (they were initially not part of the 12 tribes of Jacob). The rabbis say that whenever there is a reference to the next generation it is an indicator that we need to prepare for the coming of Messiah, as it might be the last generation.

Be against Judah: The Northern kingdom, despite the fact that they were ‘brothers’, wanted to attack the Southern kingdom.

Nevertheless, His anger was not turned away, but still His hand is outstretched: This phrase is repeated for the third time in this chapter. God did not remove His wrath (He was still angry with the people because of their behavior), but even in the midst of His judgment He was willing to forgive them if they repented and turned from their conflict and rebellion.

Chapter 10

Part 1: Isaiah 10:1-19

God loves justice (Micah 6:8). He commands us to pursue and chase after peace (Hebrews 12:14). There is a relationship between justice and peace. Without justice there would be no peace. Without peace, there is no righteousness. When we deny someone justice, we are inviting the judgment of God upon ourselves.

Isaiah 10:1-4 is a continuation of what we were studying in Isaiah 9. The rest of Isaiah 10 speaks about the judgment that God is going to mete out to His people through Assyria. Assyria was used by God to mediate justice to Israel.

Verse 1: *“Woe to those who legislate legislations of wickedness, who write decrees of grief, which they have prescribed.”*

Woe: This is a word of admonition. It is a warning, which means how awful something is going to be unless there is a change in behaviour. If the person/people continue in this way the outcome will be disastrous.

Write decrees of grief: These letters were written and sent out to be read publically to the people. In a sense it was a proclamation, but these proclamations had consequences attached to them. They were proclamations that brought grief and trouble to people. They caused people to suffer. The principle we can learn here is this: When we are part of something that denies someone else justice (receiving the right judgment), or when leaders deny their people justice, wickedness is going to flourish. This in turn leads to grief and trouble.

Verse 2: *“Who rob the needy of justice, and who take what is right from the poor of My people. That widows may be plundered, and that they may take spoil from the fatherless.”*

Rob: This is a word of distortion. Something which is twisted.

Needy: This is a synonym for the word ‘poor’. It is a word that refers to those who have meagre resources. Usually, the needy in a society have very little power within it. God’s nature is to be very protective over the helpless in a society. God watches over them. The Bible contains many warnings against those who deny justice to the poor. God gave His instructions and laws to regulate society. He expected more from those to whom He had given these laws to.

That widows may be plundered: They created situations where the assets of widows and the provision of orphans would be taken away.

Plundered...take spoil: The language used here is the same language used for a victorious army who takes all the spoils or booty of war from those they have defeated. These individuals were abusing their powers, and they were exploiting those in the society. This was not the way that God’s covenant people were meant to behave.

Verse 3: “What will you do in the day of visitation? And in the desolation which will come from a distance? To whom will you flee for help? And where will you leave your glory?”

Visitation: This is a word that speaks about God getting involved in society - God coming into a situation. When God gets involved, He is all in - totally involved in either delivering people or punishing them. The implication, here, is that God is going to visit them for judgment.

Desolation: In Hebrew this is the same word that is translated ‘holocaust’. This is a disastrous and catastrophic event.

Glory: Referring to their treasured possessions. They had impoverished people and now they were going to be impoverished (Matthew 7:2).

Verse 4: “Without Me they shall bow down among the prisoners, and in the midst of the dead they shall fall. Nevertheless, His anger was not turned away, but still His hand is outstretched.”

Bow down: Bend the knee. They were going to be brought into submission.

Prisoners: They were going to become prisoners.

In the midst of the dead they shall fall: When God visited His people (in order to put things back into their rightful order) many of them would be taken prisoners and many of them would die. This is the consequence of exploiting others, taking advantage of those who have no voice within a society. When we are unkind to others, we are inviting God’s judgment into our lives.

Nevertheless, His anger was not turned away, but still His hand is outstretched: This is the fourth time that this phrase has been repeated in the past two chapters.

Still His hand is outstretched: This is good news. Although God will not withdraw from this time of judgment upon His people, He still gives them an opportunity to repent.

Note: This next section of Isaiah deals with how God is going to punish the people – this ‘day of catastrophe’.

Verse 5: “Woe because of Assyria, the rod of My anger and the staff in whose hand is My wrath.”

Woe: How awful it will be if there is no change.

Assyria: Assyria was the vessel that God used to mete out His judgment to the Northern kingdom (Israel). Babylon was the vessel God used to mete out His judgment on the Southern kingdom (Judah).

Verse 6: “I will send him against a hypocritical nation; and against the people of My wrath I will command him to plunder the plunder and to take the spoil; to trample them like clay in the streets.”

Nation: Written in the singular; this is a hermenutical clue that this is a reference to Israel.

Trample them like clay: The word translated ‘clay’ or ‘mire’ here is a word for the material that makes up the street – whether it be stone, brick, mud, etc. When we walk on a street, we trample on it without much thought to the material that makes it up. This is the image being used here.

In the same way that we trample on the street, without any second thought, so to would God allow the Assyrians to trample the Northern kingdom – like it was just clay beneath their feet.

Verse 7: *“And he did not thus imagine, nor does his heart think thusly; But it is in his heart to destroy and cut down nations, and not a few.”*

He: Referring to the Assyrians.

He did not thus imagine, nor does his heart think thusly: Just because God uses someone does not mean that He is pleased with them. The fact that He uses them is not an affirmation that what they are doing is right or proper. Although the Assyrians were God’s vessels, to carry out His judgment, they did not have any thought or imagination that they were doing it out of obedience to God.

In his heart to destroy and cut down: Obedience or submission to God was not Assyria’s motivation. Their hearts were bent on destruction. The goal of Assyria was to expand their empire and to take control of many nations. They achieved this through anger and hatred for the nations (including Israel) that they conquered.

Verse 8: *“For he will say: ‘Surely my princes all together they are kings.’”*

Princes: These would be nations that were either enslaved and brought under Assyria’s authority, or those who entered into a confederacy with him.

Surely my princes all together they are kings: This is Assyria’s boast. He is trying to reveal how great he is. Assyria is intimating that small insignificant kingdoms (princes) have become great in his hands (kings).

Verse 9: *“Is not Calno like Charchemish? Is not Hamath like Arpad? Is not Samaria like Damascus?”*

Note: These places are a list of different kingdoms that Assyria brought into his confederacy, and caused them to submit to him. Even Samaria (Northern Kingdom) was under his authority. They submitted to Assyria and were dominated by them.

Verse 10: *“My hand found the kingdoms of idolatry, statues from Jerusalem and from Samaria,”*

My hand: God is speaking here. His hand is a reference to His authority or power. God caused these nations to be brought into submission. He caused them to cease and to be destroyed.

The kingdoms of idolatry: All the kingdoms mentioned in Isaiah 10:9 were places of idolatry.

Statues: The people in these kingdoms thought that their idols would give them power and success.

From Jerusalem and from Samaria: Like these other nations that had fallen due to their idolatry so too were Jerusalem and Samaria going to fall because of their idolatry.

Verse 11: *“Surely just as I have done to Samaria and to her idols, thus I will do to Jerusalem and to her images.”*

Images: This is a word that relates to something carefully designed. When we fashion idols for ourselves the outcome is grief and sadness.

Verse 12: *“And it shall come about that the Lord will perform all of His work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem that He will say: ‘I will visit upon the exalted fruit of the heart of the king of Assyria, and the splendour of his haughty eyes.’”*

Lord: Adonai. Our Master.

Visit: God is all in. He is totally involved.

Note: Assyria did what she did because of her own selfish and sinful desires. Her motivation was not out of a desire to serve and honour God. God did not cause or make Assyria do what it did to other nations or to Israel. However, God used what she did for His purposes. Because Assyria’s motivation was wrong, God was against her and is going to visit her to punish her.

Exalted: Arrogant. Proud. Assyria was proud and arrogant. They were not submissive to God, and therefore He is going to bring judgment upon them.

Verse 13: *“For he will say: ‘My hand, with power, I have done this, and with wisdom. For I have functioned with understanding. I have removed the borders of the people and I have stolen the treasures of their treasuries. I will bring down the inhabitants as a valiant knight.’”*

He will say: The king of Assyria will say.

This: Referring to the destruction he has brought about in Israel.

Knight: A warrior.

Verse 14: *“My hand found, like a nest, the wealth of the peoples, and their money was as though it was like eggs that were left in all the land. I have gathered and I have experienced no wing that moved, and no mouth was open or chirped.”*

Found like a nest: It was easy for the Assyrians to rob and plunder the people.

Eggs that were left: Their wealth was abandoned - like eggs just lying about. Easy pickings.

Experienced no wing: No father or mother birds were there to protect the eggs.

No mouth was open or chirped: The king of Assyria had total freedom to do whatever he wanted to do. The problem was that he did it in arrogance and in defiance - against the will of God. God used Assyria’s actions to accomplish His will, but Assyria did not do it out of love and obedience for God. They had selfish purposes. They did it in defiance to what was right. They were not motivated by an inner quality of justice and righteousness nor of wanting to bring honor to God.

Verse 15: *“Should an axe glorify itself over the One who chops with it? Or should a saw exalt itself over the One who saws with it? As if a rod could wield against those who lift it up! Or as if a staff could lift up as if it were not wood!”*

Should an axe glorify itself over the One who chops with it: Obviously the axe cannot take the glory for the wood that has been chopped. It is the woodcutter who wields the axe that gets the glory. The axe is just the tool in his hand that he uses to accomplish His purposes.
Should a saw exalt itself over the One who saws with it: Obviously not. The One who uses the saw is the One who should get the glory.

Rod ... staff: These were two instruments usually made of wood. A piece of wood can never be greater than the one who fashioned and moulded it in the first place. Assyria gave no thought to their Creator. They were like the rod and staff in God’s hand (they inflicted pain and discipline on the nations around them), but, in their arrogance, they thought that they were greater than the One wielding them.

Verse 16: *“Therefore the Lord (Adonai), the Lord (YHWH) of hosts, will send leanness among the fat ones; and under his glory He will kindle a kindling of fire.”*

The Lord, the Lord of hosts: The first ‘Lord’ is referring to the Master God – Adonai. The second ‘Lord’ is referring to YHWH – the transcendent God.

Leanness: Skinniness

Send leanness among the fat ones: Assyria were going to experience judgment. Although they had lived in plenty they were going to go into scarcity.

His glory: Referring to the glory of the king of Assyria.

He: The Lord.

Under his glory He will kindle a kindling of fire: Assyria served God’s purpose, but they did not serve it in obedience and submission. Because of their arrogance and pride the king of Assyria and his empire were going to experience the judgment of God – fires were going to be kindled against them and they were going to be consumed.

Verse 17: *“The Light of Israel will become a fire, and His Holy One a flame. It will burn and devour his thorns and his thistles in one day.”*

Light of Israel ... His Holy One: Many commentators say that this is speaking of God the Father and of His Son. Yeshua calls Himself the Light of the world (John 8:12). He is the Light of Israel.

Devour his thorns and his thistles in one day: Assyria’s judgment day came rapidly for them. Thorns and thistles imply that a fertile land has been abandoned.

Verse 18: *“And the glory of his forest and of his fertile land is going to be void of life unto flesh; and they will be as when a sick man wastes away.”*

Fertile land is going to be void of life unto flesh: Their land is going to be judged. God is going to cause their fertile land to lie fallow – it will have no life in it (no flesh, no humans, will exist on it).

Verse 19: “And the rest of the trees of his forest will be so few in number that even a young child will be able to count them.”

The rest: What is left, what remains.

Few in number: Only a small remnant of them will remain. This concept of a remnant is so important throughout Scripture. God can do great things with a remnant!

Note: When justice is denied, when legislation is enacted that is wicked, it brings troublesome times upon the poor, the weak, the orphan, the widow. However, in the end, God’s going to get totally involved and He is going to bring judgment upon those who have acted wickedly.

Chapter 10

Part 2: Isaiah 10:20-34

In this next section of Isaiah 10 there is some good news! God is going to bring a change – a change in light of His prophetic Word. When we look at the history of the children of Israel, the promises that God gave to them are connected to prophetic instruction. This has not changed today. The promises that God has given to us, in His Word, are also linked to instruction (example: Revelation 2:7...if we overcome...we can eat from the tree of life etc).

Verse 20: “And it shall come about on that day that no longer will the remnant of Israel, the one who is a refugee from the house of Jacob, continue to depend on him who struck them but will depend on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.”

On that day: Almost every time, without exception, when this phrase is used in the Hebrew it is referring to the Day of Judgment that is coming. For those who are in a covenantal relationship with God, this Day is going to have a good outcome, it is going to be a day that produces great results for us.

No longer... continue: This foreshadows a change that is coming. God is not going to allow His people to be continuously oppressed. Deliverance is coming and the way to find deliverance is through prophetic truth.

Refugee: Generally referring to those who have escaped a bad situation in one country so have fled to another.

Depend on him who struck them: Israel tended to make alliances with other countries instead of allowing the Lord to defend them. Israel depended on these political alliances.

Depend on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth: This is the change that is going to happen: Instead of Israel trusting in man they are going to trust in the truth of God.

Truth: The Scriptures (law, writings, prophesy etc)

Verse 21: “The remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the Mighty God.”

The remnant will return: Not only are the remnant going to return to God, but the remnant is also going to return to the land of Israel (this is backed up prophetically by many Scriptures).

Return: A word of repentance. There is a connection between repentance and trusting in God.

The Mighty God: They realize that true power is with God.

Verse 22: *“For if your people, Israel, will be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will return. The destruction decreed and it shall go forth quickly like a flood and shall bring about righteousness.”*

Israel, will be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will return: Over the generations the people of Israel have been numerous. However, compared to this number of people (from the time of Jacob onwards) only a small remnant is going to return to the land. Israel being like the sand on the seashore is a fulfilment of one of God’s promises to them (Genesis 22:17, Hosea 1:10 etc). However, based upon Scriptural revelation, we should not expect all of them to return to God and be part of His Kingdom.

Destruction decreed: An end has been determined.

Go forth quickly: It will quickly pass.

Bring about righteousness: Righteousness is the result of this destruction. This tells us that God is most concerned with bringing about a righteous end. God’s will always has a righteous outcome.

Verse 23: *“For a determined end the Lord God of hosts He makes in the midst of the land.”*

A determined end: This end is being emphasised.

The Lord God of hosts He makes: God Himself does this.

Land: Although God is talking primarily to the house of Jacob here, we know prophetically that this end is going to affect the whole earth - not just the land of Israel.

Verse 24: *“Therefore, thus said the Lord God of hosts: ‘Do not fear My people, inhabitants of Zion, do not be afraid of the Assyrian. He shall strike you with a rod and lift up his staff against you, in the manner of Egypt.’”*

Said: Although this is something that is going to happen in the future it is written in the past tense. When God says something, we can consider it as good as done. God’s Word is reliable. We can depend on it.

Zion: This is a Kingdom word. Every time this word appears in the Scripture it has Kingdom implications.

The manner of Egypt: Israel had been in bondage in Egypt for 430 years. They had suffered greatly in Egypt. Egypt had tried to annihilate the children of Israel – casting the male offspring into the Nile. Egypt, however, did not succeed in their plans and Israel was eventually delivered from out of their hands. Likewise, Assyria was not going to succeed either.

Verse 25: *“For in a very little while the indignation will end, as will My anger in their destruction.”*

Note: God’s wrath or anger will come to an end when His enemies are destroyed. Here God is specifically referring to Assyria as His enemy, but this is foreshadowing (a paradigm) what is going to happen in the future – the final antichrist, God’s enemy, will be quickly destroyed (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

The fulfilment of the first prophecy (the destruction of Assyria) should cause us to be built up in our faith. God did what He said He would do, so that helps us to trust in His last day promises. God is reliable. We can trust Him. He will not disappoint us.

Verse 26: *“The Lord of hosts will awaken him with a whip, like the striking of Midian at the rock of Oreb; as His rod struck the sea, so will He lift it up in the manner of Egypt.”*

Him: Referring to the king of Assyria and his army.

Striking of Midian: See Judges 7:21-25. At Midian, God moved against, and defeated, a great army – an army which had greatly outnumbered Israel.

His rod struck the sea: This reminds us of the parting of the Red Sea in Exodus 14:16-31

In the manner of Egypt: The army of Egypt (and eventually its empire) was destroyed. This is the same promise that God is making here regarding the Assyrian army and empire.

Verse 27: *“And it shall come about in that day that He will remove his suffering from upon your shoulder and his yoke from your neck, and the yoke will be destroyed because of the anointing oil.”*

That day: Judgment Day

He will remove: God will remove.

Remove his suffering from upon your shoulder: Assyria placed suffering on Israel/Judah. God promised to remove this suffering from them.

Yoke: The burden

Anointing oil: The Holy Spirit was going to come upon Israel and that was going to bring about the defeat of the enemy.

Verse 28: *“He has come to Aiath, He has passed Migron; at Michmash he placed his vessels.”*

Note: This verse speaks about how close the king of Assyria came to defeating the house of Jacob. Although he did a lot of damage to them, he was unsuccessful in destroying them. In the same way the final antichrist (in the last days) is also going to come close. However, he will also not succeed in a total annihilation of the Jewish people, as a 1/3rd remnant will be saved from his hand (Zechariah 13:8-9)

Aiath... Migron...Michmash: These are all locations located very near to Jerusalem. Assyria came very close to Jerusalem and laid a siege against her. This siege was unsuccessful and eventually was aborted.

At Michmash he placed his vessels: Assyria had a storage place/an armoury for his weapons/equipment/vessels at this place.

Verse 29: *“He passed on through a passage and he lodged at Geba. Ramah is afraid, Gibeah of Saul has fled.”*

Geba: This exact location is unknown, but it is thought to be close to Jerusalem.

Ramah...Gibeah: These were places very close to Jerusalem.

Fled: The people who lived near or close to Jerusalem left, they ran away.

Verse 30: *“Your voice cried out O daughter of Gallim. It was heard as far as Laish – O poor Anathoth.”*

Anathoth: This was a very poor neighbourhood close to Jerusalem. It was the neighbourhood that Jeremiah grew up in (Jeremiah 1:1).

Verse 31: *“Madmenah has fled. The inhabitants of Gebim seek refuge.”*

Madmenah has fled: No one knows where this place was. It became a no-man’s land.

The inhabitants of Gebim seek refuge: They also gathered up their things and fled.

Verse 32: *“As yet he will remain at Nob that day; he will shake his fist at the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.”*

He will remain at Nob: Referring to the king of Assyria. Priestly families dwelt in Nob because they wanted to be closer to Jerusalem (1 Samuel 22:19).

Shake his fist: The king of Assyria mocked the mount – the temple. He had no regard for the things of God.

Verse 33: *“Behold the Lord, the Lord of hosts will cut off the branch with an axe, and the exalted high places will be cut down. And the ones who are haughty are going to be brought low.”*

Cut off the branch: Assyria would get really close to Jerusalem, but God was going to stop them in their tracks when they got there.

Haughty: Those who have a prideful spirit.

Verse 34: *“He will strike the thicket of the forest with an axe, and Lebanon will fall by the Mighty One.”*

Lebanon: Lebanon was a forest that was thick with trees. Lebanon, in the Bible, is often used as a picture of earthly glory.

Mighty One: Many scholars see this as a reference to Messiah. In the days of Assyria, it was King Hezekiah that executed the prophetic truth that God gave to Isaiah. Hezekiah can be seen as a prototype/paradigm of Messiah. Although he was not Messiah, Hezekiah trusted in the prophetic words and instructions. In much the same way, Messiah is going to trust and obey the prophetic revelation to bring about a future victory. Assyria was destroyed when she came against Jerusalem. In the same way can we expect that in the last days, when the great army of the antichrist assembles around Jerusalem, that it too will be defeated in the way that Assyria was (Luke 21:20, Zechariah 14:1-5, 2 Thessalonians 2:8). God's prophetic revelation will prove to be true and there will be deliverance for the antichrist and his armies.

Chapter 11

Part 1: Isaiah 11:1-10

Throughout Scripture, God made numerous covenants with people. It is through these covenantal promises that we learn about the faithfulness of God. God is always faithful to His covenantal promises. There were times when God gave the children of Israel prophecies concerning the consequences they were going to receive for their disobedience and rebellion. God told them He was going to cast them aside and divorce them. No sooner had these proclamations of judgment and divorce gone out, God, rich in kindness and grace, was calling His people to repentance and was reaffirming His covenantal promises to them.

Verse 1: *“There shall go forth a twig from the stump of Jesse. And a Branch shall blossom out of his roots.”*

Go forth: This term in Hebrew is a term that often related to redemption. It is from the same root as the word that the ‘exodus’ (from Egypt) comes from.

Shall go forth a twig from the stump of Jesse: This speaks about God's covenantal promise to King David. God promised David that the Messiah would come from his seed (2 Samuel 7:12-16).

Stump: The use of this word ‘stump’ seems to suggest that the covenant God made with David was cut down. Once God makes a covenant, He may distance Himself momentarily from it (because of someone else's disobedience and rebellion) but in that same generation, or in another generation down the road, God will again affirm, restore and fulfil His covenant. David was not a perfect man. He sinned and his children sinned. Nevertheless, God did in fact raise up from David and his offspring the Messiah – Messiah Yeshua (Matthew 1).

Jesse: The father of David.

Branch: This word in Hebrew shares the same root as the word for Nazareth. This is a word that means to be separated or sanctified. It has to do with keeping, guarding or denying ourselves in obedience to God. Yeshua, this Branch, was going to deny Himself in order to keep the Word of God.

Blossom: This twig/branch is going to flourish. It is going to be fruitful or successful.

Verse 2: *“And upon Him shall rest the Spirit of the Lord. The Spirit of wisdom and understanding. The Spirit of counsel and might. The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.”*

Note: This verse gives us a very clear definition of the character and of the benefits of the Spirit of God.

The Spirit of the Lord: The phrase usually used in the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh, Old Testament) is ‘The Spirit of God’ (Genesis 1:2). Here we see a change in the usual terminology.

Lord: YHWH. The sacred name of God. The name that refers to His transcendence – the God who was, the God who is and the God who is to come. God has no limit on His time. He transcends time. God remembers past promises, He works on them in the present and all of them have future implications. The mention of the Spirit should always remind us of the order that God is going to bring about.

Wisdom and understanding: These help us to utilise the knowledge of God. They help us to share that knowledge effectively with others.

Counsel and might: Putting His counsel into practice ensures that we become recipients of His power. This power enables us to demonstrate God's priority in our lives.

Knowledge: He will know all things.

The fear of the Lord: Giving God priority in our lives.

Verse 3: *“And He will smell the fear of the Lord. Not with the appearance of His eyes will He judge and not with the hearing of His ears will He reprove.”*

He: Referring to this shoot/twig from Jesse – ie The Messiah, upon whom the Spirit of God was going to rest.

Smell: The word for 'spirit' in Hebrew (Ruach) comes from the root of a word which means 'scent', 'smell', 'fragrance'.

He will smell the fear of the Lord: Through a smell, an odour, He (the Messiah) would be able to discern the fear of the Lord - His priority. The sense of smell has the ability to trigger memories – both good and bad memories. Smell helps us to detect desirable foods, hazards, pheromones etc and it plays a role in taste (see also 2 Corinthians 2:15-16, Genesis 8:21, Psalm 115:6, Psalm 34:8-9 etc).

Not with the appearance of His eyes...not with the hearing of His ears: He would not have to see or hear anything to know the reality of a situation. Messiah is going to be able to render judgment perfectly because of what He smells. An example of something similar would be this: When people undergo lie detector tests, chemical and physiological changes take place in their bodies. Sweat, even if unseen, is released and this gives off a slight odour. These changes play a role in making accurate judgments regarding the person being tested. Smell plays a role in Messiah's judgment – in His ability to judge in a way that leads to righteous judgments.

Verse 4: *“And He will judge with righteousness the meager ones, and He will reprove with equity the humble of the earth. He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.”*

Meager ones: Those who are very poor.

Equity: This word, from a geographical standpoint, refers to a plain – a flat place, not a peak or a mountain. This judgment, so to speak, is made on a level playing field. It is upright and honest. It is fair to everybody.

Strike the earth with the rod of His mouth: God simply has to speak, and the punishment will come forth. His judgments are unique.

With the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked: This same kind of terminology is used in the New Testament in regard to the second coming of Messiah (2 Thessalonians 2:8, Revelation 19:15 etc). Messiah's second coming is characterised by judgment.

Verse 5: *“And it will be with righteousness that He will gird His waist and with faithfulness He will gird His loins.”*

Gird His waist ... gird His loins: Girding has to do with being a servant. Messiah was going to bring about the will of God. He was going to serve His Heavenly Father.

The eternal Son of God always does His Father's will. He does His Father's will through righteousness and faithfulness.

Verse 6: *"And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child is leading them."*

Note: God's righteous and faithful judgment brings about a change in nature. Currently this world is stained and corrupted with sin, but in the Millennial Kingdom this is going to change. There is going to be a return back to what was experienced in the Garden of Eden. In the Garden of Eden animals did not eat meat but all of them only ate vegetation (green grass and herbs – Genesis 2:30. It was only after the flood that animals and humans were allowed to eat meat – Genesis 9:3-4). When this change happens, there is once again going to be peace between the species.

A little child is leading them: This is written in the present tense and not in the future tense. The ferocious animals will be in submission, in subjection, even to small children.

Verse 7: *"And the cow and the bear will graze together, and their offspring will lie down together. The lion, as cattle, will eat straw."*

Straw: Hay. These animals will no longer eat meat but will go back to eating vegetation. They will no longer harm each other.

Verse 8: *"The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den."*

Nursing child: A very young child - generally less than three years of age.

Cobra...viper: Two different types of currently very dangerous snakes.

Verse 9: *"They will not be harmed and no destruction will be in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."*

My holy mountain: A reference to Jerusalem. God's Kingdom.

The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord: The more we know God the less destruction and harm we will bring about. When we know God, we bring about blessing to this world and others, rather than harm.

As the waters cover the sea: All the sea is covered with water. In the same way, all of the Kingdom is going to reflect the knowledge of God.

Verse 10: *"And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the nations shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious."*

In that day: In that day of God's judgment. This is a key indicator that this is speaking about the second coming of Messiah.

Root of Jesse: Referring to Messiah.

Banner: Banners were held up as a sign that proclaimed victory over an enemy. This banner implies something miraculous has taken place.

The nations shall seek Him: This is a reference to every tribe, every nation and every people. This is going to usher in the fulfillment of God's Abrahamic covenant – to be a blessing to the nations, not only to the Jewish people (Genesis 12:3). The Kingdom will be full of Jews and Gentiles.

His resting place shall be glorious: Rest is a word that is related to a Kingdom experience in this age (a rest celebrated every Shabbat – every 7th day). God's Kingdom, His resting place, is going to be glorious.

Chapter 11

Part 2: Isaiah 11:11-16

The rapture/our 'blessed hope' and the second/final coming of Messiah are two different events. In this next section of Isaiah, Isaiah is speaking about the latter event ie: The second coming of Messiah, when He comes to establish His Kingdom...specifically His millennial Kingdom. Messiah's second coming is going to be very different to His first coming. At His first coming He did not come to condemn the world, but He came to show forth the love of God and extend, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile, the compassion, the love, the grace and the forgiveness of God. At His first coming He did the work (died on the cross and shed His blood) to make grace possible. The purpose of His second coming is for judgment and for the establishment of His Kingdom. For God's covenantal promises to be fulfilled in their fullest sense (His promises to Abraham, David etc) there needs to first be judgment. There is a glorious end to God's judgment. His judgment brings about a Kingdom of righteousness, justice and peace. His Kingdom will manifest His glory. This will lead to the inhabitants of that Kingdom having inexpressible joy.

Verse 11: *“And it shall come about in that day that the Lord will again stretch out His hand a second time to purchase the remnant of His people who are left, from Assyria and Egypt, from Pathros and Cush, from Elam and Shinar, from Hamath and the islands of the sea.”*

In that day: This is speaking about Judgment Day - specifically Messiah returning in His wrath and pouring it out upon the enemies of Israel - those who reject the prophetic promises from God.

The Lord will again: This speaks about a continuation of something. Something was not (had ceased) but it will be again.

Lord: Master. Speaking of One who is in charge.

A second time: This implies a last day action of God. He is again going to bring redemption to His people.

Purchase: To buy, to acquire. This carries with it the idea of redemption.

The remnant of His people: The remnant of His people are the Jewish people who are alive in the last days (Zechariah 13:8-9).

His people who are left: This remnant would be made up of those who survive the time called 'Jacob's trouble' (Jeremiah 30:7). They are going to be those who are physically alive to witness the second coming of Messiah. When they see Messiah, they are going to accept Him and understand what He has done as a deliverer (Zechariah 12 -14).

Pathros: Most scholars believe that this was a northern portion of Egypt.

Cush: Possibly Ethiopia of today.

Elam: Thought to be Persia, or where modern-day Iran is today.

Shinar: Babylon (modern-day Iraq).

Hamath: Closer to the northern part of Israel (perhaps modern-day Syria).

The islands of the sea: The Jewish people are not only going to be rescued from the places geographically close to Israel, but they are also going to be rescued from the far away places. This foreshadows God gathering up, once again, a remnant of the Jewish people, from all the places of the world in which they were scattered. He is going to return them to the Land of Israel.

Verse 12: *“And He will lift up a banner for the nations when he will gather the exiles of Israel and the scattered ones of Judah from the four corners of the earth.”*

Banner: A pole with a message attached to it. This word is also the Hebrew word for a miracle. God is going to convey a miraculous message to the nations (this miracle is going to be for a banner/a sign to the nations) when He gathers up the remnant of His people and replants them in their promised land.

Note: This is NOT speaking of the regathering of the Jewish people after the Babylonian exile. Only those from Judah returned after the Babylonian exile. Israel (as promised in this verse) did not return to the land of Israel at that time. This is speaking of an end-time gathering of both Israel and Judah to the land of Israel – which we are witnessing in our day (this regathering has been happening since AD 70 but around 1948 it has gained momentum). This regathering from the four corners of the earth has not happened in a major way until our days. This regathering will continue until the return of Messiah.

Verse 13: *“And He will remove the jealousy of Ephraim, and the enemies of Judah He will strike. Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not harass Ephraim.”*

Note: A healing is going to take place between the 12 tribes of Israel – between Ephraim (northern Israel) and Judah (southern Israel). See Ezekiel 37:15-28

Verse 14: *“And they will fly from the shoulder of the Philistines toward the west; together they shall plunder the sons of the east; they shall stretch forth their hand on Edom and Moab; and the people of Ammon shall obey them.”*

Fly: Return quickly

Note: This verse speaks about judgment coming upon the enemies of Israel in the last days.

Verse 15: *“The Lord will utterly destroy the Bay of Egypt and its tongue; with His mighty hand He will wave His hand over the River, and strike it in the seven streams, and make men cross over dryshod.”*

The Bay of Egypt and its tongue: Referring to the Suez area.

Note: God is going to strike the enemies of Israel. Those Jewish people who are in bondage in these areas in the last days, and who could not return, are going to be able to walk back to the land of Israel.

Verse 16: “*And there will be a highway for those that remain of His people who will remain in Assyria, as it was for Israel in the day that he came up from the land of Egypt.*”

Highway: A significant pathway or road.

The day that he came up from the land of Egypt: Referencing Egypt reminds us of exile. At the end of this age there is going to be one more time when Israel is removed from exile – the first time they were removed from Egypt, the second time they will be removed from the four corners of the world. This second return will far eclipse the exodus from Egypt in significance (Jeremiah 23:7-8).

Note: This prophecy is for the last days and has not yet been fulfilled in its fullness. At the end of Messiah’s first coming the temple was destroyed (AD 70) and the Jewish people once again went into exile – this exile was not limited to one country (Egypt, Babylon etc) but this exile was to the four corners of the earth. This regathering only began in earnest less than 80 years ago after a 2000 year ‘radio silence’.

Chapter 12

Verse 1: “*And in that day you shall say: ‘I will give thanks to the Lord, for You have been angry with me but You have turned from Your anger, and I have been comforted.’*”

In that day: Judgment Day. For God’s New Covenant people this is going to be a glorious day that will bring about great joy.

Turned from: God’s anger has been removed from them.

Comforted: This word in Hebrew is the root word used in Capernaum – ‘village of comfort’. Many of the sages of old say that this word usually appears within a Messianic context. It is through God’s comfort that His people receive salvation (Yeshua).

Verse 2: “*Behold, God You are my salvation. I will trust and be not afraid. For my strength and my song is YAH, the Lord has become for me salvation.*”

YAH: This is an abbreviation of the sacred name of God (YHWH).

The Lord has become for me salvation: God Himself, through Messiah the Son of God, has saved His people.

Verse 3: “*And you will draw water with joy from the wells of salvation.*”

You will draw water with joy: This testifies to the individual responding to this message of salvation.

Verse 4: “*And you will say in that day: ‘Give thanks to the Lord, proclaim His name, make known among the peoples His works. Make mention that His name is exalted.’*”

You: Written in the plural – referring to Israel.

In that day: Repetition emphasises.

Make known among the peoples His works: In that last moment Israel is going to be used to bring a remnant of the Gentiles to faith (Zechariah 14:16).

At the end, the nations are going to go up to Jerusalem for war. A remnant (small number) of these is going to see God's faithfulness to Israel and they are going to come to salvation. *Make mention:* This comes from a Hebrew word that means to remember.

Verse 5: *"Sing to the Lord, for He has done excellent things; This is known in all the earth."*

Verse 6: *"Be joyful and shout, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel."*

Chapter 13

God's judgment in prophecy, for the most part, affects the nations around Israel. Israel herself will also experience judgment, but in the last days God will move in a unique way to bring about salvation to the remnant of the sons and daughters of Jacob – the Jewish people. Most scholars agree that God's judgment in prophecy should be understood as a dual fulfilment. This means that some of the prophecies in Isaiah were fulfilled in and around Isaiah's day, but their fulfilment was a paradigm or a foreshadowing of the judgment that is going to take place in the last days. Within this chapter there are numerous references that, by and large, tell us that this is talking about a last day fulfilment. It is important for us to understand this, as it helps to lay a foundation for us to be better able to discern those clues and be able to apply them in other prophecies that we encounter.

Verse 1: *"The burden against Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw."*

Burden: This was a judgment that was placed upon the people. It is a proclamation that will be put into action.

Babylon: The empire/nation that took Judah (the southern kingdom) captive – placing them in exile for 70 years. God used Nebuchadnezzar as an instrument of His judgment (because He was displeased with Judah's lack of justice and righteousness), but Nebuchadnezzar was not a wilful servant of God. Isaiah and Jeremiah inform us, in very clear terms, that the king of the Babylonians – Nebuchadnezzar - was not acting in obedience to God when he did this, but he was acting according to his sinful nature. This is the reason why God brought His judgment upon them. In the book of Revelation, Babylon is used symbolically for an Empire who wants to take God's people captive. It symbolises a nation who disagrees with the purposes of God. It is in conflict with the will of God. In Revelation, Babylon symbolises the final empire – the antichrist empire – that God will destroy.

Saw: Isaiah received a vision of this.

Verse 2: *"Upon a high mountain lift up a banner, raise your voice to them and wave your hand, bring them to the gates of the nobles."*

High: The Hebrew word used here is the word 'bare'. This is referring to a mountain whose peaks are higher than the treeline and the peaks are therefore bare. Trees do not grow above a treeline because of high altitude. Prophetically a mountain that is high up is referring to a very strong government. Babylon was that. It was a powerful empire, but God was going to bring change upon it.

Banner: (דָּבָר): This is a word that repeats frequently in the Bible, and it is a word that has great significance. It is a word that relates to that which is miraculous, but it is also a word referring to a banner or a pole which had a message/proclamation attached to it. Often a victorious army returning from battle would carry a banner. This army would fly a banner over their captives – announcing that their enemies were defeated and in submission to them. This word should always cause us to pay attention.

Them: Referring to the defeated Babylonians.

Nobles: Someone who, in a literal sense, is generous or volunteering. In this case it is speaking about those of a noble quality. 'Noble' implies wealth. These nobles had both the time and the resources to make donations. These defeated enemies were marched through the gates that were usually reserved for the noblemen.

Verse 3: *"I have commanded My sanctified ones; I have also called My mighty ones for My anger – Those who rejoice in My Majesty."*

I: Referring to God.

Sanctified: Those who have been made holy. Holiness is related to purpose. These individuals have been set apart for the purpose of God.

My sanctified ones... My mighty ones: Possibly referring to God's heavenly hosts/armies who are going to be the ones to execute His anger (eg Revelation 8 and 9). God's end time judgment is not going to come through human means. It will be a heavenly judgment that comes to earth through supernatural means.

Those who rejoice in My Majesty: Those who praise and exalt God. These angels praise and magnify God, and they are the ones who have been set apart and who are going to be used to execute God's judgment on the world.

Verse 4: *"The voice of a multitude upon the mountains, like that of many people! A tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of the nations gathered together. The Lord of hosts musters the army for battle."*

Voice: A great noise. A large sound.

Multitude: An abundance of people

Mountains: Other governments and authorities. Although this judgment is primarily upon Babylon, it has implications for not only the Babylonian Empire but for other empires or seats of government as well.

Gathered together: The nations are being assembled, gathering together. This verse implies that they are not assembling themselves, but the implication is that God is causing them to come together.

The Lord of hosts musters the army for battle: This is something that has implication beyond Babylon. Some would say that the Lord is bringing the nations to judge Babylon. Historically we know that the Medes and the Persians did gather against Babylon to battle against and defeat them. Although this took place in the past, it foreshadows what is going to be yet in the future – in the last days.

Verse 5: *“They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, the Lord and His vessels of wrath, to terrorise the whole land.”*

They come: Referring to these armies – both natural armies (*far country*) and heavenly armies (*from the end of heaven*).

Terrorise: To bring about destruction or harm. This is a word used in the New Testament (Revelation 7:2) to announce the wrath of God in the last days. This word talks about Divine retribution.

Whole land: Most scholars interpret this to have a broader meaning than just one land. They interpret it to mean the whole earth.

Verse 6: *“Howl, the Day of the Lord is near. It will come as destruction from the Almighty.”*

Howl: This is a word for lamenting. It is a word that expresses great sorrow and, oftentimes, great pain as well. It is written here as a commandment.

The Day of the Lord: This is the clearest textual evidence that this is referring to the last days.

Almighty: (El) Shaddai. It is a term that refers to God as the One who is enough. The God who is sufficient. The God who is Mighty.

Verse 7: *“Therefore every hand will let go, every man’s heart will melt.”*

Every hand will let go: We all cling to things – to sin, to what we want etc. When God’s judgment comes, no one will be able to hold on to anything. Letting go implies giving up. It implies defeat.

Verse 8: *“And they will be greatly afraid; pangs and sorrows will take hold of them; pain will seize them as a woman in childbirth; A man to his neighbour will be amazed at this; their faces will be like flames.”*

Pain... as a woman in childbirth: Their pain will be extreme.

A man to his neighbour: This is an inclusive phrase and means ‘everyone’, there will be no exceptions.

Amazed: Shocked

Their faces will be like flames: When a person is being consumed by flames the expression on his face is one of pure agony and terror. That is what this phrase is implying.

Verse 9: *“Behold, the Day of the Lord comes; Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger. To lay the land desolate; and He will destroy its sinners from it.”*

Behold: A word that reminds us of the importance of paying attention. What follows the command to ‘behold’ is always of great significance.

Lay the land desolate: The earth will be given over to destruction.

Destroy its sinners: The sinners on earth are going to be destroyed and removed from earth. This is very reminiscent of what God is going to do in the last days.

Verse 10: *“For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give forth their light. The sun, when it goes forth, will have darkness and the moon will not bring forth its light.”*

Note: Here we have three expressions of the darkness that is going to come upon this world. Yeshua, in Matthew 24:29-31 and Luke 21:25-28, alluded to these things as last day signs.

Verse 11: *“I will visit upon the world for its evil, and upon the wicked ones for their sins; I will humble the pride of the terrible.”*

Visit: This word can be translated in many different ways. It can mean to deposit something (for example, depositing a check in the bank). It can also be a word for God acting in a way to redeem something. Alternatively, it can also be a word for God’s vengeance or punishment. In this case it is using the term as a description of retribution.

Humble: To bring low.

Terrible: The tyrants. Those who sin intentionally. This means that they understood what they were doing, and after considering the implications they decided to do it anyway – despite knowing that it was wrong.

Verse 12: *“I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold, a man more than the gold of Ophir.”*

Rare: Precious. Not a lot of it. Humanity is going to become rare. God’s judgment is going to empty the earth (Revelation 8:11, Revelation 9:18, Revelation 11:13 etc)

The gold of Ophir: According to the commentators Ophir had a very fine, rare and precious gold.

Verse 13: *“Therefore the heavens they will shake, and the earth will move out of her place. In the wrath of the Lord of hosts and in the day of His fierce anger.”*

Shake: When people are extremely angry they shake. The word being used here gives us a picture of the intensity of God’s anger.

Note: This verse also places this chapter in a last day context. This prophecy has not yet been fulfilled.

Verse 14: *“And it shall come about that the deer will be driven, and as a sheep that no man gathers up: every man will turn to his own people, and everyone will flee to his own land.”*

The deer will be driven: When a deer is frightened it begins to run.

A sheep that no man gathers up: These sheep do not have the protection of a shepherd. As a result, they are vulnerable and will have no defense when God’s judgment comes.

Everyone will flee to his own land: The coming of God’s judgment causes them to fear and to go back to the place where they feel least vulnerable.

Verse 15: *“Everyone who is found will be pierced, and all the ones who are captured will fall by the sword.”*

Pierced: Stabbed, thrust through.

Verse 16: *“Their children will be crushed and torn to pieces before their eyes; their houses will be plundered, and their wives ravished.”*

Children: This is a word used for a very young child.

Ravished: Humiliated.

Verse 17: *“Behold, I am stirring up upon them the Medes, who will not regard silver, and as for gold they will not delight in it.”*

I am stirring up: God was doing this.

The Medes: This is the only reference that part of this time of trouble was also applicable to the time of Isaiah (or slightly thereafter).

Will not regard silver, and as for gold they will not delight in it: The Medes were not interested in plunder or in being bribed. They were wrathful and wanted bloodshed – human destruction.

Verse 18: *“Their bows will dash the young men to pieces, and they will have no pity on the fruit of the womb. Their eye will not spare children.”*

Note: These people are going to deal in a very barbaric and cruel way toward other people. Their sole purpose will be to cause pain, suffering and death on others.

Verse 19: *“And it shall come about that Babylon, the beautiful one of the nations, the splendor and the majesty of the Chaldeans, will be as when God overturned Sodom and Gomorrah.”*

As when God overturned Sodom and Gomorrah: Sodom and Gomorrah were not defeated through human means. Fire came down upon them and brought about their destruction. This verse is referencing a supernatural event. God’s end days wrath will not be able to be explained scientifically.

Verse 20: *“It will never be settled again, nor will there be any more dwellers from generation to generation. The Arab will not pitch a tent there, and the shepherds will not cause their flocks to lie down there.”*

Note: This verse was not fulfilled in the time of the Medes and the Persians. Babylon was still inhabited after they had conquered it. The impression is that this verse is alluding to eternal judgment.

Verse 21: “*But shall lay down there the desert animals, and their houses will be full of owls; ostriches will dwell there, and wild goats will dance there.*”

Desert animals...owls...ostriches...wild goats: This is not a place inhabited by humans. It was going to become a place that the wild animals took over.

Wild goats will dance: The animals are going to be happy with the destruction that takes place there.

Verse 22: “*The (hyenas) will howl in their palaces, and jackals in their sanctuaries of delight. For the time is close to coming and they days they will not continue.*”

Palaces: Luxurious buildings

The time is close to coming and they days they will not continue: This time of Babylon’s destruction will not be a long, drawn-out process. When God’s judgment falls on Babylon it is going to be sudden (Revelation 18:9-10, 17-18).

Chapter 14

Part 1: Isaiah 14:1-15

The Bible makes it very clear that God keeps covenant with His people. He is faithful to His promises. This should give us great comfort.

In this chapter we are encouraged to see the bigger picture. The defeat of satan is mentioned, and this lets us know that this prophecy did not only have implications in Isaiah’s days, but it also has a last day/end time application.

Verse 1: “*The Lord will be merciful to Jacob, and will again choose Israel, and settle them in their own land. The proselytes will be joined with them, and they will be annexed to the house of Jacob.*”

Lord: YHWH

The Lord will be merciful to Jacob: God affirmed, through Isaiah, that He plans on being merciful, in the future, to Jacob – the Jewish people.

Note: This verse is poetic and displays parallelism. God’s mercy is parallel to God’s choosing. Jacob is parallel to Israel. God’s choice is not rooted in Israel’s merit. Israel cannot demand that God be merciful to them. Israel cannot demand that God chooses them again. God is merciful to them based on His covenantal promises and commitment to Abraham – Romans 11:28-29. If God reneged on His Old Covenant promises, what assurance would we have that He wouldn’t renege on His New Covenant ones?

Settle them in their own land: Israel, based on merit, does not deserve her own land. She is back in her own land because of God’s mercy and faithfulness.

Proselytes: Those who are not of the household of Jacob (i.e. they are not Jewish).

The proselytes will be joined with them: The Gentiles will play a role in restoring the Jewish people back to the land of Israel.

They (these Gentiles) will be annexed to the house of Jacob: When God is merciful to the Jewish people there is an outcome for the Gentiles. The Gentiles, in this case, are incorporated into the house of Jacob (Romans 11:17-18)

Verse 2: *“People will take them and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel will settle them for servants and maidservants in the land of the Lord, they shall be captors for those who had taken them captive, and rule over their oppressors.”*

People: Referring to the Gentiles or the nations.

Them: The people of Israel

Their place: In Isaiah 14:1 we were told that the land of Israel is their own land. Here it is emphasised that this land is theirs. And why theirs? Because God, time and time again, promised this land to the patriarchs (Genesis 12:7, Genesis 13:14-15)

The house of Israel will settle them...in the land of the Lord: There is a change. The land of Israel is now called the ‘land of the Lord’. The whole earth is the Lord’s (Psalm 24:1), but He chooses, through covenant, to give a portion of His land to the descendants of Jacob.

Settle them (these proselytes/Gentiles) for servants and maidservants: These Gentiles are going to recognize God’s call, purpose and plan with Israel, and they are going to support this, helping to bring God’s plans and purposes to fruition.

Captors for those who had taken them captive: Israel is going to take captive the nations that had held her captive.

Rule over their oppressors: Israel is going to rule over the nations who had taken her captive and who had oppressed her. She is not going to repay evil for evil and exploit these nations, but she is going to execute Godly righteousness and justice over them.

Oppressors: Cruel and barbaric taskmasters (for example: the slavedrivers in Egypt).

Verse 3: *“And it shall come to pass on the day that the Lord sets you that you will no longer be afflicted from the hard work in which you were enslaved.”*

Sets (you): Positions or places

Afflicted: Annoyed or bothered. This word could also be a word for fear.

Note: God is going to bring about a redemptive change in their lives – they are going to have a Kingdom experience.

The hard work in which you were enslaved: They had been forced to do this work. This verse is reminiscent of the change that happened in the book of Exodus. The people had been in bondage in Egypt, but God brought about redemption in their lives, and He led them out of bondage.

Verse 4: *“And you shall lift up this proverb concerning the king of Babylon, and you shall say how the taskmaster ceased, and how the arrogant ceased.”*

You will lift up: When this change occurs, they will speak a proverb.

Proverb: A short statement of wisdom that reveals important truth or principles to live by.

The king of Babylon: Referring to Nebuchadnezzar, but also a foreshadowing of the final antichrist empire.

Ceased: This is the same word used for Shabbat. Shabbat means to stop. It implies that there is a change – a Godly change, one that brings about intimacy between God and His people.

Arrogant: The word used here is a word that refers to one who is full of pride. It refers to those who delight in the pain and suffering of others.

Verse 5: *“The Lord will break the rod of the wicked ones and the staff of those who are rulers.”*

Break the rod of the wicked ones: Written in the plural. This is referring to all the nations who are under the unrighteous king – possibly a reference to the antichrist kingdom.

Rulers: Governors. Those who have a degree of authority, but who, in this context, misappropriate that authority.

Verse 6: *“The strike of the people is with wrath, it is a blow that is not removed. He is going to rule with anger the nations and they are going to be persecuted without restraint.”*

The strike of the people is with wrath: It is initially difficult to determine who is doing this striking. Within the context though (see Isaiah 14:7) we see that it is referring to God striking the people with His wrath.

A blow that is not removed: There are eternal implications to this judgment.

Verse 7: *“And quietness will rest over all the earth, and they will burst forth with a shout of joy.”*

Note: In this verse we are told the outcome of what happens after the wrath mentioned in Isaiah 14:6 comes...the outcome is peace and tranquility.

Quietness: Implies tranquility

Shout: They are going to be excited. They are going to be victorious.

Verse 8: *“Indeed the cypress trees will rejoice because of you, and the cedars of Lebanon, since you have been brought down and there has not gone up the one who chops us down anymore.”*

Cypress trees will rejoice: These trees rejoice because of what is going to happen to this one.
You: Second person singular. This is referring to the king of Babylon (but also foreshadowing the defeat/bringing down of the final antichrist and his empire).

Verse 9: *“Sheol underneath shakes concerning you, to meet your coming; and the souls of the dead rise up concerning you, all the rulers of the earth it has raised up from their thrones, all the kings of the nations.”*

Sheol: The place of the dead.

Sheol underneath shakes concerning you: Sheol is upset because it was loyal to satan. Now, the one in whom it put its trust is being cast down.

The souls of the dead: In modern Hebrew this is a word for ghosts.

The rulers of the earth: Those who got their power from satan.

Verse 10: *“They all shall speak and say to you: ‘Also you, like us, have been made sick. Unto us you are likened.’”*

Note: Sheol, and those in Sheol (hell), are upset because satan (as we see in the context) has been placed in an adverse condition – like they have been.

Sick: Being put in an adverse condition. The nations are going to be upset because the one that they trusted in (the antichrist and even satan himself) is going to meet the same fate as they did.

Verse 11: *“Brought down, Sheol, is your prideful one, and the sound of your harps; the maggot is spread over you and worms cover you.”*

Prideful one: The one who is full of pride (Daniel 7:11,25, Revelation 13:5) was brought down to Sheol – together with his stringed instruments – the worship of him came to nothing.

Maggot ... worms: This is a place of decay.

Note: This is imagery that is speaking of satan’s defeat and being bound in hell. Those who are already in hell are going to be remorseful because their leader was defeated and is suffering their same fate (Revelation 20:1-3, Revelation 20:7-10).

Verse 12: *“How you have fallen from the heavens, praised son of the morning. You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations.”*

Praised: The word used here is not the word ‘lucifer’. It is a word that has to do with praise. Satan is a created being, and he was given the assignment or task to praise God. Satan, however, rebelled against this.

Nations: Those who have no covenantal relationship with God through Messiah. They have rejected Messiah. This is why they are in the place of torment because to reject Messiah is a terrible decision. They believed satan’s lies and they are going to pay for this for eternity.

Verse 13: *“You have said in your heart: ‘The heavens I will go, up above the stars of God. I am going to lift up my throne, and I will sit in the mountain of the appointed time – on the farthest sides of the north.’”*

You have said in your heart: This is satan’s mindset.

Up above the stars of God: satan wanted to be higher than all the angels.

Mountain of the appointed time: This is the place where the children of Israel would go and worship God on the festival days – the appointed times (ie this is speaking of Jerusalem). satan wants to be the one worshipped in Jerusalem (this is a reference to the abomination of desolation – 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, Matthew 24:15-16, Daniel 9:27, Luke 21:20-22). The antichrist is going to demand worship at the time of the end. He will enter the Holy of holies in the temple in Jerusalem (yet to be built) and he will demand to be worshipped.

On the farthest sides of the north: In Leviticus 1:11 we see a very similar phrase. In Leviticus, this north side is a reference to the altar. satan (and this will be borne out by the actions of the final antichrist) desires sacrifices to be made to him in Jerusalem.

Verse 14: *“I will lift up upon the clouds, and I will be likened to El Elyon.”*

El Elyon: God Most High. satan did not want to praise, thank or serve God. satan wanted to be God.

Verse 15: *“But to Sheol you will be made to go down, to the farthest sides of the pit.”*

The farthest sides of the pit: This is a play on words. In Isaiah 14:13 satan’s desire was to be worshipped on the farthest sides of the north, instead now we see him being thrown into the farthest sides of the pit. satan’s plans are not going to succeed.

Chapter 14

Part 2: Isaiah 14:16-32

Verse 16: *“They see you and to you they observed and they speak: ‘This man caused the trembling of the earth, who shook kingdoms.’”*

You: Referring to satan or satan incarnate (ie the final antichrist)

They see you: They understood (satan’s defeat).

Observed: They paid close attention, close scrutiny, to this defeat.

Caused the trembling: He was the instrument that brought about fear and destruction.

Shook: The same word means ‘made a great noise’. It is also a word used in regard to an earthquake. Earthquakes shake and destroy.

Verse 17: *“For he set the world to be a desert and its cities he destroyed. His prisoners there will not be to open to them house.”*

Desert: A place of emptiness.

His prisoners there will not be to open to them house: Military terminology is used here.

Usually after a war ends, and the leader has been done away with (executed), the prisoners are set free and are allowed to return home – even though they might have supported that deposed leader and been a part of his empire. However, what this verse is telling us is that those who unwisely joined in and sided with the enemies of God will not have the opportunity to return home. They will never be free.

Verse 18: *“All the kings of the nations, all of them, have lied down with glory - a man in his house.”*

Lied down with glory: Evil leaders and good/successful leaders all enjoyed a degree of glory (significance) while they reigned.

House: This could simply mean a place of habitation but is most likely a reference to their graves (as borne out within the context of Isaiah 14:19).

Verse 19: *“But you will be cast from your grave as an abhorrent branch and as how dead ones are clothed having by stabbed by the sword, who go down to the stones of the pit, like a corpse trodden under foot.”*

You: Speaking of satan (and of satan incarnate – the final antichrist).

Cast from your grave: The antichrist, who carries out the plans of satan, is not going to have any glory in death whatsoever. Even evil leaders (like Stalin) have had massive tombs, but this final antichrist is not going to have any of that.

Abhorrent: A rotten, loathsome, abomination of a branch (the exact opposite of the true Branch – Isaiah 11:1).

Clothed having by stabbed by the sword: When a person is stabbed to death repeatedly his garments are sliced open in multiple places and are full of blood. This is the image being portrayed here. There is no glory in these garments, only shame.

Corpse: Dead person

Trodden under foot: An image depicting defeat. Satan, the antichrist and those who have joined with them are going to be cast into the pit, the lake of fire. This lake burns with fire, brimstone and sulphur forever (Revelation 19:20, Isaiah 66:24). Eternal death.

Verse 20: *“You will not be gathered with them in the grave, for your land you have corrupted and your people you have killed. The seed of evildoers shall never be named.”*

Your land you have corrupted and your people you have killed: Satan incarnate (the antichrist) is going to be judged because he was not a good steward of what was in his possession. God never gave the world to him, but he took it anyway. He was cast out of the heavens (‘handed over’) and instead of repenting (1 Corinthians 5:5) he carried on in his sin and arrogance.

Never be named: There will be no memory of them. They will not have a covenantal relationship with God. They have no hope or purpose other than continual and eternal destruction.

Verse 21: *“And it was prepared for their sons a slaughter on account of the iniquity of their forefathers. They will not rise up and inherit the land, and nor will they fill the face of the world with cities.”*

Cities: Growth has to do with prosperity. Isaiah is using a variety of different terms in order to say that they have no future. They will not achieve anything from an eternal standpoint. They will be cut off and no one will remember them, but they will be spending eternity in the condemnation, wrath and eternal judgment of God.

Verse 22: *“‘I will rise up upon them,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘And I will cut from Babylon a name and a remnant and great grandchildren and grandchildren.’*

Babylon: In the book of Revelation (see Revelation 17 and 18), Babylon is the name used symbolically for the antichrist empire – the final world empire. The first Babylon wanted to take control of Israel for its own purposes. That first Babylon was eventually punished and destroyed. In the same way that the first Babylon did not achieve its purposes and was destroyed, so too will the second (and final) Babylon suffer the same fate and will be destroyed eternally.

Great grandchildren and grandchildren: In English we would say ‘grandchildren and great grandchildren’, but in this verse the order has been flipped.

Verse 23: *“I will set it for an inheritance for the porcupine, and marshes of muddy water; I will sweep it with the broom of destruction,’says the Lord of hosts.”*

Porcupine: Some Bibles translate this word as ‘owl’. Modern Hebrew would call it a porcupine. Either way, it is an animal that serves no great purpose. The place of the antichrist will serve no purpose from God’s point of view. It will not be a place of substance.

Marshes of muddy water: Biblically, water is also a form of judgment.

Lord of hosts: Lord of the armies. This name of God speaks about God within the context of judgment.

Verse 24: *“The Lord of hosts swore saying, ‘Is it not just as I imagined it, thus it was? Just like I counselled it was established.*

Note: Before Babylon came into being, the enemy of (especially) the Northern Kingdom of Israel was Assyria. Assyria also threatened Judah (the southern kingdom), but it was hindered in carrying out its plan regarding Judah. Assyria’s lack of successfulness should remind us that neither will the antichrist empire be successful.

Is it not just as I imagined it, thus it was: From our vantage point in history, we are able to look back and see (and tell others) that God was perfectly correct with His prophecies. Things have come about (and are coming about) exactly as He said that they would.

Verse 25: *“Assyria will be broken in My land, and on My mountains he will be trodden underfoot. Then his yoke shall be removed from them, and his burden removed from their shoulders.”*

Trodden underfoot: Defeated.

Them: Those who Assyria oppressed. He was not going to be successful over the ones that he wanted to enslave.

His burden removed from their shoulders: Although at the height of the Assyrian empire’s rule, it appeared to be seriously successful, in the longer term it did not accomplish its goals and it was ultimately defeated.

Verse 26: *“This is the Council which has been counseled concerning all the earth. And this is the hand that has been stretched out over all the nations.”*

The Council which has been counseled concerning all the earth: This message is for everyone so that no one should be deceived. Satan is defeated.

Hand: Authority or power. God is moving. His power and authority will bring this all about and it will affect all of His creation – all the earth, all the nations.

Verse 27: *“For the Lord of hosts He will counsel, and who is able to thwart this? His hand is stretched out, and who is able to return it?”*

Thwart: Make void

Who is able to return it: Once God has determined that He is going to do something there is no going back. We cannot change the purposes of God. We cannot change the activity of God. Once God says ‘yes’ to something it is only a matter of time until it is fulfilled.

Was God right about Assyria? Yes, He was! Is He right concerning the defeat of the great enemy, satan? Yes, He is!

Verse 28: *“In the year of the death of King Ahaz came about this (prophetic) burden.”*

King Ahaz: He was the king (as we saw in Isaiah 7) who refused the opportunity to receive counsel and confirmation from God. He did not trust God, and therefore he did not open himself up to receiving revelation from God. Ahaz died in disbelief.

Burden: It was a burden because it was a prophecy of much destruction (even though, in the end, God was going to be victorious).

Verse 29: *“Do not rejoice, all you of Philistia, because the rod that struck you is broken. For from the root of this serpent will come a viper, and its fruit will be a fiery flying snake.”*

Philistia: The Philistines. This word is used for an ancient people, but also for a future people – signifying a judgment that was, and a judgment that will be.

Do not rejoice... because the rod that struck you is broken: God is commanding them to not be joyful about the fact that Assyria (the rod that also struck them) was defeated. Assyria’s defeat was not going to bring them permanent relief, as God was also going to judge them.

This serpent: God is referring to Assyria.

Viper: Something more deadly was going to take Assyria’s place.

Fruit: The viper’s descendant or offspring will be even more deadly. There is a worsening progression of enemies against Philistia.

Flying: Usually implies something supernatural. This is a fiery, supernatural enemy.

Verse 30: *“The firstborn of the poor will be fed, and the destitute will lie down in safety; I will kill with famine your root, and your remnant will be killed.”*

The poor will be fed, and the destitute will lie down in safety: When this fiery serpent is defeated the poor (those who have been impoverished by the enemy) and the destitute (needy) are going to be cared for.

Lie down in safety: The same root word is used in Psalm 23:2

I will kill with famine your root, and your remnant will be killed: Referring to the Philistines and their remnant.

Verse 31: *“Wail at the gate and scream O city. All you of Philistia will be melted; for from the north smoke will come, and no one will be missing in his appointed times.”*

Wail: Cry out

All you of Philistia: In the last days, all those who are descended from this people group/those who have the same spirit as those ancient Philistines are going to melt/dissolve.

North: In the Bible the ‘North’ is frequently spoken of as the place where judgment comes from (Jeremiah 1:13 -16, Jeremiah 50:3).

Smoke: Depicts judgment

No one will be missing in his appointed times: God has an appointed time for meting out His judgment. No one will be missing from this appointed time. All will be accounted for.

Verse 32: “*What answer will be given to the messengers of the nation? The Lord will establish Zion, and the afflicted ones of His people shall take shelter in it.*”

Note: This verse carries with it a great promise. The kings of the earth are going to afflict, but then the kings of the earth are going to be afflicted.

Will establish: The Lord will make/set a foundation.

Zion: This is a Kingdom word. God is going to establish His Kingdom on this current earth (for a certain period of time), before there is a final transition from this earth into the age to come (the new heavens and the new earth – Revelation 20:6, Revelation 21:1).

Chapter 15

When we have experienced salvation, through Messiah Yeshua, and we have received the baptism/infilling of the Holy Spirit, we desire to live lives that are praiseworthy before God. When God teaches us or commands us to do something we have a desire to do it, we have a desire to obey. As we mature spiritually, we desire, more and more, to submit to God’s will – knowing it and walking in it. To know God’s will, we need discernment. The Holy Spirit does give us discernment (John 14:26), but we also receive discernment through reading the Word of God.

Prophecy is a catalyst for preparation. It helps the man/woman of God to prepare themselves for the future. Prophecy helps us to understand what the expectation of God is. Prophecy helps us to discern the movement of God, which, in turn, allows us to participate in His purposes. Deception or disobedience can hinder us from participating in His purposes.

In the next couple of chapters, Isaiah prophesies concerning judgment. This judgment is falling upon nations, peoples, areas, cities and individuals who do not want the things of God.

One of the nations that are going to experience the judgment of God are the Moabites. This nation came about through the incestuous union between Lot and his daughter (Genesis 19:30-38). Lot’s daughters saw an inadequacy in the things of God. Their misperception caused them to take things into their own hands. They acted without revelation and without instruction from God. Moab had a very ungodly origin, and that ungodly origin manifested itself in disobedience. When the children of Israel wanted to enter into the Promised Land, Moab did not assist them but instead wanted to destroy them (see Numbers 22-25). The Moabites taught and led the Israelites into idolatry (incest). Moab was a nation that was involved in idolatry for the sake of material gains (profit) – Jude 1:11, 2 Peter 2:15, Revelation 2:14. Balak hired Balaam to be a stumbling block to the Israelite people.

Verse 1: “*The burden against Moab. In a night Ar of Moab is laid waste and destroyed. In a night Kir of Moab is laid waste and destroyed.*”

Burden: This word means to ‘lift up and to place on another.’ The purpose of this is to place stress, anxiety or pressure on someone else in order to bring either destruction or repentance to them. Most of Moab walked on the path of destruction, but a remnant of them repented, forsook idolatry and embraced the God of Israel (eg: Ruth).

In a night: This is going to happen swiftly.

Ar of Moab...Kir of Moab: Cities in Moab

Laid waste and destroyed: The cities in Moab are going to be stripped bare and all their assets are going to be removed. These cities are going to be made silent and still – there will be no signs of life.

Verse 2: *“He has gone up to the temple and Dibon, To the high places to weep. Moab will weep over Nebo and over Medeba; on all their heads will be baldness, and every beard will be cut off.”*

Temple: This is not referring to the temple in Jerusalem but is referring to a pagan shrine.

Dibon: Some scholars believe that this was the capital city of Moab – their city that housed their high places of worship and idolatry.

Moab will weep: They are not weeping because they are repenting. They are weeping because they have been defeated.

Nebo: Deuteronomy 34:1-8, Jude 1:9. When Moses died on Mount Nebo, Satan was unsuccessful in retrieving his body from Michael the archangel. Satan was not allowed (then) to hinder the purposes of God on this mountain, and nor will he be allowed to hinder them in the future.

Medeba: Another important and strategic place in the kingdom of Moab.

Heads: This could mean upon their leaders or upon their high/chief places.

Baldness: Biblically this is associated with shame.

Verse 3: *“In their streets they gird themselves with sackcloth; on the rooftops of their houses and in their squares, everyone will wail, weeping bitterly.”*

Gird themselves with sackcloth: A sign of death and mourning.

Squares: Their main city streets.

Weeping bitterly: They will experience great remorse due to the fact that they had been defeated.

Verse 4: *“Heshbon and Elealeh will cry out, their shout shall be heard as far as Jahaz; therefore, the armed soldiers of Moab will cry out; his soul will be burdensome to him.”*

Heshbon and Elealeh...Jahaz: Key places within the kingdom of Moab

Shout: This is a loud cry, like a scream. It is a word used to depict suffering and remorse – however, it is not a Godly remorse but a regret for having to face judgment.

The armed soldiers of Moab: These were the battle-hardened, best, warriors on the frontline.

Verse 5: *“My heart will cry out for Moab; his fugitives shall flee to Zoar, like a three-year-old heifer. For by the ascent of Luhith they will go up with weeping; for in the way of Horonaim they will raise up a cry of destruction.”*

My heart: Referring to anyone who sees this destruction happening in Moab. Hearts will be grieved for the destruction that Moab is experiencing.

His fugitives shall flee to Zoar: When Lot and his daughters fled from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, they asked to flee to this small city called Zoar (Genesis 19:19-23). God spared this city for their sakes.

A three-year-old heifer: This was a prime time to slaughter a calf. The imagery being employed here is that Moab, in the prime of her empire, was going to be taken down, quickly destroyed.

They will raise up a cry of destruction: They proclaim peace, but then sudden destruction overtakes them. This same terminology is used in 1 Thessalonians 5:3.

Verse 6: *“For the waters of Nimrim will be desolate. For will dry up the grass, also all of the lush grass and the wild grass, there is nothing green.”*

The waters of Nimrim will be desolate: The water supply will be destroyed.

Wild grass: Prairie grass. This grass is usually higher, hardier and stronger than the lush grass that we get on a lawn. Even this grass is going to wither due to a lack of water.

Verse 7: *“Therefore the abundance they have gained, and what they have laid up, will be lifted up upon the river of Arabim.”*

What they have laid up: What they stored away for difficult times (food, weapons etc).

Lifted up: Taken away, removed in order to be destroyed. This is God’s judgment and an expression of His wrath.

Verse 8: *“For screaming will surround the border of Moab, Its wailing to Eglaim, and its wailing to Beer Elim.”*

Screaming will surround the border of Moab: When people stand on the border of Moab, and see the judgment of God falling on her, it is going to cause them to cry out because they are witnessing a terrible thing. This terrible thing though is, however, serving its right purpose – judgment expresses God’s righteousness.

Verse 9: *“For the waters of Dimon will be full of blood, for I will place upon Dimon more judgment, a lion upon the refugee who escapes from Moab, and on the remnant of the land.”*

The refugee: Those who are escaping or fleeing.

A lion upon the refugee...and on the remnant of the land: No one will escape from Moab, and no one will remain in the land of Moab. Destruction has been decreed for the people who fall into either scenario. Moab is a warning to us. We must not be those who stand in opposition to God's purposes.

Chapter 16

When we have sinned, it is wise for us to acknowledge our sin. And not only to acknowledge our sin, but to be quick to seek mercy, forgiveness and the grace of God. True repentance involves remorse and regret for having done the sinful deed in the first place (not remorse and regret that we have been found out and are going to experience consequences). In this chapter, God's judgment that is placed upon Moab (the state of Jordan today – east of Israel) is so severe that even Isaiah is moved and grieved by it. Although this was partially fulfilled in the days around Isaiah's time, we need to remember that that partial fulfillment was a foreshadowing of what is going to take place in the last days when God pours His wrath out on the enemies of Israel.

Verse 1: *“Send forth the fattened sheep, O ruler of the land, From Sela to the wilderness, unto the mountain of the daughter of Zion.”*

Send forth: A call to send tribute.

Fattened sheep: A sheep that is ready to be sacrificed.

Send forth the fattened sheep: God is giving the people of Moab an opportunity to repent. Unfortunately, Moab, for the most part, are going to reject this. They are not going to submit to this instruction, to worship the God of Israel, and nor are they going to offer up a choice sacrifice to Him.

Ruler: Governor. Someone who has power and authority in a land.

The land: Referring to the land of Moab. The ruler of Moab is being instructed to offer up or to send tribute. God was angry with Moab because they made life difficult for the children of Israel (see Deuteronomy 23:3-6). Moab knew about all the miraculous things that God had done for the children of Israel when He brought them out of Egypt, but they were neither convicted by the truth of God (that He was with and was leading the children of Israel) and nor did they respond in obedience to the revelation of God – that His hand was upon His people. Moab stood in opposition to the will of God.

Sela: A location in Moab.

The mountain of the daughter of Zion: Speaking of Jerusalem

Daughter of Zion: Possibly a prophetic term that relates to Jerusalem at the time of the end. The term 'Zion' places this in an end time/last day context.

Verse 2: *“For it shall be as a wandering bird thrown out of the nest; so shall be the daughters of Moab at the passageway of the Arnon.”*

It shall be: Moab is not going to accept God's offer to repent and so they are going to suffer the consequences of that rejection.

Wandering: Because Moab does not submit to the instruction of God, because they will not recognize the God of Israel, they are going to be like a confused bird that is trying to get to a specific location (migrate), but they do not have the knowledge of how to do it.

Thrown out of the nest: This is not speaking of a young bird learning to fly, but this is an image of being thrown out of the nest due to being rejected.

So shall be the daughters of Moab: The daughters of Moab are going to be rejected forever because of their persistent faithlessness.

The passageway of the Arnon: The Arnon was a river on the southern border of Moab. The majority of the Moabites are fleeing southwards (toward Egypt – the wrong location) instead of trying to find security in the God of Israel or with the people of Israel.

Verse 3: *“Bring counsel, make justice; and I will place as the night your shadow in the midst of the noontime; Hide the outcasts, do not betray him who escapes.”*

Note: This verse is a call to the Jewish people in the last days to be different. They are not to return evil for evil, but they are to receive the sojourner – those who are looking for refuge. God has been gracious to us; therefore we should afford grace to others.

Bring counsel: Reflecting upon the instruction of God and then demonstrating that truth and wisdom (ie: putting God’s counsel/instructions into action).

I will place as the night your shadow in the midst of the noontime: A shadow is dark, and it can hide or cover up what you do not want seen (as the darkness of night). In this context it is speaking of the exiles being able to hide in the darkness of their shadow, to be safe – even in the middle of the day. God is instructing Israel to be a shelter to those who have fled to them for safety. This is in contrast to what Israel’s enemies did to them. Instead of providing shelter for those who escaped from Babylon they cut them down and punished the Jewish refugees. God does not desire for His people to act in a tit-for-tat way.

Verse 4: *“Let the Moabite fugitives stay with you. Be a hiding place for them, because of the one that wants to plunder them. For the one who tramples they are going to come to an end, devastation ceases, the oppressors are consumed out of the land.”*

The one that wants to plunder them: This could mean that if the fugitives are not hidden or taken care of then the oppressor will wipe them out and none will survive when the destruction comes to an end.

Tramples: Treads upon others.

Note: This judgment is going to be vast, and it is going to be complete. The only safe place for the exiles of Moab to flee is to Israel. The timing of those who flee will be crucial. Once this judgment starts to fall, they will not be able to flee from Moab. They have to flee to Israel before this judgment falls. Those who wait until the end of the judgment are not going to survive, because the oppressor will oppress everyone.

Verse 5: *“A throne, with grace, is going to be established; and He will sit upon it in truth, in the tent of David, judging and seeking justice and hastening righteousness. “*

Note: This verse is the key verse to set this prophetic passage in a last day’s context. It speaks about a transition away from this world into the kingdom that Messiah Yeshua will rule over - His millennial kingdom.

Grace: Although some Bibles translate this word as ‘mercy’ a better way to translate it is with the word ‘grace’. ‘Grace’ is a word that speaks about God’s loving kindness/steadfast love, a loving kindness that is only available through accepting His covenantal offering – Messiah Yeshua.

He will sit upon it in truth, in the tent of David: At the time of this prophecy, David was already deceased.

When the term 'David' is used, after the death of King David, it then becomes a hermeneutical aid that assists us in realizing that we're speaking about the Son of David – the Messiah.

Verse 6: *"We have heard about this intelligent one of Moab – he has great pride and intelligence – and his wrath it will not be, thus his lies.*

We have heard: Speaking about the leader of Moab.

Intelligent: Referring to a worldly intelligence. This intelligence can very quickly lead to pride. Grammatically, in Hebrew, there is a close relationship between the word for 'intelligence' and the word for 'pride'. This pride and intelligence of the king of Moab are not utilised in the truth of God, but in the ways of the world. This is going to lead to him becoming a recipient of the wrath of God.

Great pride and intelligence: He uses his intelligence for a selfish purpose.

His lies: He believes he can deceive others. He may deceive many, but he is not going to deceive God. Therefore, for this pride and deceit, God's judgment will come upon this nation. Isaiah's prophecy warns the people to flee from Moab before this judgment falls.

Verse 7: *"Therefore Moab will howl for Moab, all of her is going to howl, unto the very foundations of Kir Hareseth they will mourn; surely they will be broken."*

Therefore: Because of this judgment that is coming.

Howl: This is a lamentation, an expression of grief.

Moab will howl for Moab: They will be grieved because of what is happening to themselves individually, but also because of what is happening to them as a nation.

Kir Hareseth: Many scholars believe that this glorious and splendid city could have been the capital city of Moab. See 2 Kings 3:24-25. When King Jehoram placed judgment on Moab, he left this city's foundations intact. This city's stones remained in place – even though the people were cut down. In this prophecy this will not be the case – all of this city will be destroyed – not even its foundations will be spared.

They will mourn...they will be broken: There will be a total annihilation that takes place in this place, and this is going to cause great grief.

They: All the inhabitants or residents of Moab.

Verse 8: *"For the fields of Heshbon will be miserable, and the vine of Sibmah; the masters of the nations have struck down its choice vines, and they will arrive even to Jazer and they will wander in the wilderness. Her shoots are going to be abandoned, they will even pass to the sea."*

The fields ... will be miserable: Not only will the cities experience the judgment of God, but also the more rural areas – the fields and the lands.

Choice vines: The chief places (the very best places) in Moab will receive judgment.

Jazer: Another important city in Moab.

Her shoots: Her branches. This image alludes to Moab's future.

Abandoned: Left alone to decay. No one will care for her or pay any attention to her.

They will even pass to the sea: These branches/shoots are going to try to find help and assistance and they will go even as far as the sea.

The implication, however, is that this will not be a source of rejuvenation for them. Vines need pure water, not sea water. Even though these shoots make it to the sea they will receive no help or positive result from it.

Verse 9: "Therefore I will bewail the vine of Sibmah, I will cry with the weeping of Jazer; I will drench you with my tears, O Heshbon and Elealeh; for triumphant shouts have fallen silent over your summer fruits and your harvest."

I will cry: Isaiah was affected by this prophecy that he was given in regard to Moab. He responded in a physical and in an emotional way to this prophecy. He sees that God's judgment on Moab is going to be so complete and this grieves him.

Sibmah...Jazer...Heshbon and Elealeh: Chief cities in Moab.

Triumphant shouts have fallen silent: There is no joy in this harvest.

Summer fruits: When it is time to harvest the fruit some of it is good and so is taken off the tree immediately. However, not all of the fruit ripens at once, so some of the fruit is left on the trees for a longer period of time in order to ripen. The hope is that later on in the summer this fruit will mature and will be able to be harvested. This verse tells us that this hope is not going to be fulfilled – this harvest is not going to end with shouts of joy.

Verse 10: "The gladness will be gathered up, and the joy from Karmel; in the vineyards there will not be a shout of joy, nor will there be singing in the wineries. No treaders will tread out wine in their presses; I have made their shouting cease."

Karmel: Karmel was a choice piece of land (a 'plentiful' land).

Nor will there be singing in the wineries: Usually when the winery is full of wine the people rejoice. This is not going to be the case here.

Treaders: The people who step/tread on the grapes to get the juice out of them.

Cease: This word is the same root of the word for "Shabbat". It is a word that is associated with a stopping. There is no longer a harvest in Moab. Nothing good is coming out of it.

Verse 11: "Therefore my intestines shall resound like a harp for Moab, and my inner being for Kir Heres."

My intestines shall resound ... and my inner being: Isaiah sees the vision concerning Moab and it grieves him. He knew that Israel had been called to be a blessing and a light to the nations (Genesis 12:3), but Israel had not been obedient to this call and nor had they been a light to the nations. As a result, the nations were going to be destroyed.

Intestines: The inner part of his stomach, his bowels. It is used poetically to describe that sinking feeling we get in the pit of our stomach when we are grieved or upset about something. It is also used as an expression for being moved to have mercy or compassion on someone (Matthew 9:36).

Resound like a harp: It is like a dirge being played.

Note: Isaiah's sadness does not mean that he is disagreeing with God. Isaiah acknowledges that God demands justice and righteousness and that His consuming wrath is appropriate. However, Isaiah is never-the-less grieved because of the destruction of life and land. If there had been repentance this could have been avoided.

Verse 12: “*And it will come about that Moab is weary because they went to the high place, They came to his sanctuary to pray; but they will not prevail.*”

Weary: Moab had very little strength or power. They will have very little ability to respond differently.

The high place: The place of idolatry. Revelation 9:20 tells us that when God is pouring His judgment upon the nations, the one thing they would not repent from is their idolatry. This is what is happening here.

They came to his sanctuary to pray; but they were not able: Many scholars interpret this differently. A possible explanation is that they were wanting to come to this sanctuary (perhaps this is the sanctuary/temple in Jerusalem) but it was too late. The time for “sending the lamb” (Isaiah 16:1) has past, and now there is no more time left for sacrifice. An illustration of this would be someone who is defiant and rebellious and who is unwilling to change. However, when they are being led to the gallows/electric chair etc to experience the outcome of their unrighteousness they begin to cry and plead for forgiveness. By then it is too late.

They will not prevail: They are not going to prevail in this attempt to turn at the last minute, in the midst of God's wrath.

Verse 13: “*This is the word which the Lord has spoken to Moab since that time.*”

Note: The implication of this verse is that this is not new revelation. God has offered repentance. He has offered an invitation to Moab (and the nations) to join His people.

Verse 14: “*But now the Lord has spoken, saying: ‘In three years, as the years of a hired hand, the glory of Moab will be weakened with all that great multitude, and the remnant will be very small and she will not be mighty.’*”

Three: Biblically, the number three is the number for manifesting something.

The years of a hired hand: Culture can play an important role within a context Biblically, as in this case. Often, at that time, an individual would hire himself out to someone for three years. At the end of those three years, he would be free to go, but he would leave empty handed. During those three years he was simply sustained (receiving lodging and food) but he received no profit from his work. What this verse is implying is that there will be no profit for those who have adopted the Moabite mindset and philosophy (identity, idolatry etc) when this judgment is revealed.

The glory of Moab: This is an earthly, fading glory.

Weakened: Made light. Become insignificant. What we can learn from this is this: when we have the wrong identity (ie when we are not identified as a servant of the living God, as a disciple of Messiah Yeshua) everything in our life is going to be insignificant (Matthew 16:26).

All that great multitude: Her great wealth, her abundance, all she achieved etc will become insignificant in light of God's judgment.

The remnant: The few who God allows to remain.

She will not be mighty: This is not the word for ‘feeble’, although it implies a feebleness. Those who do not follow God will lack stability. Nothing that they do will endure.

Chapter 17

When we are committed to the things of God, when we have a pleasing testimony before Him and are doing His work, then we are going to be in a position whereby we can make good/wise decisions. When we reject God, unwise and poor decisions begin to bring about disaster in our lives.

Note: In this chapter we read about God's judgment that will fall on Damascus. The city of Damascus was one of the chief cities in that period of time. It was also one of the oldest and most significant cities.

We also read the harsh words that God spoke against Israel - specifically the northern kingdom of Israel. God spoke harshly against them because they chose to follow after false gods. They chose to be like the other nations. They turned away from Scriptural revelation, and, as a result, God's punishment was placed upon them – the purpose of this punishment was to bring them to repentance.

Verse 1: *"The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is removed from being a city, for she shall be a heap of falling."*

Burden: This is the same word that is used for a weight which brings stress, pressure, anxiety and punishment to a people.

Removed from being a city: She will no longer be a city but will be in an entirely different condition. God's judgment will render her unfit for human habitation. His judgment will bring about disaster for her. Instead of being a city of prominence she is going to be a place of shame. She will no longer be an ordered and well functioning city.

A heap of falling: She will be a heap of ruins. This is also the word used for 'intestines' – a mess of organs.

Verse 2: *"Abandoned are the cities of Aroer, flocks shall lie down there, and no one will make them afraid."*

Abandoned: No longer inhabited.

Aroer: This could be referring to a town that was a Moabite settlement on the north bank of the River Arnon to the east of the Dead Sea (in present-day Jordan) – Deuteronomy 2:36, 4:48, Judges 11:26. However, this word can also be a word for 'loneliness' or for being abandoned - having no activity, no fellowship or no social aspects attached to it.

Flocks: Herds – sheep, rams, ibexes etc. This will become a place of habitation for animals. Humans will no longer live there.

Lie down: They shall find rest there.

Verse 3: *"The stronghold of Ephraim is going to cease, the kingdom from Damascus and the remnant of Syria they will be as the glory of the children of Israel," says the Lord of hosts."*

Stronghold: Citadel, castle, a strong fortress. A place that often housed solidiers.

Stronghold of Ephraim...the kingdom from Damascus... the remnant of Syria: Israel (the Northern Kingdom) and these nations had formed an alliance (Isaiah 7:5).

Therefore, when these kingdoms suffered God's judgment so too did Ephraim (Israel -the 9 tribes plus a portion from the tribe of Levi).

Glory: Some of the ancient commentators point out that although this word means glory or honour from a human perspective it is a word that can also be related to wealth.

The children of Israel: Referring to the Northern kingdom of Israel

Note: What this may be speaking about is that the Northern kingdom (these children of Israel) made a poor decision when they joined with this alliance. They had joined it for the purpose of wealth (glory), but this wealth was going to be cut off from them.

Says the Lord: When God speaks there is an outcome. What He says will happen.

Verse 4: *"In that day it shall come to pass that the glory of Jacob will be impoverished, and the fatness of his flesh grow lean."*

Note: This judgment upon Israel came about because of what they agreed to with Damascus. Part of that agreement involved being against Judah. Israel lost sight of their call. They lost faithfulness to the Word of God. They ceased going to Jerusalem for the festivals that they had been commanded to celebrate there, and they ceased worshipping the God of Israel. Israel/Ephraim/Northern kingdom (whose capital was Samaria) was defeated by the Assyrians in 722BC.

In that day: This phrase should cause us to think about judgment. God's judgment in the past foreshadows His future judgment. His past judgments teach us about what to expect for His future judgment.

Glory: Referring to the honour or wealth.

Impoverished: Referring to those who have a meager number of resources. God's judgment is going to bring low the children of Israel.

Fatness of his flesh: They had had a lot of things – wealth, honour etc.

Grow lean: They are going to become thin. This confederacy is going to lead to them being lessened.

Verse 5: *"He will be as one that gathers the harvest from the stalk, and his arms as the ones of the harvester who takes the ears of the stalk; it shall be as the gleaning of the ears of grain as in the Valley of Rephaim."*

He: Referring to the northern tribes of Israel in the period just before their destruction.

Gathers the harvest from the stalk: When a plant (eg wheat) is harvested only the bare stalk remains. These northern tribes are going to become like the bare stalk.

As the ones of the harvester who takes the ears of the stalk: The harvester holds onto the head of the wheat only until he has cut it. Once it has been cut the harvester lets it fall to the ground. This image is personifying a time of plenty (when the harvester holds the grain in his hands), but this is going to come to end (when the harvester drops what he has harvested).

Valley of Rephaim: This is an area that is southwest of Jerusalem. It was a good land (Joshua 15:8, Joshua 18:16), however, because of the Philistines, it was uninhabited for many years – it was like a ghost town, an area that was abandoned.

Verse 6: *“And it will remain with him just the scraps, like the shaking of the olive tree, two or three olives at the top of the uttermost bough, four or five in its most fruitful branches,” says the Lord God of Israel.”*

Scraps: Their disobedience to God was going to result in their wealth and prosperity being taken away. They were going to be left with the scraps, the gleanings (the minimal leftovers after the harvest is complete).

The shaking of the olive tree: To get olives off the tree the tree had to be beaten and shaken. This is the imagery that is being used regarding these northern tribes of Israel. They were going to be beaten and shaken and all their good fruit would come tumbling down, to be enjoyed by others and not enjoyed by themselves.

The top of the uttermost bough...its most fruitful branches: The best places on the tree, the places where there should be the most fruitfulness, will only show a meagre yield. Very little will remain for these disobedient tribes once their judgment takes place. This judgment is going to leave them desolate.

Verse 7: *“In that day a man will look to his Maker, and his eyes will gaze upon the Holy One of Israel.”*

In that day: This phrase is repeated. Repetition shows emphasis.

A man will look to his Maker: In the last days, there is going to be a change.

A man will look ... his eyes will gaze: This verse reveals to us that God's judgment upon Israel is not for their eternal destruction but to bring them to repentance. After God's judgment He shows His mercy. This mercy is set within a last day's context. In the last days, God will remember the patriarchs. He will remember His promises. For the sake of His name, for a testimony of his faithfulness/mercy and compassion He will renew these promises in the last days (Romans 10-11, Zechariah 12:10-14).

Verse 8: *“He will no longer look to the altars, the work of his hands which he did with his fingers; nor the Asherah, nor the pillars that were erected in honour of the sun.”*

He will no longer look: There is going to be a change!

Altars: This word is written in the plural. This is a hermeneutical clue that tells us that this is not referring to the bronze altar or the incense altar found in the temple. Instead, this is referring to idolatry and the pagan altars associated with idolatry. The purpose of the time known as “Jacob's trouble” (Jeremiah 30:7) is to bring the last days Jewish people to repentance. This is a verse of hope and is a prophetic promise. In the last days there is going to be a change – Israel will no longer worship its idols, but they are going to turn to God.

The work of his hands: He created it for his purposes, for his idolatry. These things he created will no longer have any relevance for him.

Asherah...the pillars that were erected in honour of the sun: These are pagan gods.

Verse 9: *“On that day the cities of his stronghold will be abandoned as a woodland, the treetops are going to be abandoned as, from before (the time of) the children of Israel, they will be desolate.”*

On that day: This expression is repeated again.

Cities of his stronghold: Their fortified cities.

The cities of his stronghold will be abandoned: This judgment is going to be harsh. We understand the purpose of this judgment (for repentance), but this helps us to understand the severity of it. Even though it is going to have a good outcome, it is going to be a very thorough day (not necessarily a 24-hour day, but a 'day' refers to a specific allotment of time) of judgment (Matthew 24:15-22).

Woodland: A forest – a place unfit for human habitation.

Treetops: The chief/top or best places. When Israel went into the Promised land God caused Israel's enemies to be defeated or to flee. God then gave the Israelites the cities, the lands etc that had been inhabited by their Gentile enemies (Canaanites, Philistines etc). All of these good places, chief places, were going to be destroyed and become desolate in this time of judgment.

Verse 10: *"For you have forgotten the God of your salvation. The Rock of your power you have not remembered; You have planted pleasant trees, and foreign shoots you have planted."*

You have forgotten the God of your salvation: God made it very clear as to why He was sending His judgment on them. It was no secret. They did not remember the One who gives true prosperity, true salvation and victory.

Rock: 'Rock' can be thought of as a foundation. 'Rock' is also a word associated with Messiah. These people have forgotten their Messianic hope.

Note: Prophecy is poetic. One of the chief characteristics of Hebrew poetry is parallelism. Parallelism teaches us the relationship between things. Here we see that the 'God of Salvation' and the 'Rock of power' are related. The 'Rock' (Messiah) and 'God' being used in this parallel way shows that there is unity or oneness between God the Father and God the Son.

Remembered: A study of this word reveals that it is a word that is related to covenant (Deuteronomy 8:18-20)

Pleasant trees...foreign shoots: These foreign trees and seedlings were part of pagan worship (Deuteronomy 12:2). Instead of building up a kingdom rooted in the promises of God (the covenantal truth of God) they planted trees that were pleasant to them (Isaiah 1:29-30). Their own wants and desires (acting in a way that was pleasant to their flesh) led to idolatry.

Verse 11: *"In the day of your planting it flourished, and in the morning your seed blossomed, there was a mound for the harvest, but in the daytime it became sick – desperate sorrow."*

Flourished...blossomed: Their disobedience did not immediately lead to punishment. They were prosperous and successful for a season despite their idolatry.

A mound for the harvest: The harvest was great, it was abundant.

Sick: They thought they were doing so well and things looked so good, but in a moment that all changed. Their harvest became less, it waned, it became weak and pitiful.

Desperate sorrow: Human pain and suffering was the outcome.

Verse 12: *“Woe to the great multitude of many peoples. They are going to be making a noise like the roar of the seas, and to the rushing of nations that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters.”*

Note: Isaiah 17:12-13 is a depiction of the exile.

Woe: This is a word that is used to get our attention, but it is also a word that warns us about how awful something is going to be.

Making a noise: Humming: The noise made here is not the noise made for a song. This is speaking of a sound that is being made – a sound that sounds like the violent roaring or the humming sound of the sea. The Assyrians were going to come against the Northern kingdom like a great noise, a great disturbance, like the rushing of mighty waters.

Mighty waters: Strong waters

Verse 13: *“For the nations as the roar of many waters they will roar. He rebukes them and they will flee from afar and be chased like the chaff of the mountains before the wind, like tumbleweed before the tornado.”*

He rebukes them: God rebukes the Northern kingdom. This rebuke is going to cause them to flee to a distant land with their enemy pursuing after them.

Verse 14: *“In the time of the evening, behold, there is going to be fear. Before the morning there is not going to be. For this is the portion of the ones who loot, and the fate of our plunder.”*

Before the morning there is not going to be: Everything is going to be destroyed.

This is the portion of the ones who loot: The Northern kingdom was going to be looted. This was their fate/their portion/their lot due to their idolatry. When we are not faithful to God the outcome is destruction.

Chapter 18

God's judgment, in the last days, will bring about vindication and victory - deliverance for Israel. God's judgment, His wrath, manifests His glory and His righteousness (Psalm 19:9, Revelation 16:7).

Verse 1: *“Woe to the land with whirring wings, which is beyond the rivers of Cush.”*

Woe: Generally, this word speaks of something negative that is going to happen. It is a word that introduces judgment into a text.

Whirring: In Modern Hebrew this is the word used for a telephone ring. It is a noise that captures attention.

Wings: Many commentators point out that this area in Africa (Cush – which includes Ethiopia, and probably Sudan, Eritrea and surrounds in Northeastern Africa) has many rivers. Many insects, birds, grasshoppers, flies, locust plagues etc frequent these places due to the abundance of water. As a result, this sound of insect or bird wings is not uncommon in this area.

Beyond the rivers of Cush: This judgment includes Ethiopia, but it goes even beyond the borders of Ethiopia. Ethiopia is gifted with nine major rivers and twelve huge lakes.

Verse 2: *“Which sends ambassadors by sea, even in vessels of papyrus on the waters saying, ‘Go, swift messengers, to a nation lengthened and detailed, to a people awesome from their beginning onward, a nation powerful and treading down, who plunders rivers in its land.”*

Ambassadors: Historically this area of Cush represented a powerful people. At times the different tribes living in this land were brought under the leadership of one ruler and king. This made them a formidable threat in those days. Ambassadors are individuals that are sent forth from their nation to other nations for political purposes. They made announcements, relayed decrees and important information from the king or from the leadership of their country.

Vessels of papyrus (reed): These vessels were wooden boats that easily floated on the water.

Swift messengers: These ambassadors had a message to proclaim. They were light on their feet (ie They got their message out quickly).

Go, swift messengers, to a nation: Many commentators believe the nation being spoken of here is the nation of Israel.

Lengthened: This is not the word for ‘tall’ but is a word that has to do with being lengthened or dragged. This nation was called (drawn) for a specific purpose.

Detailed: This is also not the word for ‘smooth’ but is a word that means ‘detailed’. This nation had a call from God to be different, to be set apart, to be unique to God.

Awesome: This unique nation caused fear in the hearts of others. They were fearful to behold.

From their beginning onward: They are a nation who has a history.

Powerful: This is a word that has to do with a measuring line. Most scholars tell us that when this term is used it is a word that speaks about something that is measured, organised, detailed.

Treading down: This nation is detailed and organised. As a result, it can weigh up and defeat its opponents.

Plunders rivers: Rivers often give power to a nation. Even to this day some of the greatest cities are along rivers. Rivers allow for transportation. Rivers serve as a resource from many different perspectives. Rivers can often speak about a strong people. Israel was able to defeat stronger people than themselves in their land.

Verse 3: *“All of the dwellers of the world, the inhabitants of the earth, When He lifts up a banner on the mountains, you see it; When He blows a shofar, you hear it.”*

He lifts up a banner: This banner or proclamation (which is a sign of victory – defeating the enemies) is frequently related to Messiah. Messiah is the banner that is proclaimed. He is the One who gives us victory.

Mountains: Mountains speak of governments. When this banner is lifted up the governments will see it. It is going to be something that captures the attention of all nations.

Shofar: Ram’s horn or trumpet. This horn is uniquely related to Israel. When this ram’s horn sounds, Israel is once again going to hear (Matthew 13:15, Romans 11:8, Romans 11:25-27).

Hear: The word 'hear' is a word that demands a specific response. This foreshadows a change that is coming into the world.

Verse 4: *"For thus said the Lord unto me: 'I will be quiet, but I will look from My habitation. As the heat of brightness, like a cloud of dew in the heat of the harvest.'"*

Said...unto me: Isaiah the prophet received specific, personal revelation concerning this event. This revelation is what he is sharing with us.

I will be quiet: God was not going to immediately respond. This was not a prophecy for Isaiah's day, but it was for the future. God was going to look/notice, but He was not yet going to act.

Brightness: Clarity. It is a word that speaks of something being pure. When a day is very hot the heat burns up the clouds and the day is very bright and very clear. This is the image being portrayed here.

As the heat of brightness: God's perspective is perfect. He sees things clearly.

Like a cloud of dew in the heat of the harvest: People began to harvest their crops in the morning when it is cooler (there is a 'cloud of dew' still over an awakening land). This coolness was seen as a good thing. God is patient. He is not responding, but He is watching and waiting. At the right time, at the time of the harvest, something positive and desirable is going to happen. This is what this verse is communicating to us.

Verse 5: *"For before the harvest, at the end of the blossoming, at the time that the sour grape is ripe in the flower, He will cut off the sprigs with pruning shears and take them away and cut down the branches."*

Before the harvest: Something (a change) needs to take place in a plant before it is harvested. This change alludes to an image of repentance. If this change (repentance) does not occur, then that which did not change is going to be judged and removed.

The end of the blossoming: There is a process to harvesting produce. A tree first puts out its flowers (it blossoms). These flowers are meant to change into fruit. At the end of the blossoming/flowering (once the flower stage is completed) the expectation is fruitfulness. This fruit goes through a maturing process while still on the tree/vine etc. It takes time to ripen and to be ready for the harvest/fit for consumption. At harvest time, the fruit is sorted out according to whether it is good or bad. The good fruit is utilised, but the bad fruit is removed and tossed aside.

The sour grape: This fruit has matured poorly.

Cut off the sprigs...cut down the branches: The implication is that these ones did not produce good fruit. They are going to be cut down and thrown away. This speaks of a termination. After a thorough inspection of the fruit in the field, those fruits that were not pleasing become recipients of judgment.

Verse 6: *"They will be left together for the birds of the mountains and for the beasts of the earth. They are going to be sustenance for the birds of prey in the summer, and the beasts of the earth will winter on them."*

They: Referring to those who did not produce good or pleasing fruit.

Sustenance...in the summer, and ...winter: This informs us that this harvest yielded a lot of very bad fruit – enough bad fruit to nourish the birds and the beasts through summer and winter. The birds and beasts feasting is an idiom for judgment (1 Samuel 17:46).

Verse 7: “At that time a gift will be brought to the Lord of hosts, by a people lengthened and detailed, to a people awesome from their beginning onward, a nation powerful and treading down, who plunders rivers in its land – to the place of the Name of the Lord of hosts, To Mount Zion.”

At that time: Read within the context, this is a reference to the last days (the ‘days of Messiah’).

Gift: This is a unique word for ‘gift’ in the Scripture. Many people in Israel today are called by this name (Shai). It is also a word that has Messianic connotations (Genesis 49:10 – Shai-loh – “He whose it is”). This word (together with the word ‘Zion’) gives this passage a Messianic context and is referring to Messiah’s second coming.

At that time a gift will be brought to the Lord of hosts: God’s judgment is going to bring about obedience for the remnant of the nations [those within the nations who survive the wrath of God (trumpet and bowl judgments spoken of in Revelation 8,9, 11:15-19, 16)]. The response of the nations at that time (in the millennial kingdom – the Messianic Age) will be to bring gifts to God (bringing a gift is an act of worship) in Jerusalem (see also Zechariah 14:16).

People: Many believe that this people is referring to Israel – that final remnant at the end (Matthew 24:30-31).

Lengthened and detailed, to a people awesome from their beginning onward, a nation powerful and treading down, who plunders rivers in its land: See explanation in Isaiah 18:2. This is what Messiah is going to do at the end – He is going to bring the world into subjection under Himself. He is going to be victorious.

To the place of the Name of the Lord of hosts: Through God's judgment the nation of Israel is going to be seen rightly.

Mount Zion: Those who are hostile toward Zion and the children of God in Mount Zion stand in opposition to the plans, purposes and the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

Chapter 19

Part 1: Isaiah 19:1-15

Biblically there is no such thing as “National salvation” (where an entire nation is saved). There is not going to be a national salvation for Egypt, Assyria or for Israel. However, a remnant from those nations is going to be saved. In Genesis 15:18 the land promised to Abraham and to his descendants (those who are declared righteous through faith and not through works – Genesis 15:6, Romans 9:6-8) includes parts of the land of Egypt and parts of the land of Assyria. Parts of these lands (empires) are going to be included in the Kingdom promise of the land of Israel.

Some people claim that God is no longer interested in real estate. This is not true. Land is of the utmost importance concerning the promises, the program, and the purposes of God.

To rightly understand this chapter, we need to understand the significance of the land that is mentioned. God is going to do something in this land to bring about the fulfillment of His promises.

Verse 1: *“A burden of Egypt: Behold the Lord rides upon a swift cloud and will come into Egypt, shaking the idols of Egypt from before Him. The heart of Egypt will melt in His midst.”*

Burden: A weight or a destruction. Initially, in this prophecy, God speaks to Egypt and warns them that they are going to suffer destruction. They are going to also be recipients of the judgment of God.

The Lord rides upon a swift cloud: This judgment that will come upon Egypt is of a heavenly origin. God has mandated it.

Shaking: This shaking, a term for judgment, causes destruction (a change from what was). The purpose of this is to destroy those things which are hindering the purposes of God. God is going to destroy the influence of idolatry in this nation.

Note: God, who is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34-35) does not love one nation more than other, or one individual more than another individual. God does not have favourites. God can, however, in His sovereignty, give a calling to a particular nation or people. Being a “chosen people” does NOT mean being a favourite people. Being “chosen” means to be called by God to fulfil His purposes – to share His gospel message to all those who have not heard it (God loves all people. His desire is to forgive sin and to redeem everyone eternally). One of the purposes of God’s judgment is cause a remnant to respond to Him.

From before Him...in His midst: This is probably referring to the very presence of God. God’s holiness is going to come into this place and is going to destroy idolatry, and all those who have an idolatrous heart. God’s judgment is for the purpose of change. Through judgment, God calls people unto Himself.

Verse 2: *“I will set Egyptians against Egyptians; and they shall war each man against his brother, and a man against his neighbour. City against city, kingdom against kingdom.”*

I will set ...and they shall war: God is going to cause conflict or division (Matthew 10:34-36). The truth of God, His gospel, brings division. Some people receive it. Many people reject it.

Kingdom against kingdom: The different tribal groups will be against each other. What we can expect in the last days is tribal conflict in various places throughout the world (Mark 13:8).

Verse 3: *“The spirit of Egypt will be emptied out in its midst, their counsel will be swallowed up, and they will consult the idols and the charmers, the mediums and the sorcerers.”*

The spirit of Egypt: This spirit was/is an idolatrous spirit.

Emptied out: It is going to be weakened. It is going to fail. This judgment is going to cause a change. A remnant is going to conclude that idolatry, the worship of false gods, is not the right way.

Counsel: Their thought processes. Their own perspective on things.

Swallowed up: Devoured, destroyed.

They will consult the idols: Although a remnant undergoes a change, the vast majority of the people are still going to turn to and consult their idols.

Charmers...mediums...sorcerers: Instruments/vessels of idolatrous practices (sorcery and enchantment).

Verse 4: *“And the Egyptians I will give into the hand of a cruel master, and a fierce king will rule over them,’ says the Master, the Lord of hosts.”*

The Egyptians I will give into the hand of a cruel master: They are going to experience the result of what idolatry leads to – demonic influence and leadership. They are going to be given over to these idolatrous spirits.

A fierce king: This could be referring to the final antichrist (Daniel 8:23-25), or it could be referring to one who has the spirit of the antichrist. This verse alludes to the possibility that the majority of Egypt will enter into the evil antichrist empire in the last days and they will be given over to it.

Verse 5: *“The waters will fail from the sea, and the river will be wasted and dried up.”*

Waters: Biblically, water (whether it is rain, dew or water in general) is seen as a blessing. When water dries up, and things become arid, this is a symbol of judgment. One of the things that made Egypt a strong, powerful and mighty empire was its water - the Nile River.
Fail: Evaporate. Dry up. The source of Egypt's power, her water, is going to be removed.

Verse 6: *“The rivers will turn foul, and the brooks of defense will be emptied and dried up; the reeds and rushes will rot.”*

Rivers: The Nile has many different tributaries that branch off it and form large rivers of their own (the Blue Nile etc).

Foul: The rivers are going to stink. They are going to give off a vile and repugnant smell as they dry up.

Verse 7: *“The papyrus reeds by the Nile, by the mouth of the River, and everything sown by the River, will be dried up, and will be pushed away and be no more.”*

Papyrus: This wood was useful and significant and had many purposes.

Everything sown by the River: All the seeds and vegetation along the Nile River.

Pushed away: It is going to become very brittle, and therefore the wind will just push it away.

Be no more: Egypt's disobedience and failure to acknowledge God is going to result in them losing resources and earthly authority. Instead of experiencing blessing from God they are going to experience a curse. Egypt was going to no longer be strong, but was going to become weak.

Verse 8: *“The fisherman will mourn; all those will lament who cast hooks into the River, and they will languish who spread nets on the waters.”*

The fisherman will mourn: A good river produces food. These fishermen are going to mourn, lament and languish as they are going to get no response (fish) from the waters. Their business or livelihood is going to fail, and this is going to cause them great misery.

Verse 9: *“And the workers of fine linen, and those that weave a good fabric, will be ashamed.”*

Fine linen...good fabric: The linen (eg: Egyptian cotton etc) and fabrics are going to become inferior, and this is going to cause shame to the Egyptians.

Verse 10: *“And its foundations will be broken, all who work for a wage will be troubled of soul.”*

Its foundations will be broken: The foundation of a nation reflects their spiritual condition. Those nations who have a right spiritual condition will have a foundation that is strong and that can be built on. Those who build on a bad spiritual foundation will soon find that their foundations are crumbling (Psalm 11:3). Egypt’s foundations are going to crumble.

All who work for a wage will be troubled: Egypt’s economy is going to collapse and be destroyed.

Troubled of soul: Made sad.

Verse 11: *“Fools are the chief officials of Zoan; and the wise ones that counsel Pharaoh counsel foolishness. How can you say to Pharaoh that you are a descendant of a wise ones? How can you say that you are the descendant of the ancient kings?”*

Zoan: A key Egyptian city in the north-eastern Nile Delta.

Pharaoh: Many commentators believe that ‘Pharaoh’ is a reference to the Egyptian government in general. They believe that this term simply refers to the governmental authority in Egypt.

Counsel foolishness: Their counsel is devoid of real knowledge or understanding.

How can you say...: This ‘counsellors’ were unable to make this claim. They had come out of nowhere (so to speak) and had no link or heritage to those who had given counsel or who had had positions of leadership and authority in the past.

Verse 12: *“Where, therefore, will be your wise ones? What will they say to you? That they knew what the Lord of hosts counselled concerning Egypt?”*

You: Referring to the leadership of Egypt.

That they knew what the Lord of hosts counselled concerning Egypt: Do these counsellors understand what God has planned for Egypt? Do they understand that the problems that they are encountering are because God has set forth His counsel for the destruction of Egypt? Although God’s judgment brings about destruction it also has within it a degree of a call to repentance. God’s judgment manifests His power, glory, authority and splendour. In the midst of God’s judgment a remnant sees His glory, power etc and it brings them to repentance, to embracing the only True God, and to joining with the Kingdom (covenant) people.

Verse 13: *“They have become foolish, the officials of Zoan; they are deceived the officials of Noph; They have also deceived Egypt, those who are the chief ones of her tribes.”*

Zoan...Noph: These were two important cities in Egypt. These two cities have prophetic significance.

Officials: Referring to cabinet officials. These officials are not just those who are in governmental positions. These officials are within the inner circle within the cabinet in a government. These officials are going to be made foolish.

They have also deceived Egypt: These officials are going to be deceived and they, in turn, are going to deceive those in Egypt.

The chief ones of her tribes: The tribal leaders. The key counsellors to Egypt, in the last days, are going to be instruments of deception. This is part of the judgment that they will receive for having turned to idolatry and other sources of wisdom rather than to God.

Verse 14: *“The Lord will mix up in her midst a spirit of distortion; and they have caused Egypt to err in all her work, as a drunk man staggers in his vomit.”*

Her midst: In the midst of Egypt.

Distortion: Delusion. God does not send delusion upon Egypt in a vacuum – simply because He is Sovereign and wanting to see these people destroyed so that He can manifest His glory. God sends this spirit upon them because of their refusal (time and time again) to repent and to turn toward Himself (see also Romans 1:28, 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12). This is a spiritual law: when God manifests Himself to an individual (or to a nation) and His revelation is rejected by that individual (or by that nation) then a spirit of delusion takes root within that individual (or within that nation). The more God’s truth and revelation is rejected the stronger and stronger becomes the delusion.

Staggers: Those who are deceived do not walk on a straight path. They lack clear direction and vision in their lives.

Vomit: The outcome of this delusion is to make them sick. They are not functioning, spiritually, in a healthy way.

Verse 15: *“There will not be to Egypt a deed which he can do, which the head and tail, palm branch or bulrush may do.”*

There will not be to Egypt a deed which he can do: When a nation or a person is under the influence of idolatry there is no act/deed that they can do to reverse or change God’s judgment (other than repentance – but repentance is not the context here. This nation is not thinking about repentance but are trying to respond to the false teaching/delusion that they are receiving).

Head and tail: The chief leaders within the government (from the greatest to the least of these officials).

Palm branch or bulrush: Referring to the people within the nation – from the greatest to the least.

Note: There is no action that the common people or the leaders in Egypt can do to stay God’s judgment. Only repentance would remove God’s judgment and the consequences of idolatry, but none of these people consider repentance as an option.

Chapter 19

Part 2: Isaiah 19:16-25

Yeshua warned His disciples that we (those of us who are alive in the last days) need to take heed, to watch, to be aware of the fact that the rise/increase of false prophets will be a characteristic of the last days (Matthew 24:11). Paul, and other writers in the new covenant, also warned that in the last days there is going to be a great apostasy/falling away in the church (2 Thessalonians 2:3). The word 'apostasy' has to do with a turning away from what is good (sound Biblical truth) to embrace and pursue those things which are not in accordance with God's will. We need to be paying attention to what is going on around us today. False teachings are rife, and many are being encouraged to turn away from sound Biblical doctrine to embrace (although they would not couch it in these terms) the doctrine of demons (1 Timothy 4:1).

In the first part of Isaiah 19 we learned about God's judgment that was going to fall upon Egypt and the destruction that was going to ensue. However, we are now going to learn that within God's judgment a healing also takes place for a remnant (in this case: a remnant within Egypt, Assyria and Israel). In the last days, a remnant within Egypt (Assyria and Israel) is going to come to faith.

Verse 16: *"On that day Egypt will be as a woman, with fear and trembling, because of the waving of the hand of the Lord of hosts, which He waves over it."*

On that day: This phrase is repeated six times in the next ten verses. This is very unique and significant grammatically. It is also a phrase that should remind us of God's judgment, specifically His last days judgment (the judgment just prior to the establishment of His Kingdom on earth).

Note: This passage deals with the nations of Egypt, Assyria and Israel. In Genesis 15:18, when God allots the Promised land and gives it its geographical borders (which include Egypt and Assyria) this exact same phrase 'On that day' is used. Although this covenant was cut with Abraham about 4000 years ago and "on that day" may seem as if it was completed in the past, this phrase points out that this passage in Genesis has last day implications. "To your descendants (seed)..." also gives this passage future implications. This prophecy (in regard to this physical land) has not yet been fulfilled. Israel has never lived within the full scope of her promised boundaries. Is she ever going to? God, who never lies, promised Abraham that she would, and so she shall!

Fear and trembling: Women, by and large, are more quickly gripped by fear than men are.

Waving of the hand: God is waving His hand (authority), and the implication is that it is being done in a threatening manner.

Verse 17: *"And the ground of Judah will become a terror to Egypt; everyone who makes mention of it will be afraid in himself, he (Egypt) will fear because of the counsel of the Lord of hosts which He has determined against it."*

The ground of Judah will become a terror to Egypt: Why? Because Egypt is going to see God moving to deliver Israel because of His covenant with them.

As God moves to deliver Israel, He is going to judge the enemies of Israel (and Egypt is one of those enemies). This makes those in Egypt very afraid.

Counsel: In this context this word is a synonym for prophecy. What God has proclaimed (prophecied) He is going to do.

Lord of hosts: Lord of the armies.

Verse 18: *“On that day there will be five cities in the land of Egypt speaking the language of Canaan and they will swear to the Lord of hosts in the midst of the City of Destruction.”*

Five cities: There is something unique about these five cities. ‘Five’, Biblically is a number for being incomplete. Not all of Egypt will be saved, but only a remnant.

The language of Canaan: Most rabbinical commentators classify this language of Canaan as the Hebrew language. The word ‘Canaan’ comes from a Hebrew word which means to ‘submit’ or to recognise authority and respond properly to it. This is what these five cities are going to do – they are going to recognise the authority of the God of Israel.

Swear: Take an oath to.

City of Destruction: Many English translations translate this as the ‘city of the sun’. This is incorrect. The implication of this verse is that the Egyptians are going to threaten these cities with (persecution) destruction if they continue submitting to the God of Israel.

Verse 19: *“On that day there will be an altar unto the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the Lord at its border.”*

Altar: An altar is for sacrifice. This means that in the center of Egypt there is going to be those who want to submit to and live sacrificially for God.

Pillar: This is a sacred or holy structure. It is going to be erected as a testimony, testifying that a remnant within Egypt want to submit to and worship the God of Israel.

At its border: Presumably this will be erected at the border between Egypt and Israel.

Verse 20: *“And it shall come about that this should be for a sign and a testimony to the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they will cry out unto the Lord because of their oppressors, and He will send them a Saviour and a Mighty One and He will deliver them.”*

Sign: This word, Biblically, speaks of something which is miraculous. It refers to something that only God can do. God is miraculously going to redeem a remnant in Egypt, and they are going to be responsive to Him.

A sign and a testimony: When God works miraculously in a person's life (a sign) there is a visible outcome, and that person gives testimony of God's miraculous work in their lives.

Oppressors: Those who place stress or anxiety upon others. This remnant in Egypt is going to be persecuted and oppressed in the last days because of their faith.

He will send them a Saviour: God is faithful to His people. He responds when they call out to Him.

Saviour: מוֹשִׁיָּהוּ (Moshiya). The name ‘Yeshua’ comes from this same root word. His name means salvation.

He will deliver them: In the midst of their persecution God is going to send them the Mighty One (Yeshua) to deliver them.

Verse 21: *“And the Lord will be known to Egypt, and Egypt will know the Lord on that day, and will serve a sacrifice and offering; they will make a vow unto the Lord and this they will pay in full.”*

Known: This is not referring to a cognitive knowing of the Lord but about an experiential knowledge of Him.

Note: Once these Egyptians have been saved, they are going to want to make sacrifices and offerings unto the Lord. The response after salvation is worship.

They will make a vow: They make a commitment to the Lord and what they have committed to they do. This speaks about the faithfulness of this remnant to the Lord.

Verse 22: *“And the Lord will strike Egypt, He will strike and heal it; they will return to the Lord, and He will be entreated by them and heal them.”*

The Lord will strike Egypt: In the midst of their deliverance the Lord is going to strike Egypt with a plague.

Strike and heal: Egypt is going to be struck with this plague, but God is going to heal them.

They will return to the Lord, and He will be entreated by them and heal them: This remnant is going to have a great influence in Egypt. After God has struck Egypt with a plague there is going to be repentance in Egypt and God is going to heal them and bring about a change in this land.

Verse 23: *“On that day there shall be a road from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians.”*

Road: This is the word used for a runway at an airport. It is a pathway that connects two locations. It is a word that speaks of unification, a connection.

Assyria: This is the first time that Assyria is mentioned in this passage. The emphasis here is not on the people of Assyria but on its geographical location. Egypt is to the south of Israel and Assyria is to the north. The land spoken of here (Egypt to Assyria, and through the land of Israel) matches the area God promised to Abraham and his seed in Genesis 15:18.

The Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria: The Egyptians and the Assyrians will have something in common. They will be united with a common purpose.

The Egyptians will serve (worship) with the Assyrians: When God establishes His earthly Kingdom (for His 1000year reign) it is going to be a Kingdom characterised by righteousness, holiness and worship. Worship is key in the millennial Kingdom, and it should be the foundation of our lives. Egypt and Assyria are going to be united in their worship of the Lord God of Israel. This worship is going to take place in Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:16-21).

Verse 24: *“In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing will be in the midst of the land.”*

Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria: God is going to set up a Kingdom and in that Kingdom, in these geographical locations, the remnant of the people are going to worship God, Messiah Yeshua – Jew and Gentile alike.

Three: The number three is for the purpose of revealing or documenting something. God's judgment is going to lead to a Kingdom reality. God's covenantal purposes are going to be revealed through Israel in those days. God is going to be shown to be faithful to the promises He gave to Abraham regarding the Promised land. God keeps His covenantal promises.

A blessing will be in the midst of the land: What was God's desire in the Abrahamic covenant? God desired that Abraham and his descendants would be a blessing to all the families of the world (Genesis 12:3). This is textual evidence that God's people are going to be a blessing in the land.

Verse 25: *"Which the Lord of hosts will bless, saying: 'Blessed are My people Egypt, the work of My hand Assyria, and My inheritance Israel.'"*

Egypt: Prophetically Egypt is generally spoken of as a symbolic representation of the world. Here Egypt personifies the people of the world, all of the nations. Through God's promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:3) the people of the world are blessed.

Note: In one sense Egypt represents the first exile. The people of Israel went willfully into Egypt (Genesis 46) but were then enslaved there and could not leave until they had a saviour. Assyria represents the second exile. Israel was taken captive by Assyria (2 Kings 17:6). They are only restored back to the land of Israel in the last days (Ezekiel 37:16-22).

The work of My hand: God is going to take that which represented captivity and exile and He is going to change it into a blessing.

Chapter 20

In Matthew 16:23 Yeshua rebukes Peter for not having in mind the things of God, but for having in mind the things of men. Peter was looking at things from a human perspective. If we want to be people who are pleasing to God, we need to be people who have His perspective on things. When problems come into our lives, we do not need to be overcome by them. As disciples of Messiah, with the help of the Holy Spirit working in our lives, we are called to overcome the problems. As we overcome, God is glorified, our faith is built up and grows and the obstacles that follow can be tackled with assurance, as we know that God, who was faithful in the past, will move to help us to overcome - God desires that the good work that He begun in us reaches completion (Philippians 1:6).

In this chapter we learn a principle that, if we embrace it, will change our lives: we need to be people who walk by faith and not by sight. It is unnatural for a human being to walk in faith. Naturally we tend to make decisions based upon what we see. As followers of Messiah, we are called to live supernaturally – we are called to live by faith (truth) and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). Faithfulness can be defined as behaving (acting) in a way that is motivated by the truth of God and not motivated by human reasoning.

Verse 1: *"In the year that Tartan came to Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against Ashdod and he took it."*

Tartan: This is not the name of a man. It is a title for a military leader. This man was not the king, but he was the supreme general (Commander in Chief) of the Assyrian empire.

Ashdod: At this time, Ashdod was a Philistine city.

In the year that Tartan came to Ashdod: This happened after the Northern kingdom of Israel had already been taken captive by Assyria.

Sargon the king of Assyria: The king of Assyria was a powerful man in the physical. He was the leader of a very large and very vast empire which was growing rapidly. Assyria, through being victorious in war, was adding nation by nation into its empire.

He fought against Ashdod and he took it: The children of Judah saw firsthand how powerful Assyria were, as nation by nation were brought into subjection to it. God used these Assyrian victories as a teaching tool for Judah. Judah, the children who belonged to the God of Israel, needed to learn to see things differently. God wanted Judah to look beyond the natural. Although Assyria were adding nation upon nation to its empire in the natural that was not the expectation that God wanted them to have for themselves. God wanted them to live in His truth – that in Him they were conquerors/overcomers. Their eyes did not need to be on what Assyria was doing, their eyes needed to be on what God was doing. They did not need to fear Assyria, they needed to fear God (Matthew 10:28).

Verse 2: *“At that time the Lord spoke in the hand of Isaiah the son of Amoz saying: ‘Go, open up the sackcloth around your loins, and your sandals remove from your feet.’ Thus he did, and he walked naked and barefoot.”*

At that time: At the time when the Judeans saw Ashdod fall to the Assyrian empire.

The Lord spoke: God gave divine revelation.

In the hand: This expression speaks of the fact that Isaiah the prophet was under the authority of God. Isaiah spoke with the authority that he received from the Lord.

Open up the sackcloth around your loins: For quite some time Isaiah had been walking with sackcloth around his loins. This was a sign or a visible aid to remind the people of their need to repent. Now, however, the time for repentance is over.

Naked: Nakedness in the Bible speaks of shame. It is now the time for punishment or shame.

Barefoot: This was a sign of poverty. It was a sign that the person was in a desperate situation financially.

Note: Isaiah had been calling Judah to repentance, but they had not repented - even though they had watched the Northern kingdom (their brothers) being taken captive.

Verse 3: *“Then the Lord said, ‘Just as My servant Isaiah went about naked and barefoot for three years as a sign and a wonder concerning Egypt and Ethiopia,’”*

My servant: This is one of the greatest compliments that a person can receive – to be thought of by God as His faithful servant (Matthew 25:23).

Naked: Some commentators say that ‘nakedness’ here is referring to Isaiah being just in his undergarments. Some commentators say it means exactly what it says.

Naked and barefoot: Isaiah walked around showing the signs of shame and destitution. The outcome of people’s lack of faithfulness and lack of repentance eventually leads to God’s judgment in their lives – shame and poverty.

Three: Biblically this is a number related to revelation. Isaiah was revealing/demonstrating/confirming something to these people - ie without faith they would find themselves in a desperate situation, destitute and spiritually shamed.

Ethiopia: Ethiopia, 3000 years ago, was a very powerful and splendid nation. This caused many people to trust in them and to forge an alliance with them. Ethiopia helped to protect these allied nations when they were attacked.

Verse 4: "Thus the king of Assyria will lead the captivity of Egypt and the exiles of Ethiopia, the young and the old, and they will be naked and barefoot, and their buttocks will be exposed, thus will be the shame of Egypt."

Note: The Philistines (those who lived in Ashdod and elsewhere) trusted in the alliances they made with Egypt, Ethiopia, etc. This did not stand them in good stead, as those countries were overpowered by Assyria. Egypt, the young and the old, was taken captive, and Ethiopia was led into exile.

They will be naked and barefoot, and their buttocks will be exposed: When Assyria conquered a nation, they would strip the people naked and make them walk barefoot. The reason for this was that it was much harder to resist, fight or run without shoes and while naked. Isaiah went around naked and barefoot as a testimony to his people - if they failed to trust God then this was going to be their experience.

Verse 5: "And they were dismayed and ashamed of Ethiopia, their expectation, and Egypt, their glory."

Dismayed and ashamed: Like the Philistines, Judah had also looked to Egypt and Ethiopia and had trusted them to aid them in fighting against their enemies. Now they are ashamed of their expectation as it turns out that their confidence in these countries was misplaced.

Verse 6: "And the inhabitant, the one who dwells in this island, will say in that day: 'Behold thus we looked where we could flee for help to be saved from the king of Assyria: and how shall we escape?'"

Island: Referring to Ashdod. Ashdod borders the Mediterranean Sea – it is right along the coast. The word used here in Hebrew means 'island'. Ashdod was surrounded by Judah and the Mediterranean – there was no place for them to flee. They were like an island unto themselves.

That day: Referring to their day of judgment.

Thus we looked: They had an expectation. They looked toward Egypt and Ethiopia to help them, but these countries were unable to come to their defense. Ashdod had no one to help them. They had no place to flee. This was the message God was trying to get across to the children of Judah. They had that same tendency - to trust in political and military alliances rather than to trust in God. God wanted them to stop trusting in treaties, to stop making peace agreements – those things that could be seen. He wanted them to trust in Him alone (Him who is unseen) and to do what He had called them to do. We should never trust in physical resources. We need to rather trust in what God has revealed to us – His truth and spiritual revelation.

Chapter 21

Most scholars see the prophecy in this chapter as relating primarily to Babylon and the region around Babylon. Although this has been fulfilled in the past, it still has relevance and contains instructions for the last days. Babylon is synonymous with being the punishers of Israel – specifically Judah. They are the ones who took Judah into exile and inflicted great suffering on them. In the last days, the empire of the antichrist, like Babylon, is going to exert great pressure and cause great suffering and pain for the Jewish people. Many are going to go into exile. However, a future deliverance and restoration is promised. When Yeshua returns, for His second coming, the enemies of Israel are going to be judged and He is going to deliver and restore His people. In the book of Revelation, the term (Mystery) ‘Babylon’ is used in a symbolic way as the name of the antichrist empire (Revelation 17 and 18).

Verse 1: *“The burden against the Wilderness of the Sea. There will be whirlwinds in the South that pass through from the wilderness and come to the awesome land.”*

Burden: A message of destruction, punishment and, oftentimes, annihilation.

Wilderness: A desert.

Sea: Babylon was built on the Euphrates Rivers. This river was a great asset to Babylon and turned it into a great power. This river was so vast and influential that it was as though they had a sea within their borders. Hence the reference to a ‘sea’.

Whirlwinds: Tornadoes. Very strong winds that cause great destruction – leaving rubble and ruin in its path.

Awesome: Terrible.

Note: What God is saying here is that there is going to be strong winds (turbulent tornadoes) that are going to bring about destruction. Most scholars, however, do not see these tornadoes as being weather phenomena. They see this as the dust that rises up because of a vast army marching through the land. When an army marches to war with their chariots and horses they kick up dust so that a kind of whirlwind is created. The scholars see this as a strong military invasion that was going to come against Babylon.

Verse 2: *“A strong vision was told to me; the treacherous dealer will be dealt with treacherously, and the plunderer is going to be plundered. Go up, O Elam! Besiege, O Media! All groanings will be brought to an end.”*

Strong: Hard. Harsh. This is a word which speaks of something which is powerful but in a destructive or harsh way.

Told to me: Isaiah received this vision, and he said it was a hard or difficult vision to receive.

Treacherous dealer: The one who is the traitor (betrayer). Those who are faithless, or practice disloyalty.

The treacherous dealer will be dealt with treacherously: Those who betray are going to find themselves betrayed.

Elam: (Southwestern Iran) An empire very close geographically to Babylon (Iraq).

Elam...Media (Northwestern Iran): Two empires that were going to come together to lay siege and bring destruction to Babylon. God was faithful to bring judgment upon Babylon in the past. We can anticipate God doing this again in the last days.

All groanings will be brought to an end: God is going to make an end of these groanings that were caused by the Babylonians upon His people. Babylon came to an end under the leadership of the Medes and Persians. Cyrus allowed the people who were in exile in Babylon to go back to the land of Israel.

Verse 3: *“Therefore my loins are filled with anguish, pains have taken hold of me, like the pangs of a woman in labour. For I have been tortured from what I have heard, and I am fearful from what I have seen.”*

My loins are filled with anguish: Some commentators say when Isaiah looked at the harsh judgment that was coming upon Babylon it elicited some compassion from him. Others translate this as Isaiah quoting the king of Babylon - who is going to be dethroned and brought to an end.

I have been tortured from what I have heard, and I am fearful from what I have seen: Many scholars say that Isaiah saw what was going to happen to ancient Babylon (+-2500 years ago), but that he was also shown how God’s judgment is going to be poured out upon the antichrist empire.

Verse 4: *“My heart is confused, fear and trembling seized me; The night for which I longed He turned into fear for me.”*

Note: It is unclear if this is Isaiah looking at this and not comprehending (confused by what he has seen), or whether it is the king of Babylon that Isaiah is speaking for.

Fear and trembling: He was extremely afraid.

The night for which I longed: In modern Hebrew this is a word that is used for an evening ball/a prom/a dance (a nighttime party).

Fear: The word used here is a word that speaks of extreme fear. In modern Hebrew it is a word used for going into shock. He desired a celebration, but what he got was a shock (If this is referring to the king of Babylon then this fulfilment could have taken place in Daniel 5:1-6).

Verse 5: *“The table was prepared. The watchman was watching from his posts, eating and drinking. The princes arose and anointed their shield.”*

Note: The idea here is that Isaiah is either seeing a vision of what is going to go on in the king’s palace in Babylon just before they are devastated, or he is quoting the thoughts of the king concerning the fact that the destruction of his empire came about so unexpectedly and so swiftly (Daniel 5:30-31). Isaiah prophesied that Babylon was going to end very suddenly and very unexpectedly. This is also how it is going to be for the antichrist empire. He is going to think that he has established himself and that everything is going to plan but then suddenly, quickly and unexpectedly he is going to be defeated (1 Thessalonians 5:2-3).

Eating and drinking: This is referring to the king and his cabinet officials eating and drinking.

Princes: The cabinet officials or the king’s leading officials.

Anointed: They put oil on their shields so that the arrows would just glance off them and not hit as hard.

Note: The king of Babylon was having a party when he received the news from his watchman of the devastation that was coming.

Verse 6: *“For thus said unto me the Lord, ‘Go and stand at the watch place: and what he will see he will declare.’”*

Watch place: The watchtower.

Verse 7: *“And he looked, and he saw a chariot and a pair of horsemen, a chariot of a donkey and a chariot of a camel. And he listened attentively as there was much to hear.”*

There was much to hear: This prophecy had a great implication in the past and it also has a far-reaching conclusion beyond the time of the literal judgment of Babylon (+-2500 years ago).

Verse 8: *“A lion was proclaimed concerning this watchtower, O Lord. I stand continuously throughout the day, and on my watch I stand all night.”*

A lion: For many scholars this is a strong hermeneutical clue that this is indeed talking about Babylon. The symbol for Babylon was a lion.

Watchtower: This vision that was seen.

Day, and ... all night: The prophet, all day and all night, was looking for revelation concerning this event. It was of the utmost importance to Isaiah that he tried to understand what God was revealing to him.

Verse 9: *“Behold a chariot of a man comes and a pair of horsemen!’ And he answered and said: ‘Fallen, fallen is Babylon! Every statue of her god is broken to the land.”*

He: The man on the chariot. He called out to Isaiah (the watchman who was observing what is going on).

Fallen, fallen is Babylon!: This verse is quoted in Revelation 18:2. This shows us that God, who was faithful in the past to judge the enemies of Israel, will be faithful in the future to judge His enemies. This judgment in the past (the fall of Babylon) allowed the children of Jacob to return to the land of Israel. In the future we can expect God to bring about destruction upon the antichrist kingdom. This kingdom will seek to make the covenantal promises of God null and void, but God (like He judged Babylon) will also judge the antichrist and his empire. In Revelation it is after Babylon (the final Babylon, the antichrist empire) falls that Messiah returns for His second coming (Revelation 19)

Every statue of her god is broken to the land: This is reminiscent of Dagon in 1 Samuel 5:1-4. The enemies of God are going to find their idolatrous worship, that was based in falsehood and in the desire of self, is going to be consumed by God's wrath. It will be brought to the ground and will be no more.

Verse 10: *“My gleanings and the seed which I have heard from the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, I will declare it to you.”*

Gleanings: After the harvest the grain is taken to the threshing floor, and it is threshed. The chaff is removed and destroyed (a picture of judgment) but the grain is stored for future use. The grain is the valuable part of the harvest and is the blessing that is received (the promises of God are related to blessings).

God of Israel: This phrase usually gives a passage a last day context.

I will declare: Declaration is the outcome of the Word (the promises) of God. God's promises are going to be presented upon the threshing floor so that the people can take hold of them and enjoy the produce.

Verse 11: *"The burden of Dumah unto me proclaimed from Seir. 'Watchman, what is from the night? Watchman, what is from the night?'"*

Note: This is a very important prophecy against, ultimately, Edom (the descendants of Esau). Although the name 'Edom' is not mentioned, we know that it is referring to Edom because Dumah and Seir were both locations within Edom.

Seir: Mountains in Edom (See Ezekiel 35).

Watchman: The one who keeps watch and guards what is valuable or important.

What is from the night: In this context, night has to do with vision.

Note: The destruction of Dumah, Seir, Edom is very important prophetically. It represents a final battle taking place (Isaiah 63:1-6, The book of Obadiah, etc). Edom joined with Babylon to pour judgment upon Judah. Edom was never called to do that. In Psalm 137:7 we are told that Edom wanted Judah torn down to its very foundations. Amos 1:11-12 reveals to us that Edom hunted down his brothers in his anger and he delighted to put them to death (showed them no pity). God never instructed Edom to do this and for his actions Edom is going to be judged.

Verse 12: *"And the watchman said: 'Come morning, come night. If you will inquire, inquire; Return! Come back!'"*

Watchman: The keeper. The one who guards.

Come morning, come night: This is an idiom. It means that when something important must be done it will be done – whether it is day or night. This prophecy, in its time of fulfilment, can happen in the day or night. It will be done timeously when it needs to be accomplished.

Inquire, inquire: This is a word that indicates a very strong petitioning or supplication - a great desire for something. This word appears twice, indicating a complete, utter or sincere desire to do something (in this context to repent – 'return').

Return! Come back!: Those who do not have a strong desire will not answer the call to repent or to turn back to God.

Verse 13: *"The burden against Arabia. In the forest of Arabia you will lodge. O you travelling companies of Dedanites."*

Arabia: This area today would include Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Yemen, Oman. These nations are also going to be judged.

In the forest of Arabia you will lodge: The people are going to flee in fear into the forests because of the judgment that is going to fall on them.

Dedanites: These were a group of trading people that feared the Arabians and so would not stay in the cities when they travelled but would camp out in the forests.

Verse 14: *“O inhabitants of the land of Tema, bring water to him who is thirsty; with their bread they met him who fled.”*

Tema: Tema (possibly descended from Ishmael – Genesis 25:15) was part of Saudi Arabia. They were a group of people who made their living by selling supplies (bread, water, etc) to those who were afraid and fled from the powerful people in this country. This is an image depicting that the Arabians are going to find themselves in this same predicament. They are the ones who are going to flee when judgment falls on them. They are the ones who are going to be in need of bread and water.

Verse 15: *“They will wonder about aimlessly because of a drawn sword, because of a bow which is bent, because of the severity of war.”*

Note: These individuals are going to experience the consequences of judgment. War is going to be brought to them and they are going to be defeated.

Verse 16: *“For thus the Lord spoke unto me: ‘In another year, according to the year of a labour, all the glory of Kedar will be brought to an end.’”*

In one more year: God is giving Isaiah very precise timing.

The year of a labour: The image here is of a one-year contract that is signed between two parties. When that year, to the day, comes to an end, payment is made, and the work is terminated. If a year contract is signed the working days are exact. No one works after the end date of the contract. Similarly, this prophecy is going to be exact and precise.

Kedar: This is another name for Arabia. Kedar was the second son of Ishmael (1 Chronicles 1:29).

The glory of Kedar will be brought to an end: Arabia is associated with Ishmael. Kedar speaks of the next generation. The concept of the next generation for Israel is that it has a good connotation. However, for the enemies of God the next generation is cut off. The enemies of God have no future hope.

Verse 17: *“And the rest of the number of bowmen, the mighty ones of the sons of Kedar, will be diminished; for the Lord God of Israel has spoken.”*

Bowmen: People who have bows and arrows.

Be diminished: There will not be many survivors. They will be few.

The Lord God of Israel: This name of God gives a text last day implications.

Note: Prophecy reveals to us that God is faithful to judge the enemies of His people, no matter who they are – Babylon, Edom, Arabia. Prophecy also teaches us that God is faithful to renew and reestablish His covenantal promises (the great covenantal promise being the establishment of His Kingdom through Messiah Yeshua).

The Lord God of Israel has spoken: We can be encouraged by the fact that what God has said God will do!

Chapter 22

Part 1: Isaiah 22:1-14

A question that we should ask ourselves frequently is this: Is God pleased with me? We know that God loves us, died for us, and (if we have accepted Yeshua) forgiven us (John 3:16). But is He pleased with us? (Psalm 19:14, 1 Thessalonians 2:4, Colossians 3:23, Proverbs 16:7). Is God pleased with the way we behave? Is He satisfied with the way we are living our lives? In this chapter we soon see that God is not pleased with those who dwell in the city where He placed His name, and where He, in a unique way dwelt – Jerusalem (2 Kings 21:7, 2 Chronicles 7:16)

Verse 1: *“The burden (against) the Valley of Vision. What is to you that you have all gone up to the rooftops?”*

Burden: A weight. Jerusalem was walking in pride (they exalted themselves). Their behaviour did not manifest holiness. Their lives did not reflect the purposes of God as they did not walk in His instructions. So, God brought them down (Jeremiah 13:9, James 4:6). *The Valley of Vision:* This is a very unique description of Jerusalem. God identifies Jerusalem in this prophecy as a ‘valley’. Geographically this does not make sense. Jerusalem was set on a mountain and when people went to Jerusalem the Bible says they went ‘up’ (1 Kings 12:28, Matthew 20:17-18 etc). Although Jerusalem is a mountain, in this prophecy God sees her as a valley. God is going to humble her. He is going to bring her low. The pride of the people is going to be humbled in a shameful way – as they are going to experience being defeated by their enemies.

What is to you: What is the problem?

You have all gone up to the rooftops: They went up onto their rooftops to try to see/perceive what problem was on the horizon (in this case, they were going to see an army coming against them in war) – see Matthew 24:15-17, Mark 13:15 (Yeshua tells those who went up to the housetops, to see what was happening, not to gather things from their house as they flee what is to come).

Verse 2: *“There is abundant noise. The city is full of humming, the city of joy. Your corpses are not slain with a sword, nor dead due to war.”*

There is abundant noise: The sages required that the scribes left a line after this phrase, in order to make it a stand-alone phrase.

Abundant noise: A great disturbance. It is not speaking of a good or pleasant sound.

Humming: A word that also refers to a noise, but a noise like a humming/buzzing sound. Many times in Scripture this word is used to describe a city where everyone is talking about something. An event or a stir within a city causes it to be abuzz. This noise captures everyone's attention. Here the city is abuzz because of the armies that are coming against Jerusalem.

The city of joy: Jerusalem was supposed to be a city of worship, a city that depicted the holiness of God. One of the byproducts of living a sanctified life is indeed joy. This city is not going to be experiencing this joy, which they should be, because they are far removed from the purposes of God.

Corpses: Dead bodies.

Note: This city is buzzing. There are dead people within it, but they have not been killed by the sword or through war. Many scholars see this as speaking of their spiritual condition. It is not the enemy that has brought about this death within the city, but it is their disobedience, their sin. They are spiritually dead. God is not pleased with them and therefore His life is not in these people.

Verse 3: *“All your officers are wandering aimlessly; they are captured by the archers. All who are found in you are bound together, from a distance they flee.”*

All your officers are wandering aimlessly: God’s presence is not in this place. He is not leading, guiding or instructing these people. This word ‘officer’ is referring to those who are high ranking among the police or within the army. They are high ranking in defense (militarily) but are not necessarily so high ranking politically.

Wandering aimlessly: They have no vision or direction from God. They are confused intellectually.

Captured: This foreshadows an exile.

Archers: Those who have the bow...a weapon (ie the enemy).

Bound together: They are placed in chains.

They flee: They are leaving Jerusalem. They are cut off from the holy city, ie from the presence of God.”

Verse 4: *“Therefore I have said, ‘Look from me, because I am weeping in bitterness. Do not hasten to comfort me concerning the plundering of the daughter of my people.’”*

I: Referring to Isaiah

Look from me: Isaiah does not want them to look at him.

Hasten: Hurry.

Do not hasten to comfort me: Isaiah does not want to be quickly comforted. He is receiving bad news, and he wants to have time to grieve.

Plundering: Plundering leaves things empty and in desolation.

Daughter: A daughter usually speaks of a future. Daughters marry and have children.

Children speak of a future hope. Isaiah is grieved because when he looks at what the Lord is revealing to him, he sees the people not having a future.

Verse 5: *“For a day of disturbance and defeat and shame from the Lord of hosts in the Valley of Vision – destroying the wall and crying to the mountain.”*

Disturbance: There is a degree of confusion among the people due to an uprising. Everyone is moving about, and they have been defeated. Furthermore, they are ashamed or embarrassed.

From the Lord of hosts: The Lord is the One who is causing/allowing this to happen to the people as He is not pleased with them.

Destroying: This is a word of destruction and could be a foreshadowing of exile. The image here is that of the city being in ruins. There is spiritual devastation in this place, but there is also going to be physical devastation here. The people are not following the instructions of God but have been led by demonic influence.

Wall: This could be referring to the walls of the temple.

Mountain: This may be referring to Jerusalem

Verse 6: *“Elam lifts up its quiver, with chariots of men and horsemen, and Kir uncovered her shield.”*

Elam: Elam was part of the nation or empire of Assyria.

Quiver: A reference to bearing arms. A quiver is part of weaponry.

Chariots of men and horsemen: Soldiers.

Kir: An important city in the nation of Moab. These two mighty nations are coming to do battle against Jerusalem.

Uncovered her shield: Moab is preparing herself to battle against Jerusalem.

Verse 7: *“And it shall come about that your choice valleys will be full of chariots and horsemen, and they will be utterly placed at the gate.”*

Utterly placed at the gate: This all foreshadows a defeat. What we can conclude is this: when God is not pleased with us, He allows the enemy to let us experience pain, suffering and loss. This is a call for us to repent and to begin, again, to walk in the will and purposes of God.

Verse 8: *“And He uncovered the screen of Judah. And you shall look in that day to the armour of the House of the Forest.”*

Uncovered the screen of Judah: The enemy exposed that which shielded or protected Judah. Nothing in Judah was hidden from their enemies. Their secret sins, their weapons of warfare that they trusted in etc were all laid bare for the enemy to see.

You: Judah

In that day: A phrase of judgment.

Armour: The weaponry

House of the Forest: There are trees in a forest. The people brought lumber from the forest to make the temple. The people trusted in that temple. They felt that because the temple was among them that the enemy would never have victory over Jerusalem. They felt as if the temple was their security, their secret weapon against enemy attack, so to speak. The weapon that they thought would provide security to them (ie the temple) was going to be destroyed.

Verse 9: *“You also saw the splitting to the city of David, that it was great, and you will look and you will gather the waters of the lower pool.”*

You: Written in the plural. Many are going to see this happen.

The splitting: This speaks of a breaking through, a breach into the city.

The city of David: This is the first verse that confirms that this prophecy is indeed about Jerusalem.

Gather the waters of the lower pool: This is an act of desperation. God had said that these people were going to go into exile. It would have gone better for them to have just submitted to God’s Word and surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar.

Instead, they dug in their heels and made a stand hoping that they were going to survive in a desperate situation – the city under siege. By gathering this water, they are taking precautions to try to survive. A city without water cannot survive for very long.

Verse 10: *“The homes of Jerusalem you counted, and the houses you broke down to fortify the walls.”*

The homes of Jerusalem: Another clear reference that this prophecy is about Jerusalem.
Counted: They calculated how many homes would be needed to shelter the people and all the “extra” homes were broken up to make the walls stronger for less chance of them being breached. They tightened up their security.

Broke down: They destroyed these homes. The people were taking matters of security and provision into their own hands.

Verse 11: *“You also made a reservoir between the two walls for the water of the old pool. But you did not look to your Maker, nor did you have respect for Him who fashioned it long ago.”*

Reservoir: In Hebrew this is the word ‘Mikvah’. These ritual baths are still very much in regular use among the observant Jews in Israel today.

Between the two walls: This mikvah (reservoir of water) was so precious that it was reinforced between the walls of the city.

The water of the old pool: They went back to the oldest source of water, which is probably the best source of water.

Did not look: To ‘look’ is often an idiom for prayer. They did not seek the One who is the source of water, the One who actually made the water. They only saw the immediacy of their situation and, instead of seeking God and His plans, they made a plan with their own hands. Not looking to God is exactly why they were in this situation in the first place.

Verse 12: *“And the Lord, the LORD of hosts, proclaimed in that day for weeping and for lamentation, for baldness and for girding with sackcloth.”*

Lord: The first word ‘Lord’ refers to God as the Master. The second usage of ‘Lord’ refers to God as the transcendent One (YHWH).

Weeping... lamentation... baldness (shaving of their heads) ... girding with sackcloth: These are all outward signs of repentance. God was calling on the people to repent. The people were taking physical action in order to try to survive, but what they really needed to do was to take spiritual action or make spiritual preparation. Isaiah was doing this. He was weeping and mourning (Isaiah 22:4). This was a time for grief and sorrow – not a time for being comforted.

Verse 13: *“And behold, joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep. Eating meat and drinking wine: ‘Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.’”*

Note: These people did not want to weep and mourn and lament. They had no desire to repent and to turn to God. They did not believe that God would be forgiving, that He would renew His covenant or that He would save His people (2 Chronicles 7:14).

In this verse, in the middle of desperate times, these people realised the futility of their actions. All their human effort, and all they have done to preserve themselves, was not going to provide victory for them. They realised that their time was limited. They had no interest or desire to cry out to God - weeping and repenting while there was still an opportunity to do so. Instead, they wanted to spend themselves on one last party, one final pleasure. They desired to kill the calf, slaughter the sheep, eat the meat and drink the wine. They gave no thought to God and to the age to come, instead they wanted to please their flesh. These people knew and understood that there were enemies and conflicts in this world. They had heard and seen the news. What they did not believe, however, was that what they were experiencing was a judgment from God. God was far away from their thoughts and actions.

Verse 14: *"It was revealed in the ears of the Lord of hosts: 'This iniquity is not going to be atoned for, even to your death,' says the Lord God of hosts."*

It was revealed in the ears of the Lord of hosts: This is an idiom, basically giving us God's perspective on this.

This iniquity is not going to be atoned for: God would have been willing and able to forgive the people for this iniquity. These people, however, were so far removed from God, that it was not even a thought that crossed their minds that they were in need of repentance or forgiveness.

Note: Nothing goes on in this world that God is not aware of. He plays an active part in this world. The people did not believe in an active, intimate God who was part of every aspect of their lives. When our lives do not reflect this awareness of God then we are going to live very displeasing lives before Him – the outcome of which is eternal death. All our decisions and all our actions need to be based on the truth of Scripture.

Chapter 22

Part 2: Isaiah 22:15-25

People who truly believe in God are optimistic. We believe that God will act and deliver His people. We believe that He is faithful to His promises and, therefore, even though our enemies are often greater than us physically, we trust in God's triumph over them (1 John 4:4). Israel, in this chapter did not have this faith. The fruit of faith is endurance and perseverance – believing that God is going to ultimately have the victory causes us to not give up. These people, instead of believing in the salvation of God, gave up – they had their last fling, believing that tomorrow they would die (Isaiah 22:13). This displays their lack of faith and lack of hope. They were not thinking about God's faithfulness, and therefore they had no expectations and so did not behave in faith.

Verse 15: *"Thus said the Lord God of hosts: 'You go to this steward, To Shebna, who is over the house, and say:'"*

Thus said: Although this prophecy was yet future, God is speaking as though it has already happened. If God has said something, it is as good as done.

Steward: A type of manager

Who is over the house: Many scholars believe that he was over the king's house. Others say that he was the temple treasurer. Either way... he was a man of influence and had great authority. He was in the inner circles and was a close confidant of the king. The king trusted him. If he was the treasurer of the temple, then he also held the purse strings and had great authority in this regard. His downfall, though, was that he only looked at things from a physical perspective. It is not wise to make decisions based only on what can be seen. We need to make decisions dependant on God's revelation/truth and His perspective.

Verse 16: *"What have you here, and whom have you here, that you have hewed out for yourself here a tomb, hewing out an exalted tomb. For you have chiseled in the rock a dwelling place."*

What have you here, and whom have you here: These two idioms mean: what are you (Shebna) doing here? And who are you, in the midst of what's going on?

Exalted: Raised up.

Dwelling place: In this context it is probably a different word referring to a tomb.

Note: This steward has given up. He doesn't believe there is any hope for salvation, and the reason why is because he is only looking at things through a physical lens. He saw that the enemy was physically more powerful than the children of Judah. His concern now was only about leaving a human legacy – a monument or a tomb to be remembered by. This is not how a person of faith behaves. Those in the world are interested in a legacy – remembering those who the things used to belong to. As believers we are motivated by heritage (heritage/inheritance focuses on those who are inheriting, from God, now).

Verse 17: *"Behold, the Lord is going to cast you away powerfully, O mighty man, And you will surely be wrapped up."*

Behold: This is always a word used for grabbing attention or revealing something that is significant. God is going to move against Shebna.

Cast you away: God is going to move this man – change his location. Like the others, he too had no faith – 'eating and drinking because tomorrow he was going to die' kind of attitude.

Powerfully: This moving away is going to be forceful, mighty.

Verse 18: *"You are going to be wrapped up like a turban and tossed like a ball into a wide land; there you shall die, and there your chariots of honour shall be the shame of your master's house."*

Tossed like a ball into a wide land: This is an image of exile. Shebna is going to go into exile.

Your chariots of honour shall be the shame of your master's house: Shebna was going to become an instrument of shame to those whom he was supposed to serve.

Verse 19: *"So I will drive you out of your office, and from your position He will pull you down."*

Your office: His position. His seat of authority.

Your position: His status.

He: Referring to God.

Pull you down: Destroy.

Note: Shebna was a man who was focused upon earthly pride. He wanted to exalt himself, and in doing so he brought shame to those that he was supposed to serve. God is going to send him into exile and there he is going to die – never to be heard from again. This is a very sad ending for this man. He had an important place and position in society, and he had an incredible opportunity to make a difference, to have a Godly influence on others. But he did not think about others but only about himself. This led to shame, dishonour and destruction.

Verse 20: *“It shall come about in that day that I will call to My servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah;”*

In that day: An expression of judgment - Judgment Day. Judgment produces a change. Judah is going to receive judgment, and the change that is going to come about from this judgment is a change in administration.

Eliakim: Many of the Christian scholars see this man as kind of a typology for Messiah. His name means ‘My God He will raise up’. This name has within it a hint of resurrection.

Note: Although this prophecy was fulfilled, it still has relevance for the last days. It foreshadows what has to still take place at the end. In this chapter we have learned that there was an apparent defeat coming. The people were so sure of this defeat that they ate and drank because they expected to die. Death however did not come, but a transition, a change in administration, did. In much the same way, in the last days, there is going to be a time of great trouble in the last days (Jeremiah 30:7). Things are going to look rather hopeless for the children of Jacob (the Israelis) in the last days. However, a remnant of the house of David is going to be saved (Zechariah 13:8-9). It is at this time that the wicked administration (“Shebna”) will be removed, and a transition to a new administration occurs – Messiah (of whom Eliakim is a type) will set up His Kingdom on Earth and He will begin to rule and reign (Revelation 20:4-6).

Hilkiyah: This name means ‘My portion is the Lord’. Through resurrection we receive our portion, our reward, from the Lord. Those like Shebna had no hope, no expectation of God’s reward. They did not believe in a resurrection. They had no Kingdom faith or hope. It is only when we have a Kingdom perspective, a Kingdom hope, that we will be able to endure, persevere, overcome, as we know that in the end there is going to be a marvellous change.

Verse 21: *“And I will clothe him in your tunic, and with your sash I will gird him; and your government I will give into his hands. He shall become a father for the inhabitant of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.”*

Your: God is still speaking to Shebna.

Gird: Strengthen

Your government I will give into his hands: Eliakim is going to have authority. He is going to rule.

Father: Fathers provide and protect. Fathers leave an inheritance for their children. Eliakim teaches us about what Messiah is going to bring about for His covenant people.

Verse 22: *“The key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder; so he shall open, and no one shall close; and he shall close, and no one shall open.”*

Note: This verse is found in Revelation 3:7. The message in Revelation 2 and 3 is spoken to the people of God – teaching them how to be found faithful and how to overcome in the last days.

The key ... I will lay on his shoulder: He (ultimately Messiah, but Eliakim in this context - a typology of Messiah) is given an authority and a responsibility for the house of David.

He shall open: The Kingdom of God is opened to us through the gospel, through believing in Messiah Yeshua.

No one shall close: Once we have accepted Messiah, no one can keep us/shut us out of the Kingdom of God.

He shall close, and no one shall open: For those who reject the gospel, the Kingdom of God shall not be opened up to them.

Verse 23: *“And I will fasten him as a peg in a faithful place, and he shall be for a glorious throne for the house of his father.”*

Note: The nation of Judah was not going to be destroyed. A transition of leadership was going to happen, and a new leader was going to take Shebna’s place. This new leader, Eliakim, was going to be placed in a secure place. He was going to endure and bring honor.

Verse 24: *“And they will place upon him all the glory of his father’s house – the offspring and the future offspring. He will take care of every small vessel, from the cups to all the lyres.”*

Him: Many scholars believe that ‘him’ is referring to the children of Israel, under the leadership of Eliakim.

Place upon him all the glory of his father’s house: This means that he can be trusted.

Offspring: The sons and the daughters.

Future offspring: Future generations.

He will take care of: He will be reliable.

Lyres: Musical instruments.

From the cups to all the lyres: This one will be dependable to keep both the house and the music (the worship) well maintained.

Verse 25: *“‘In that day,’ declares the Lord of hosts, ‘the peg that is fastened in the secure place will be removed and be cut down and fall, and the burden that was on it will be cut off, for the Lord has spoken.’”*

Note: This verse appears to be problematic at face value. Many commentators will steer it away from the direction that this passage is going in and they say it refers back to Shebna (a kind of summary verse of what happened to him and how he felt etc). Others say that this verse is futuristic. Those who take this latter stance speak of a time yet future when Judaism, having been like ‘a peg in a secure place’, will be chopped down and it will fall. Those who trusted in Judaism are going to see it, that which they had thought of as their firm foundation, being ripped apart. This is foreshadowing a time of change. The people will no longer find their security in Judaism, but, when Messiah returns for His second coming,

they will realise that He is the Son of David and their Messiah – the One who truly holds the key of David (Zechariah 12:10).

Chapter 23

The prophecy of Isaiah is not for the Jewish people alone. Isaiah prophesies about many nations and different peoples. The purpose and primary message of a large portion of these prophecies is the threat of judgment and a call to repentance. God is calling people back to truth.

Verse 1: *“The burden against Tyre. Wail, you ships of Tarshish! For it is laid waste, so that there is no house, no harbour; from the land of Cyprus it is revealed to them.”*

Burden: God is placing a weight upon these people because He is displeased with them. This is a call to repentance.

Tyre...Tarshish: Coastal (port) cities in the nation of Lebanon. Maritime trade made these cities wealthy.

Wail: A term of lamentation. God is calling this city to wail, to lament. The burden that God is going to place on this city would affect the ships – their trade.

Laid waste: Plundered. Stripped bare of everything of value. This is a term of destruction.

No house, no harbour: Their homes and the harbour are going to be destroyed.

Verse 2: *“Be still, dwellers of the coastland, you merchants of Sidon, your messenger is passing through the sea.”*

Be still: Be silent. There is no way to avoid this judgment. It has been decreed and it will come to pass.

Coastland: Could be referring to an island or a port/coastal city.

Merchants: Traders. Shipping goods to and from Lebanon was its main source of national income.

Sidon: Another key city along the coast of Lebanon. Sidon was north of Tyre. Much of the wealth in Lebanon was brought in through these two port cities.

Messenger: This messenger is proclaiming that judgment is coming.

Verse 3: *“In mighty waters is the seed of Shihor, the harvest of the River is her revenue, and she is a marketplace for the nations.”*

Shihor: Shihor is seen as connected to Egypt. Egypt was once again a very prosperous and wealthy place. There was a shipping go-between Egypt and this location in Lebanon.

The harvest of the River: Referring to the Nile River. Egypt was famous for its agriculture. It would export its grain to these places along the Mediterranean and from there the nations would purchase what they needed. However, God’s judgment falling upon these places in Tyre and Sidon (these cities in Lebanon) was going to also have a negative effect or impact on Egypt and her revenue.

Verse 4: *“Be ashamed, O Sidon; for the sea has said, the powerful sea has said: ‘I have not laboured, I have not given birth. I have not raised up young men, or exalted virgins.’”*

The sea has said: Isaiah is using poetic language.

I have not laboured: This city was exceedingly wealthy, but they had not done the work in order to be prosperous. Others had paid the price, but they had benefitted from it.

Lebanon, and its ports, were strategically located, perfectly situated, for trade with Africa, Europe and the Middle East.

Verse 5: *“When the report comes to Egypt, they also will be in agony at the report of Tyre.”*

Note: Tyre’s suffering is going to effect Egypt. Egypt is going to suffer too.

Agony: Great pain or suffering.

Verse 6: *“Pass through, O Tarshish, Wail O inhabitant of the coastland.”*

Note: Because of this judgment that is going to be placed upon these two Lebanese cities (Tyre and Sidon) there is going to be great lamentation. This lamentation will not only affect Lebanon, but other countries are going to feel the adverse effects of this judgment and they will wail too. This teaches us an important principle: Our sin does not only affect us. It can also affect others in a very adverse way. When we reap the consequences (judgment) for our sin, others may also suffer.

Verse 7: *“This is to you O joyous city, whose history is from ancient days, your feet will remove you far off to sojourn.”*

Joyous: These cities in Lebanon had been full of joy because others had built them up and made them prosperous. They reaped the benefits of the labours of others. This caused them much joy.

Whose history is from ancient days: They had a long history of prosperity, success, wealth and great joy. Their payday is coming. All that made them joyful is going to be taken away from them.

Your feet will remove you far off to sojourn: Because of this judgment, people are going to leave or abandon Lebanon.

Verse 8: *“Who has taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traders are the honourable of the earth?”*

Who has taken this counsel: The question being asked here is: who is the source of this judgment?

Counsel: God has provided information; He has given revelation as to why this is happening to Tyre (see Isaiah 23:9)

Crowning city: This was a city that was highly exalted. It had great authority and power.

Princes: High officials

Traders: Merchants

Honourable: They were very influential.

Verse 9: *“The Lord of hosts has counselled concerning her, to profane the proud and all her beauty to make light together with all the glorious ones of the land.”*

Lord of hosts (Lord of the armies): This is not a term for God used in the law of Moses, but the prophets very frequently use this name for the Lord. It is a name that speaks of God’s power and ability to carry out His Word.

Make light: To bring it low or to make it less.

Note: Everyone is going to see this judgment of God when it is placed upon these cities in Lebanon.

Verse 10: *“Pass through your land like the River, O daughter of Tarshish; there is no more strength.”*

Pass through your land: Have a look at your land and see what has happened. They will see that there is no longer anything desirable or powerful left in their nation.

River: This is specifically referring to the Nile River. The Nile flowed strongly, and it moved very quickly. It was a mighty river.

Verse 11: *“His hand He stretched out upon the sea, He shook kingdoms; the Lord commanded against Canaan to destroy her strongholds.”*

He: God.

Canaan: In Hebrew this is a word that can either refer to the Promised Land, or it is a word that can be used to refer to a merchant. In this context it is referring to the latter. This can be proved grammatically within the text. ‘Merchants’ is a word that is written in the third person feminine singular. ‘Strongholds’ is also written in the third person feminine singular. When the word for Canaan is used to refer to the Promised land it is written in the masculine singular. Tenses need to agree with each other, therefore in this context Canaan should be read ‘(the) merchant’.

Verse 12: *“And He says, ‘No more will you rejoice, O you oppressed virgin daughter of Sidon. Arise, cross over to Cyprus; there also you will have no rest.’”*

Oppressed: Many people who are prosperous and wealthy do not consider the widow, the orphan or the stranger, but they use their wealth on themselves and on their own desires. A Biblical principle is that the measure we use for others is the measure that we ourselves will receive (Matthew 7:2). Sidon had oppressed others and now that measure was going to be returned to them, whereby they would now become the ones oppressed. The prosperity that they had enjoyed for themselves for so many generations, was going to be removed from them.

Cyprus: Cyprus was not very far away from Lebanon. It was a fairly short westward crossing on the Mediterranean.

There also you will have no rest: The people who left Lebanon and went to Cyprus, thinking that things would go better for them there, would soon realise that even in Cyprus they would still be suffering.

Verse 13: “Behold the land of the Chaldeans, this people was not; Assyria founded it for shipmen, they set up its towers, and raised up its palaces, but she was made to fall down.”

Chaldeans: Another name for the Babylonians.

Note: The Chaldeans and the Assyrians (being landlocked and not having access to the sea, and therefore trading routes) invested heavily in Tyre and Sidon – which, strategically, were in prime positions for sea traders.

This people was not: Tyre and Sidon would not have been a mighty people if it had not been for the Babylonian investment into their economy.

Shipmen: The word used here is a maritime/naval term.

Set up its towers and raised up its palaces: The Babylonians/Assyrians had done this for Tyre and Sidon.

Verse 14: “Lament, O ships of Tarshish. For plundered is your power.”

Lament: This verse is repeated from part of Isaiah 23:1

Ships of Tarshish: Although we do not know the exact location of Tarshish we do know that it was a port city (some say it was located in Spain, near Gibraltar). It was one of the cities that had a trading route to Lebanon and therefore it would have been impacted negatively (economically) by the fall of Tyre and Sidon.

Plundered: Destroyed, devastated.

Verse 15: “And it will come about on that day that Tyre will be forgotten for seventy years, as a day of one king. At the end of seventy years, it will happen to Tyre as the song of the harlot.”

That day: ‘That day’ is a reference to judgment - either the great Day of Judgment, at the end of this age, or simply another time of judgment (prior to the great Day of Judgment in the last days).

A day of one king: Many of the rabbinical scholars and Christian scholars agree that this is a reference to King David (who lived 70 years – 2 Samuel 5:4). Judah forgot King David. They did not adapt his teaching to their lives and nor did they have the Kingdom mindset that David had. Many say it was for this reason that they were exiled for the same time span as David’s life had been.

Seventy years: The Babylonian exile also lasted for seventy years (Jeremiah 29:10).

The song of the harlot: This difference between the 70 years of Tyre’s exile and the seventy years of Judah’s exile in Babylonian is what happened at the end of the seventy years. For Judah: God renewed His covenant with the Jewish people, and He brought them out of exile. This redemption and renewal, however, was not going to be the case for Tyre and Sidon. A harlot advertised herself and her wares by calling out in a loud voice (her “song”). This was what Tyre’s lot was going to be after her seventy years of exile had been completed. Tyre would have to try to make her own economic plan.

Verse 16: *“Take a harp and go through the city, O forgotten harlot; play well and multiply your songs on account that you may be remembered.”*

Forgotten harlot: Many years have passed, and Tyre has become like an aged harlot. She needs to try to get the world to remember who she was in her prime so that they can buy into and invest in her again.

Verse 17: *“And it shall come about at the end of seventy years that the Lord will visit Tyre. She will return to her pay, and she will play the harlot with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the land.”*

Visit: This is such an important word in the Scripture. When God visits it means that He gets very strongly involved (Luke 1:68, Ruth 1:6, Jeremiah 27:22 etc). This visitation can have very positive or very negative implications for the peoples who are “visited”. The purpose of God’s visits is for His will to be fulfilled.

Her pay: Her harlot or prostitute’s wages.

Play the harlot: She will prostitute herself.

Note: Even though God restores Tyre, after seventy years, she is not going to remember her judgment and nor is she going to repent and change. Instead, she is going to go straight back to her former ways – being a merchant and playing the harlot. She is going to be a source of idolatry for the kingdoms of the earth (see also Revelation 18:9-20).

Verse 18: *“And it shall come about that her wages and her harlot payments will be sanctified for the Lord. It is not going to be stored up in the storage house, for her gain will be for those who dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for an elegant covering.”*

Sanctified for the Lord: God is going to take it from them, strip it from them, and He is going to give it to His people. The reason God does this is because they did not learn from God’s judgment. They neither repented nor changed their ways. They did not apply God’s prophetic truth to their lives.

Storage house: Treasury

Her gain will be for those who dwell before the Lord: Wealth transfer, from the wicked to the righteous, is something that is going to happen at the end of the age (This is not something applicable to the age we are in right now). At the end of this age, when Yeshua comes again and sets up His Kingdom on Earth, God is going to take from those who did not learn His truth. He is going to take away their earthly prosperity and He is going to provide it for those who sit before the Lord (those who have learnt and applied the truth of God to their lives – John 14:6). This is the wage that will be given to the righteous (Proverbs 10:16).

Eat sufficiently: The righteous are going to be satisfied (Matthew 5:6)

Elegant: This is also a word that means durable or lasting (Deuteronomy 29:5).

Note: This reminds us of what Yeshua told us when He said not to store up our wealth upon this earth but to do so in the Kingdom of heaven (Matthew 6:19-21). True and eternal reward will only be obtainable in the Kingdom of heaven.

Chapter 24

God's judgment is severe, it is harsh, and it is thorough. This is why we need to be so thankful and grateful for the salvation that we have received through Yeshua's death on the cross. After God's judgment comes something good – the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

This prophecy in Isaiah 24 does not speak about something that would be fulfilled in Isaiah's lifetime or prior to the first coming of Messiah. This is a last day's prophecy. It speaks about God's ultimate judgment (His wrath) that is going to change the face of this Earth. If God's desire is to change the attitude, appearance and mindset of the world how much more does He desire that we, His people, are changed and transformed? (2 Corinthians 3:18, 2 Corinthians 5:17).

Verse 1: *"Behold the Lord empties the earth, and He destroys it. He twists its face and scatters abroad its inhabitants."*

Note: The language used here is poetic and there is much parallelism. Frequently prophecy is delivered as poetry. This wide variety of vocabulary that is used gives us, the reader, a full understanding of what God is up to.

Empties: When something is made empty there is a destroying, a loss, a suffering. God's judgment brings about loss, as those things that God judges are things which are not part of His will. Those things which do not manifest the glory of God are destroyed.

Twists its face: When a person's face changes it means that it is not like it was initially. When a person's face changes it shows a different feeling, a different attitude, a different perspective. This twisting of the face of the earth's surface implies that a change/a transition is coming. God's judgment is going to bring about a transformation of His creation.

Scatters: The word used here is a strong word. It is a word that implies a rapid or violent moving or casting away.

Note: Not only is there going to be a loss of wealth ('empties') but there is also going to be a great loss of life ('scatters' – a violent tossing aside of the inhabitants of the Earth). Those who are tossed aside will not be part of what God is about, and nor will they partake of the Kingdom that He is building.

Verse 2: *"And it shall be: as the people, as the priests; as the servant, as his master; as the maidservant, as her lady; as the buyer, as the seller; as the lender, as the borrower; as the one who is in debt, so also will be the creditor."*

Note: What we have in this verse is people in a couple of different positions socially, economically, etc. Usually these positions are opposite one another (eg: servant and master). Under God's judgment all these differences are going to melt away and everyone will be in the same or in a similar position. God's judgment is a great equalizer. It puts everyone who has rejected the gospel on an equal footing, and all are on the same pathway – the pathway to eternal destruction.

Verse 3: *“The earth shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered, for the Lord has spoken this word.”*

Emptied...plundered: Loss is being emphasized.

The Lord has spoken: All of this is coming about because God has said it.

Verse 4: *“The earth mourns and fades away; the world languishes and fades away; the exalted people of the earth languish.”*

The earth mourns and fades away: The earth is not going to thrive. God's judgment is going to bring mourning and a fading away, a withering. This is simply a word that is a manifestation of decay. It manifests a dying process. This is what is going to happen to creation – it is going to change by means of death. This should not surprise us. Death (the death of Messiah and our dying with Him – Romans 6:6-11) is what brings about a change in our lives.

Languishes: It is going to be miserable, loathsome.

Exalted people: Those who have a high position. Those who are in control. They are the ones who have the finer things in life, a greater degree of resources, authority and power. They are not going to escape God's judgment.

Verse 5: *“The earth has become defiled underneath its inhabitants, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, and violated His eternal covenant.”*

The earth has become defiled underneath its inhabitants: It is not the earth (creation) which is to blame for its defilement – the inhabitants of the earth (humanity) are the problem. In Judaism that which is last is first/primary in thought. This means that what God created last (man) was His first or primary purpose for creation. God prepared creation for man, but man has brought corruption or defilement into it.

The laws: The commandments of God. When the commandments are transgressed there will be no righteousness. Without righteousness there will be no manifestation of God's glory. The absence of His glory soon leads to His judgment.

Changed the ordinance: They have made up their own laws, which are in violation to God's laws or standards.

Eternal covenant: This is the eternal covenant related to Messiah. They have violated this covenant (the gospel) due to their lack or absence of faith.

Verse 6: *“Therefore the curse devours the earth, and the inhabitants of it they were guilty. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, few men are left.”*

The curse devours: The outcome of rejecting God's truth is that a curse is activated in the earth.

Guilty: The Word of God clearly reveals what the problem is. When we violate God's laws, His statutes, His standards then we are guilty before Him. Guilt produces shame.

Burned: Set ablaze with fire.

Few men are left: The humanity that remains will be small in amount.

Verse 7: *“The new wine fails, the vine languishes, all the merry-hearted sigh.”*

The new wine fails: We see so often in the prophets that the produce of the land, or the lack thereof, reflects the spiritual condition of God's people.

Languishes: It is miserable or loathsome.

Merry-hearted: An idiom for those who rejoice.

Sigh: An expression of grief, sorrow or great pain/discomfort. The people are not experiencing comfort (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

Verse 8: *“The mirth of the tambourine ceases, the noise of the jubilant ends, the joy of the harp ceases.”*

Mirth: The joy. The happiness.

Ceases: The word ‘shabbat’. This is a word that speaks of a stopping.

Note: There is no more joyful music. Everything stops because God is displeased because He (and His laws) have been disrespected.

Verse 9: *“With a song they do not drink wine, and strong drink will be bitter to its drinkers.”*

Wine...strong drink: Usually associated with celebrations, rejoicing and banquets. These will be no more as there will be nothing to celebrate.

Verse 10: *“The city of confusion is broken down; every house is shut up, so that none may go in.”*

Confusion: Confusion is related to the absence of God's order, due to a rejection of God's purposes.

None may go in: In a happy society, people visit one another. Here, however, the homes are closed up. There will not be a reason for people to visit one another. The only thing the people will be thinking about is the suffering that they are experiencing.

Verse 11: *“In the streets they cry out concerning the wine, all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land has gone into exile.”*

Wine: Wine is related to joy. The absence of joy causes them to cry out in the streets.

All joy is darkened: Those who had been glad have become gloomy or dark.

Mirth of the land has gone into exile: Joy has gone into exile. ‘Exile’ is a word that is used in reference to God's punishment. It is what happens to those who reject God's purposes.

When we choose our own purposes, we are inviting God's punishment into our lives, but when we choose His purposes, we are inviting His provision into our lives.

Verse 12: *“In the city desolation remains, and destruction has hit the gate.”*

Destruction has hit the gate: This is a Hebrew idiom. When the gate of a city is ‘hit by destruction’ it means that the city has been captured, defeated.

Verse 13: *“For thus will be in the midst of the world in the midst of the people, it shall be like the shaking of an olive tree, like the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done.”*

In the midst of the world in the midst of the people: What is happening to the world is also going to happen to the people.

The shaking of an olive tree: This is an idiom for harvesting. When they harvest the olive trees, they shake the trees so that the olives can fall to the ground. A harvest is related to the concept of a payday. This payday is going to go one of two possible ways for all people - either God is going to look upon our faithfulness and He is going to reward us, or He will look at our unfaithfulness and we will receive His punishment.

Verse 14: *“They lift up their voice, they shout in the majesty of the Lord, they rejoice from the sea.”*

Lift up...shout...rejoice: In this verse there is a change. The first 13 verses speak of God’s judgment. People can now see that God’s judgment has fallen on the evil things – those things that were set against Him. When they see God’s righteous judgments (His wrath) they are going to rejoice (Psalm 96:13, Revelation 18:20).

The sea: The roaring of the sea speaks to the majestic and powerful nature of God.

Verse 15: *“Therefore the valleys honor the Lord, and the islands of the sea give glory to the name of the Lord God of Israel.”*

The Lord God of Israel: This is an end days prophecy. This use of God’s name (as the God of Israel) reminds us of the faithfulness of God to keep His covenant with His people. At the end, God is going to bring about a change for the children of Israel. Two thirds are going to be lost, but a 1/3rd remnant will come to faith in Messiah Yeshua (Zechariah 13:8-9, Romans 9:27-28, Romans 11:25-29).

Verse 16: *“From the ends of the earth songs of praise are heard, and the beauty of the righteous One is seen. I am being reduced! Woe to me! The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously. Indeed, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.”*

Ends: This is the same word used for the corner of the fringe garments (The prayer garment has four corners on it. On each of these corners are tassels with a blue thread running through them – Numbers 15:37-41. These corners reminded the people to follow the commandments of the Lord and to be a holy, set apart, people to God). It is a word that speaks of the extremities. In this context it is talking about those in the furthest reaches of the earth.

The beauty of the righteous One is seen. I am being reduced! Woe to me!: This is similar to what we read in Isaiah 6. Isaiah, when he was receiving his call, saw the majesty of God. When he saw it, he responded in this way...woe is me. As God’s judgment comes, His splendour and holiness are going to be seen to the uttermost corners of the earth. Like Isaiah, the inhabitants of the earth will respond in the way Isaiah did: ‘Woe is me’.

Treacherous dealers: Traitors. Betrayers. This word for betrayal is repeated a few times in this verse. Isaiah looks and sees how the people have betrayed God. He is saying “woe is me” because he lives in the midst of a treacherous people.

Verse 17: *“Fear and the pit and the snare are upon you, O dwellers of the earth.”*

Note: God’s judgment is thorough. God’s judgment is complete. The only way to escape from this judgment is to be in a covenantal relationship with God.

Fear: This word is a synonym for terror. The people are greatly afraid.

Pit and the snare: The people of the world are trapped. They have no way to escape.

Dwellers of the earth: Those who are going to be consumed by the judgment of God are often referred to by this term – those who dwell on the earth. This same term is used by John in the book of Revelation for those who are going to be the recipients of God's wrath (see Revelation 13:8). “Those who dwell in the heavens” is a term attributed to believers. It is a position of being and not necessarily referring to our dwelling place right now.

(Ephesians 2:6). In a sense, once we believe, our passport is stamped ‘citizen of heaven’.

Even though our current location is Earth we are not truly citizens here, but are ambassadors, pilgrims passing through.

Verse 18: *“It will come about that the one who flees from the sound of fear will fall into the pit, and the one who gets up from the midst of the pit will be caught in the snare; for the chimneys from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth are shaken.”*

Fear: Terror

Note: There will be no escape for the earth dwellers.

Shaken: This is a word that is associated with a great or loud noise.

Verse 19: *“The earth is violently broken, the earth is split open, the earth is shaken exceedingly.”*

Split open: The earth is going to be wobbly. It is going to lack stability.

Shaken exceedingly: The earth is going to collapse.

Verse 20: *“The earth will be shaken as one who is drunk, and it shall totter like a hut; its transgression shall be heavy upon it, and it will fall, and not rise again.”*

Shaken as one who is drunk: Those who are alive on earth at this time are going to wander around in a state of confusion. They will have no clear direction in their lives.

Hut: A tent or shack – ie: a temporary residence. People stay in this shelter for a short period of time while they are traveling.

Note: Those who belong to the earth (those who have a humanistic point of view and not a Godly perspective) are going to be confused. They are going to be shaken, they are going to wobble and then they are going to collapse. All this will be happening to them as a result of their transgression – sin.

Verse 21: *“It will come about on that day that the Lord will visit the exalted army and from on high concerning the kings upon the earth.”*

That day: The implication is that this is referring to the last days – to a time of judgment.

Visit: This is the same Hebrew word found in Isaiah 23:17 where it is translated ‘visit’. It is a word that is translated in a variety of different ways.

God can visit in a good way (To redeem, to assist etc) or God can visit in a way that is bad for people (To punish people, to destroy, etc). It is a word that shows God's commitment to the manifestation of His character.

The exalted army: Some commentators say that this is referring to the antichrist and his army. They are going to want to set themselves up – even to fighting a battle in the heavenly realm (2 Thessalonians 2:4, Isaiah 14:13-15).

The exalted army ... the kings upon the earth: God is going to visit and judge those who hold lofty positions in this earth.

Verse 22: *“And shall be gathered the prisoner concerning the pit, and they will be closed concerning the prison; they will be punished many days.”*

Gathered the prisoner: God's prisoners are going to be in the pit, in prison, for many days (see Revelation 20:3) before their final punishment.

Punished: This is again the same word that can be translated 'visited'. God has an appointment with them, an appointment to judge and punish them.

Many days: This is an expression that means for eternity. Their punishment is never going to come to an end (Revelation 14:10-11).

Verse 23: *“The moon is going to be confounded, and the sun will be ashamed. For the Lord of hosts He has reigned on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before His elders of glory.”*

The moon ... the sun: The moon ruled the night, and the sun ruled the day (Genesis 1:16). These lights were made to be signs and seasons and days and years. They were created to give instruction and illumination to those on earth. The world, however, did not respond to them, so they were unsuccessful. People did not understand the truth that the sun and moon were trying to portray. The true meaning of the seasons and holidays are only understood through revelation/illumination. People paid no heed. Truth did not bring about change. This causes the moon and sun to be ashamed.

Confounded... ashamed: These words are synonyms.

The Lord of hosts He has reigned: This is written in the past tense even though it is a future event – referring to the transition that is going to take place at the end of this age from the kingdom of this world into the Kingdom of God. Past tense indicates something is seen as done, it is seen as complete and entire in God's eyes, although we have not actually experienced it yet.

On Mount Zion and in Jerusalem: There is a Godly purpose and future for Jerusalem.

Elders of glory (holiness or honour): There are 24 of these elders (Revelation 4:4). 12 of these elders are related to the 12 tribes of Israel (the walls – Revelation 21:12-13), and 12 of them are related to the apostles (the foundation – Revelation 21:14-15). Israel, and the tribes of Israel, are still part of God's plans and purposes. If we set Israel aside, we are not going to rightly understand God's purposes and plans, His prophetic revelation.

Chapter 25

We will not receive the fullness of God's blessings or His promises until we enter into His Kingdom. This does not mean that God does not bless us now in this world, at this time. He does – graciously and abundantly. The fullness of God's Kingdom, though, will not be realised until His wrath/judgment has been poured out. For those who are in a covenantal relationship with God, His judgment leads to good things.

Verse 1: *“The Lord my God are You. I will exalt you, I will give thanks for Your name, for You have done wonderfully. Your counsels of old are faith and truth.”*

The Lord my God are you: Isaiah is prophesying, but he's doing so in a very personal way. He is acknowledging the Lord God as his God. We could see this declaration as Isaiah's statement of faith.

I will exalt you: God has revealed Himself to Isaiah. Isaiah has experienced God. This causes Isaiah's response toward God to be one of exaltation and praise.

Give thanks for Your name: Isaiah is recognising the character (name is synonymous with character) of God and he is thanking God for His character. Giving thanks can also be a confession or an acknowledgement of the goodness of God's character.

You have done wonderfully: In the past, in the present and especially in the future God has/is and will manifest His wonders, His marvelous things.

Counsels of old: God's blueprints for the future – His plans and purposes. God's plan has been made known to mankind from ancient times.

Faith: This is what our response should be to God's plans and purposes. We need to respond to them in faith.

Truth: This speaks of being in agreement with God.

Verse 2: *“For You have set a city to a heap, a fortified city collapses in a ruin. A palace of foreigners to be a city no more; it will never be rebuilt.”*

Set: Placed. Made.

Heap: The city has changed. It has undergone a transformation. No longer is it a city, but it is a pile of ruins.

A fortified city: A fortified city is a strong and powerful city.

Collapses: This is the same word that can be used for a waterfall cascading down.

Ruin: Destruction has happened, and God has brought it about. This is what God does to all who stand in opposition to Him.

Foreigners: Those that are outside of Israel. These are the ones who enjoy the finer things that this world has to offer (*'palace'*) - those who have no covenantal relationship with God. Within their human power, intellect and capabilities they made glorious things. But God is going to destroy them.

Never be rebuilt: No more opportunities for them, no second chances after God's judgment has taken place.

Verse 3: *“Therefore a strong people they will honour You, a city of ruthless nations will fear You.”*

Therefore: This is the response of those who witness God's judgment and survive (the remnant).

Strong: Powerful.

Honour: Even though they have strength, power and resources they are not going to rely on themselves. When they see God's judgment, they are going to make a wise decision and are going to respond by honoring or glorifying God.

Ruthless: In modern Hebrew this is the Hebrew word for tyranny – those who enslave, oppress and punish others.

Nations: The Gentiles – those who have not been interested in God, and so have not put their faith in Him.

Fear: When the Gentiles witness the judgment of God they are going to be changed/transformed.

Verse 4: *“For You have become a stronghold for the one who is exceedingly poor, a refuge to the destitute in his time of trouble, a shelter from the storm, a shade against the heat; for the breath of the terrible ones is as the rain that beats against the wall.”*

Terrible ones: Probably referring to those who practice tyranny, those who breathe threats towards others.

The rain that beats against the wall: The words, the threats, are going to have no power. They are no problem for God. Although rain may be strong, as it beats against a wall it has no effect on that wall, it makes no impressions.

Verse 5: *“As heat in a desert so the noise of the foreigner is reduced; as heat in the shade of a thick cloud, the song of the tyrants will be diminished.”*

Heat: This word implies 'arid' or 'dry' – what happens when it is very dry.

Heat in a desert: The expectation is that the desert is going to be hot. Heat is not a bother in this location.

Noise: Uprising.

Foreigner: Those who have no covenantal relationship with God.

Reduced: God is going to subdue them; He is going to make them submit. This submission could be either through a change or transformation in their hearts, or it can simply mean that God is going to conquer them.

Note: In this passage we see how God is going to bring great change to this world. If we are desiring righteousness, holiness, morality, and justice then God's judgment is going to be of interest to us.

Verse 6: *“The Lord of hosts He will do to all the people on this mountain: a feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of well refined wines on the lees.”*

Lord of hosts: This is a name of God that speaks about His power, strength, and sovereignty. He is able to do what He has said He will do.

He will do: This is speaking about what God is going to literally do, from this mountain, for the people who are in covenant with Him.

This mountain: In this second half of Isaiah 25 this location, 'this mountain', is emphasized. Many believe that 'this mountain' is speaking about the mountain (government) of the Lord i.e. The Temple Mount. Yeshua – the Messiah King – is going to rule from this place (Isaiah 2:2-4).

Choice pieces: A word that can also mean oil or the fat of the meat – usually associated with the best aspect of the meat.

Note: Many say this verse is reminiscent of the great wedding banquet in Revelation 19:7-9. John and Isaiah agree that there is going to be feasting, a banquet of the best foods and wines.

Fat things full of marrow: The words used here in Hebrew allude to that which is prepared in a delicate or careful manner.

Well refined: This wine has gone through a careful process so that it can be used to its full potential.

Wines: Wine in the Scripture is synonymous with joy. God is promising that through His rule He will make an abundant feast for His people. This feast will consist of choice foods and wine which has been specifically prepared to bring great joy.

Verse 7: *“And He will swallow on that mountain the face of a covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.”*

Swallow: This is a word that speaks of a change that is coming. It is a word that can be used in reference to judgment – that which is consumed, that which is done away with. God is going to devour or bring something to an end.

The face of a covering: This is like a veil which is cast over all mankind. God is going to remove this veil that keeps us from seeing, beholding, or understanding the essence of His glory. Obviously, we will never know everything, but this speaks about a change for us. The glory of God is going to be manifested to us in a greater way in His Kingdom.

Spread over all nations: This veil is something that all of humanity have had in common. It is something that has separated or hidden us from God's Presence. However, through God's judgment on this mountain this veil is going to be removed.

Verse 8: *“He has swallowed up death forever. The Lord God has wiped away the tear from upon every face; the contempt of His people He will remove from all the earth. For the Lord He has spoken.”*

Swallowed: This is the same word used in Isaiah 25:7 (even though many of the English translations have rendered them as two different words). It is a word that speaks of a transition or change.

He has swallowed up death: Even though this is still a future event, from our perspective, it is an event that, from God's perspective, is as good as done, therefore written in the past tense.

Wiped away the tear: See Revelation 21:4

Every face: Referring to every face of those who are in a covenantal relationship with Him and therefore are in His Kingdom with Him.

No one will enter into the Kingdom of God without being in a new covenant relationship with God through Messiah. This covenant is established by faith, by the grace of God, in the sufficiency of the work of Messiah.

Contempt: The reproach, the shame.

The Lord He has spoken: This is a term of promise.

Verse 9: *“He will say on that day: ‘Behold our God. This is the One we have hoped for, He is our Saviour. This is the Lord; we have hoped for Him; Let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation.’”*

Note: This verse gives us the clearest indication that we are indeed talking about the last days. This verse is not speaking about something that has already happened, but about something that still has to happen.

That day: Judgment Day – that day that gives way to the Kingdom of God.

Salvation: This is the meaning of the name Yeshua – Jesus. It speaks of a Kingdom victory - the outcome of overcoming the enemy through the grace and work of God that He bestows on us.

Verse 10: *“For the hand of the Lord will rest on this mountain, and Moab shall be treaded down under Him, as one treads hay in the midst of a dung heap.”*

Hand: Hand speaks about power, strength, ability and also God’s authority.

This mountain: Jerusalem (the Temple Mount).

Moab: An enemy of Israel that tried to prohibit them from entering into the land (Israel entering into the Promised Land is a parallel picture of God's New Covenant people entering into the Kingdom of God).

Dung: Manure.

Hay in the midst of a dung heap: This hay has no significance whatsoever. That is what this verse is saying about Moab, and not only Moab, but all people or nations that try to prohibit or thwart the plans and purposes of God.

Verse 11: *“He will spread forth His hands in its midst, He will spread forth His hands as the swimmer spreads forth in order to swim. He will make low him who has pride, with an ambush of his hands.”*

Hands: Authority. Power.

Its midst: This could either be referring to God spreading out His hands in the midst of the mountain or in the midst of His people.

As the swimmer spreads forth in order to swim: Swimmers stroke their arms/hands in the water in a very specific manner, each stroke has a specific purpose, and these strokes help the swimmers to arrive in a very specific location. This is what God is going to do. He is going to move in a very specific way and for a very specific purpose to arrive at His desired outcome – His Kingdom purposes.

Make low: Humble.

An ambush: This is not the word for ‘trickery’ but is the word for ambush. An ambush surprises. An ambush captures one off guard.

Verse 12: “Your walls of your elevated fortress He has brought down, lay low, and bring to the ground, even unto the dust.”

Walls: Walls speak of security.

Brought down: Humbled. All of humanity's attempts to resist God and war against Him are going to be brought to nothing.

Chapter 26

Judgment is like two different sides of the same coin. One side is condemnation or punishment. But for those who have repented, the other side is vindication. God's judgment brings vindication for His covenant people, whereby we are positioned in His will. There is an inherent relationship between being in the will of God and being in the Kingdom of God. When we are in God's will we are going to experience Kingdom provision (joy, gladness, fullness).

Verse 1: “On that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: ‘We have a city that is strong; Salvation He will place for walls and ramparts.’”

That day: Judgment Day (usually that final Judgment Day).

This song will be sung: This is a unique introduction to this chapter. It is not a burden, or a vision, but here we are told of a song that is going to be sung on Judgment Day. Songs, in Hebrew, are closely related to poetry. Poetry, very frequently, employs parallelism. In this chapter we see the dichotomy between those who are condemned and those who are vindicated.

The land of Judah: Within the context, Judah is a term that gives this passage a Kingdom connection – God's Kingdom.

City: This is presumably speaking about the main city in Judah – Jerusalem. Jerusalem has an eternal character. Jerusalem is an eternal city (Revelation 21:1-2).

Note: Many translations translate this: “strong city”. Grammatically this is incorrect, as the word ‘city’ is written in the feminine and the word ‘strong’ is written in the masculine. These two words cannot be linked together grammatically.

Strong: This word alludes to the fact that because Jerusalem still exists, we are in a good position, we have hope.

Walls: There are two words that denote walls in Hebrew. One kind of a wall is a wall of a house (which this word is not). The walls spoken of here are the walls that would surround a city. The primary purpose of this kind of wall is to provide security and defense.

Ramparts: These provide additional security to a city.

Note: What God is saying here is that in the last days the people will sing a song of security, a song of defense, a song that will speak about salvation.

Verse 2: “Open the gates that the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter in.”

Gates: Referring to the gates of this city.

Nation: (see Isaiah 9:1). When this word is written in the plural it is mainly referring to the nations – the Gentiles. However, when it is written in the singular (as it is here) it is most often referring to the nation of Israel.

Abraham was told that he was going to be a great nation (Genesis 12:2. Here, 'nation' is also written in the singular and is referring to the nation of Israel – Abraham's natural descendants).

Keeps the truth: They have believed and have been faithful.

Verse 3: *"Those who have their mind inclined to You will be kept in peace. For they have trusted in the Lord."*

Their mind inclined: This has to do with a mentality or a thought process. The way that they think is attached to the way that God thinks.

Kept in peace: Peace is an outcome of being in God's will. Those who do God's will will experience peace.

Verse 4: *"Trust in the Lord forever. For in YAH the Lord is a rock of ages."*

YAH: A name of God (shortened form of YHWH).

A rock of ages: An eternal rock. 'Rock' shows connection to Messiah (Mark 12:10).

Verse 5: *"For He has brought down the inhabitants on high, and the city that is exalted He has made low, He will cast it down unto the land and it will arrive unto dust."*

The inhabitants on high: These people exalted themselves instead of exalting God. They did not have the right mentality or thought process. This is in contrast with the people of faith that we read about in Isaiah 26:4.

Verse 6: *"They are going to be trampled under foot, by the foot of the poor, and the steps of the one who is meagre in his possessions."*

Meagre in his possessions: This is speaking of people who are very, very poor.

Note: These people were prideful and did not show compassion to the poor. They did not love their neighbours as they loved themselves. Therefore, their judgment is to be trampled by the very ones that they despised and neglected.

Verse 7: *"The pathway of the righteous is uprightness; O Most Upright, You weigh the path of the just."*

Pathway: The course or the journey. Those who exalt themselves do not consider their pathways. They do not care if they trample others underfoot in their journey through life. The righteous consider their walk, their lifestyle.

Uprightness: Justice.

O Most Upright: Some translators say these words can be referring to the God who is upright. Other translators simply see it as a description of what is right (ie a straight path).

Weigh: Measure. When things are measured out, they are brought into balance and equality. It is a measurement that demands a response. It is an adding to what is lacking.

The path of the just: Those who walk in the righteousness of God see what others are lacking. They get involved as they want to help. They want to make up what is lacking.

Verse 8: *“Surely in the way of Your judgments, O Lord, we have hoped for You. The desire of our soul is for Your name and for the remembrance of You.”*

Name: Character. Character is connected to behaviour.

Remembrance: Memory of. This is speaking about remembering God’s covenantal promises.

Verse 9: *“My soul desires You at night, even my spirit in the midst of me will seek You at dawn; for when Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.”*

Spirit: Soul

Dawn: The earliest part of the morning.

Righteousness: This is a true believer’s motivation when they turn to Messiah. They want to turn away from sin and unrighteousness and want to live righteously.

Verse 10: *“For grace that is placed upon a wicked one he will not learn righteousness, and in the land of uprightness he will deal unjustly and he will not behold the majesty of the Lord.”*

Grace: Favour.

Wicked one: The wicked person is now contrasted with the righteous. Those who are wicked do not desire to be in a covenantal relationship with God. They do not want the righteousness of God in their lives. This is the difference between a true believer and a non-believer.

Land of uprightness: A land of justice.

Deal unjustly: He will twist justice. Even when he experiences God’s goodness in his life, he doesn’t acknowledge it as from God.

He will not behold the majesty of the Lord: God’s Presence will not be manifest in his life.

Verse 11: *“O Lord, You raise Your hand but they will not see, what they will see they will look and they will be ashamed because of the envy of the people. Surely Your fire upon the enemy will consume him.”*

Envy: A wrong desire, a jealousy.

Your fire upon the enemy: This is the eternal destiny of those who do not love God. They are going to be ashamed, and they are going to be consumed by the fire of God.

Verse 12: *“O Lord, You will establish peace for us, for also all of our deeds You have acted for us.”*

Establish: This is a word for arranging and setting things in order.

Us: Those who are in a covenantal relationship with God.

Note: In this chapter Isaiah goes back and forth between the righteous and the unrighteous.

Peace: Peace is related to the fulfillment of the will of God. The fulfillment of God’s will is experienced by His people.

All of our deeds You have acted for us: All the good deeds that we have done (through the Holy Spirit working within us) have eternal characteristics and consequences.

Verse 13: *“O Lord our God, masters have ruled over us in addition to You, but alone in You we will remember Your name.”*

Masters have ruled over us: In the past they have been enslaved.

We will remember Your name: Even though Israel (in the past) had been ruled over by others, that had not caused them to forget the Lord God. They have remembered Him and His character in the midst of their exile. It was this remembrance that brought them back to the land.

Verse 14: *“The dead they will not live; the deceased they will not rise up. Therefore You have visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.”*

Dead: Here Isaiah goes back to talking about the unrighteous. Those who do not belong to God are dead. They do not have life.

Visited: God went all in. He fully committed Himself to this.

Made all their memory to perish: They will be remembered no more.

Verse 15: *“You have added to the people of the Lord, you have increased the nation; You have done glorious; You have expanded all the borders of the land.”*

Added: This is what God has done for His people.

Increased: God has added (believing Gentiles) to the nation promised to Abraham.

Nation: In the singular, therefore a reference to Israel (and for those who have entered into Israel through the grafting in by the New Covenant – Romans 11:17-26a).

Expanded all the borders of the land: There is an inherent relationship between God’s people and the land (of Israel). There is an emphasis, throughout the Bible, upon the land. One of the things that several commentators say is that God is expanding the land’s borders because a great number of redeemed will be brought into it.

Verse 16: *“O Lord, in trouble they have visited You, they have poured out a prayer and Your uprightness is to them.”*

In trouble: Trouble (Jacob’s trouble – Jeremiah 30:7) is what is going to bring Israel to repentance. God can use difficulties to bring people to salvation.

Visited: Responded to. They are all in. This is a word of commitment.

Uprightness: A word that can be translated ‘ethics’. There has been a change - from walking in disobedience, to embracing the ethical standards of God.

Verse 17: *“Like a pregnant woman draws near to birth she suffers, and she cries out in her labour pains, thus we are before You, O Lord.”*

She suffers...labour pains: Israel will go through her worst time of trouble in the last days.

Verse 18: *“We have become pregnant. We have suffered like one that gives birth; but have born wind, and salvation has not been done in the earth. Nor have fallen the inhabitants of the world.”*

Note: Israel were called to establish salvation and bring light to the Gentiles (Acts 14:47) but, as a nation, they failed miserably at this. They were not the ones who established salvation. What this verse is telling us is that Israel had no merit – nothing good that they had done that they could turn and point to. The only reason Israel turned to God was because she was in trouble.

Nor have fallen the inhabitants of the world: Israel had not brought about a change. They had not defeated their enemies, the tyrants and wicked leaders of the world.

Verse 19: *“Your dead will live; together with My dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; for Your dew is like the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.”*

Your dead: Speaking of those who are God’s covenant people.

Note: This verse is in contrast to Isaiah 26:14. Isaiah 26:14 is referring to the dead of non-covenantal people. Those whom God has punished and destroyed in judgment will not rise up.

They shall arise: Death for God’s covenantal people comes to an end (1 Corinthians 15:35-49). This foreshadows resurrection.

Awake and sing: These are words that show joy.

Your dew: What God provides for His people sustains them and gives them life.

Dew: Morning dew has a special significance in Judaism. Prayers for dew to come down are said throughout summer (from the time of Passover) until the end of autumn (until the Feast of Tabernacles). This morning dew is seen as a blessing, it is related to life.

Verse 20: *“Go My people and come into your chambers and close your door behind you; hide for a little while until wrath passes.”*

Note: This verse teaches, emphatically, that unredeemed Israel WILL go through the wrath of God (this will NOT be the case for the church, who will be raptured before the wrath of God falls – 1 Thessalonians 5:9). Before the wrath of God falls, a sealing of the remnant of unredeemed Israel will take place (Revelation 7:18). This seal is similar to the seal that was placed on Cain so that no one could harm or kill him (Genesis 4:13-15). The remnant of Israel will be sheltered and protected while the wrath of God falls on the earth. It is also important to note that the source of the ‘time of Jacob’s trouble’ is not God. The source of Israel’s trouble, in that day, will be because of the persecution from the enemies of God – this persecution will be orchestrated by the antichrist empire.

Verse 21: *“For behold, the Lord will go forth from His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will also disclose her blood, and will no more cover her slain.”*

Behold: This is a word that is used to grab our attention, as what is to follow this word is of the utmost importance.

The Lord will go forth: He will respond, at the end of this period of time.

Punish: This word can be translated 'visit'. When God visits people, He visits them either to go all out to bless them, or He goes all out to utterly and totally destroy them.

The inhabitants (dwellers) of the earth: See comments made on Isaiah 24:17

Her blood: Her guilt.

Will no more cover her slain (the ones that they have killed): Instead of being instruments of life they ministered death.

Note: Those who love God and are in a covenantal relationship with Him are going to want to be a blessing (minister life) to others. They will never take God's grace and exploit it for their own sinful purposes. Instead, God's grace leads us to be committed to Him - in mind and deed (our actions).

Chapter 27

This chapter carries a warning: beware to those who want to attack Israel. There is a covenantal relationship between God and Israel. Throughout the years, Israel has suffered greatly at the hands of her enemies, but also, at times, because of the discipline of God. However, in the last days, God is going to move to pour judgment upon this world, and, in doing so, He is going to reaffirm His relationship (His covenant) with the sons of Jacob. A 1/3rd remnant of Israel is going to experience God's redemption and restoration back to the promises and purposes of God.

There are strong textual indicators within this chapter that tell us that it has to do with the last days – the final redemption that Messiah will bring about when He returns to set up His Kingdom.

Verse 1: *"In that day the Lord will visit with His strong, great and hard sword the Leviathan, the (fleeing) snake; Leviathan that twisted snake; And He will slay the reptile that is in the sea."*

In that day: An expression that is now familiar to us ... a day of judgment, specifically that final day of Judgment.

The Lord will visit: See Exodus 15:3. God fights the battle for His people.

Visit: God will be totally invested in this. He will act in a mighty and thorough manner.

Great: Large

Hard: Not breakable.

Leviathan: A large sea monster. It comes from the sea and has satanic connections. In Revelation 13:1 we are told of a beast that rises up out of the sea in the last days. This beast is an empire that rises out of great instability and chaos in the world (Prophetically the sea represents instability). God is going to bring judgment on this monster that rises out of the sea (the antichrist empire).

Snake: This is one of the words that is used to describe satan (Genesis 3, Revelation 12:9)

Fleeing: This word can be translated to flee (to leave rapidly from one location to go to another – the primary objective is simply to be gone, to not remain), but it can also speak of a deadbolt for a door – that deadbolt gives strength to the door. In this context the latter meaning could be the better translation of this word as it describes the strong serpent that God is going to do battle with.

Twisted: That which perverts. That which is deceitful. That which is not upright. Satan entices people, who are under his influence, to behave in crooked ways.

He will slay: God is going to go to battle with His enemy and He is going to destroy him with His great, strong and large sword (Hebrews 4:12, 2 Thessalonians 2:8).

Verse 2: *“On that day a vineyard of fine, red wine they will answer to her.”*

A vineyard: Israel (Isaiah 5:7)

Fine, red wine: This is something that is desired or coveted. Israel is being depicted here as a fine or desirable wine.

They: Most of the ancient scholars of Judaism say that the plural word used here represents the heavenly court – those who we see assembled in Daniel 7:9. Those in this court are going to answer Israel and are going to speak to her about the faithfulness of God (see within the context of Isaiah 27:3)

Answer: This word has nothing to do with singing. It is a word that means to answer or to respond.

Verse 3: *“I, the Lord, keeper in moments, I have watered her lest he visit unto her, night and day I will keep her.”*

Keeper in moments: The tense used here indicates that God keeps it continuously. God faithfully keeps Israel throughout all her different time allotments. He has preserved the seed of Israel, the heritage of Jacob.

Watered her: God has nurtured and cared for her.

He visit: The one who would do the ‘visiting’ here is not God but is referring to the enemies of Israel – those who would visit her in order to destroy her. Satan thinks that if he destroys Israel then the purposes and plans of God would not be able to be fulfilled, as God’s plan to establish His Kingdom on Earth is dependent upon Israel’s response to Him (Matthew 23:37-39 – God is speaking specifically to Israel in these verses. It is only when Israel says ‘Blessed is He – Messiah- who comes in the name of the Lord’ that Messiah will come again to be seen by all.)

Verse 4: *“Anger I do not have. Who would set before Me thistles and thorns in battle? I would go through them; I would ignite them all together.”*

Anger: The word is literally ‘heat’. It speaks of a red-hot anger.

Anger I do not have: In regard to Israel, God is not going to be angry with her (the context is: on Judgment Day).

Thistles and thorns: It is not easy to go through a field of thistles and thorns. God, however, can very easily go through any obstacles.

Go through them... ignite them all together: God is going to use the weaponry that the enemy employs in an attempt to hinder the purposes of God. In judging them, He is going to use their own weaponry against them. There are examples of this in Scripture – see 2 Chronicles 20:22-24. Here we see that the swords of the enemies were not used against God’s covenant people, but they were used against each other. The enemies became confused and therefore fought in a way that destroyed themselves and not the people of God.

Verse 5: “Or he can hold onto My strength, he will make peace with Me; and peace he will make with Me.”

Or: This word shows a choice. God gives His enemies (those who want to thwart His plans and purposes) a choice, an alternative to their fate in Isaiah 27:4.

Hold onto: In Hebrew there is a kind of play on words here. To ‘hold onto’ means to be strengthened. And then the verse goes on to speak of God’s strength. There is a double strength happening here. When we hold onto God’s strength and power then we ourselves are strengthened. Through clinging to Him we have access to His power.

Peace: An outcome of the fulfilment of God’s will.

Peace with Me: God’s desire, His objective, is to be at peace (Psalm 120:7, Isaiah 9:6, Romans 16:20). Peace between God and man can only be achieved through covenant (Romans 5:1).

Verse 6: “Those who come He shall cause Jacob to take root; Israel will blossom and flower and will fill the face of the earth with its yield.”

Those who come: These days are yet future from Isaiah’s perspective. Most scholars believe that this is what God is going to do in the last days.

Israel will blossom and flower: Israel will be a nation that blossoms and flourishes.

Yield: Produce. Fruit.

Fill the face of the earth with its yield: The calling of Israel was to be a blessing and a light to the nations (Genesis 12:2-3, Isaiah 49:6). They were called to reflect the righteousness of God. They never fulfilled their calling. At the end of the last days this is going to change. The remnant of Israel will do what they were called to do – reflect the righteousness of God.

Verse 7: “Is it according to the blow that (they) were hit? Or is it according to the ones of him who have been killed that are killed?”

Note: Because of the grammatical constructions, this is a difficult verse to translate literally into English. Translators have added their own words in an attempt to translate/interpret it. For example: The word “Israel” does not even appear in the original Hebrew text.

They: This is written in the singular (‘he’) but it is referring to the enemies of God/Israel.

The dead: Those who have been killed or slain.

Note 1: What this verse is speaking about is that the enemy is not like God. The enemy cannot strike like God strikes. He cannot kill like God can kill. Some of the scholars see this verse as making a contrast between how God deals with Israel and how He deals with the nations. Israel has received blows (striking, punishment – Hosea 6:1, Proverbs 13:24, Hebrews 12:7-11) from the Lord, but they are not like the blows that God gave to Pharaoh and the Egyptians. Even though many children of Israel died, they were not like the dead of the enemies.

Note 2: This verse speaks about the uniqueness, superiority and sovereignty of God. The enemy cannot act as God acts. He cannot bring about death as God brings about death. This verse also teaches us that God does not deal with Israel in the way that He deals with the nations. Why not? Because God has a covenant with Israel, which He does not have with the nations.

If the nations entered into a covenant with God (like we have done, through Messiah) then God would deal with them in the same way that He deals with Israel – like sons.

Verse 8: *“In the same measure that He sent her He will contend for her. And He will remove with a harsh breath in the day of judgment.”*

In the same measure: This again shows the uniqueness of how God deals with His covenant people.

Sent her: God sent Israel into exile to punish her.

Her: Referring to Israel

Remove: This is also a word that can mean to enunciate, say or declare something. God is either going to remove something or He is going to declare something with a harsh breath.

Harsh breath: Some commentators say that this is imagery speaking of a harsh storm that God is going to bring against her out of the east.

Judgment: The word used for judgment here is the word ‘east’. Judgment is often depicted as coming out of the east (Genesis 41:27, Exodus 10:13, Psalm 48:7).

Verse 9: *“Therefore with this the iniquity of Jacob will be atoned; And this all the fruit will be removed of his sin: when he sets forth all the stones of the altar as the stones of chalk which are beaten to powder, when wooden images and incense altars explode.”*

The iniquity of Jacob will be atoned: In the last days God is going to do something to atone for/cover up Jacob’s sins.

The fruit: The outcome/all the implications of his sin. The fruit of his sin will be removed.

Wooden images and incense altars: Things related to idolatry or false worship are going to be shattered in that day.

Note: When Jacob experiences God’s atonement and forgiveness then he, by God’s grace, is going to be changed. When this change happens to Jacob (Israel) he is going to rise up and make the stones of the altar like powder, he is going to destroy idolatry in the midst of the children of Israel in the last days.

Verse 10: *“For the fortified city will be alone, and the habitation is going to be sent forth, it will be abandoned as the desert; there the calf will graze, and there he will lie down and consume its branches.”*

The fortified city (the stronghold) will be alone: The empire is going to be destroyed.

Alone: Desolate

Abandoned: Nobody will live in this place.

Consume its branches: There will be nothing left in this place that could give nourishment. Any resemblance of life or vegetation is going to be done away with.

Verse 11: *“When its boughs are withered, they will be broken off; the women come and set them on fire. For it is a people of no understanding; therefore, He who made them will not have mercy on them, and He who formed them will show them no favour.”*

Note: This verse speaks about the fact that if we do not have faith in the promises of God, we are going to act in a way that is going to bring about our own demise.

Boughs are withered: This is speaking about the dryness of the harvest. When things become dry, they become very fragile and are easily broken.

The women come and set them on fire: The women here burn up what, in their minds and from their own perspective, appears to be dead. They have no faith in the resurrection. They are not thinking about the age to come, but they completely destroy the potential that is in front of them. By their actions they participate in their own punishment. They act in such a way as to bring the judgment of God upon themselves.

Verse 12: *“And it shall come about in that day that the Lord will thresh, from the channel of the River unto the River of Egypt; and you all will be gleaned one by one, O you children of Israel.”*

Thresh: This is a word for beating or hitting wheat (grain) to get rid of the chaff so that the kernel, the nourishing part of the grain, can be utilised.

From the channel of the River unto the River of Egypt: Some scholars say that this speaks of a threshing from the Nile River to a smaller, lesser-known river in Egypt.

You all will be gleaned: Israel is going to go through a threshing – a time of affliction, trials and hardship at the hand of their enemy (a time known as Jacob’s trouble). God is going to use this time of trouble for Israel to bring her to repentance. The remnant, who are going to survive this time of threshing, are going to be gathered up by God – one by one.

Verse 13: *“It will come about on that day that He will sound the great shofar and the perishing ones from the land of Assyria they will come, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt they will come. They will all bow down to the Lord on the Holy Mountain in Jerusalem.”*

Shofar: The ram’s horn. The ram’s horn speaks of God’s provision, it speaks of Kingdom victory (Genesis 22:13-14).

Assyria ... Egypt: God is not going to forget the outcasts of His people who are in Assyria and Egypt - two places that represent great suffering and exile. This is very similar to what we read about in Matthew 24:31. When Messiah returns, He is going to gather up His elect from the four corners – north, south, east and west.

Bow down: Worship

The Holy Mountain in Jerusalem: Jerusalem was holy in the past (Nehemiah 11:1, Daniel 9:24) and it has a holy and glorious future.

Chapter 28

Part 1: Isaiah 28:1-15

Idolatry is the sin that has plagued the children of Israel throughout their history. The two primary characteristics of idolatry are firstly a desire to be like others (to assimilate, caving in to peer pressure) and secondly it is all about accomplishing our own desires (what we want for our lives, rather than what God wants for them).

This chapter begins with God, speaking through Isaiah, addressing the northern kingdom (Ephraim, or Israel – ie not Judah). This northern kingdom was characterized by idolatry. This idolatry later spread to the southern kingdom as well.

Verse 1: *“Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower which is at the head of the verdant valleys, to those who are overcome with wine.”*

Woe: This is a word of warning. It speaks of a coming and imminent destruction. God was going to bring about destruction on that northern kingdom. Because of their pride, Ephraim was going to cease to exist.

Crown of pride: They sought to bring majesty and glory to themselves rather than to God.

Drunkards: Although everyone in this kingdom was going to suffer, in many ways this prophecy is aimed at those with influence, the leaders who oversaw this nation. God speaks of them as drunkards. They were under the wrong influence. The Spirit, truth and Word of God was not manifest in their lives, but rather those things which are synonymous with the ways of the world.

Ephraim: Ephraim was Joseph’s youngest son. He was the one who received the special or preferred blessing from his grandfather, Jacob (Genesis 48). This was very significant prophetically. The kingdom of Israel split after Solomon’s reign. The northern part of the kingdom became known as Ephraim (or Israel), and the southern kingdom was known as Judah. The name Ephraim means ‘fruitful’. God had blessed the northern kingdom – their land was rich and fertile. Those in this kingdom had great wealth. However, instead of being fruitful in the things of God they turned aside to pursue the worldly ambitions of the nations. These were people who were ruled by their own desires. They were a prideful people.

Glorious beauty is a fading flower: This northern kingdom had much beauty. Their land was good and had tremendous potential. However, they used all their resources in the wrong way.

At the head: They were a visible presence. Everyone knew of this kingdom.

Verdant: Fertile.

Overcome: Although this nation had great potential it was struck down, it was overwhelmed with wine. Scripturally wine is often related to joy and happiness. The problem here was that the people simply pursued a fleshly joy. They wanted to gratify themselves. Whatever God gave them they misappropriated for their own pleasure rather than for the pleasure of God.

Note: These people were so busy focusing on their own earthly majesty that they forgot about the power and majesty of God.

Verse 2: “Behold, strong and powerful is the Lord. He is like a current of hail, and a destroying storm, like the currents of strong waters that sweep away. He will lay the land flat in His hand.”

Strong: This word can also mean courageous. It does not only speak about a physical power, but also an inward fortitude and commitment to that which is right.

A current: This word might mean a storm, but it is the same word that speaks about a powerful, flowing river.

Hail: Hail brings about destruction.

Strong waters that sweep away: Swift destruction.

His hand (Deuteronomy 26:8): Under God’s authority (a manifestation of His power) this northern Kingdom is going to be destroyed.

Verse 3: “The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, will be trampled with feet.”

Trampled with feet: This is a poetic reference that informs us that Ephraim is going to be trampled under the feet of God.

Verse 4: “And the glorious beauty is a fading flower which is at the head of the verdant valley, as the first fruit before the summer, which an observer sees; he eats it up while it is still in his hand.”

First fruit: People wait for that initial harvest. It is something to look forward to.

He eats it up while it is still in his hand: He is so excited about the fruit that instead of harvesting it the first thing he does is that he tastes it and devours it with anticipation. This is poetic language that tells us that God’s judgment is going to come quickly. He is going to swallow up what the people have built because He is not pleased with the results.

Note: When we read prophecy, we need to make it personal. We need to ask ourselves if God is pleased with the results of our lives (what we are achieving, what we are committed to etc).

Verse 5: “On that day the Lord of hosts will be a glorious crown and a diadem of splendor for the remnant of His people.”

On that day: That final day – Judgment Day.

The remnant: Those that remain. A remnant speaks about the faithfulness of God. He consistently preserves a remnant (those who are not swept away by society, those who are committed to a different purpose – they do not have a worldly agenda).

Verse 6: “And for a spirit of judgment for the one who sits concerning judgment, and He is going to be mighty for the ones who turn back war at the gate.”

The one who sits concerning judgment: This is referring to those who have taken a stand. He is in a location/position, and he is there to execute justice. He is concerned about that which is right. He does not go along with society. He does not flow with the rest. The remnant is going to be those who are motivated about justice from a Godly standpoint. God is going to give this remnant the ability to make just and right judgments.

Turn back war: Those who administer justice contend/fight at the gates. They are not afraid of intense battles to see that true justice is served.

Gate: A gate is an idiom for a place for judgment. Justice was administered at the gates (Ruth 4:1-2, Proverbs 31:23).

Verse 7: *“Also these with wine they were led astray, with strong drink they were led astray; the priests and the prophets have erred with strong drink and were swallowed up from wine. They were led astray by strong drink; they erred in their vision; they tottered in judgment.”*

These: The current leadership.

Led astray: They erred.

Swallowed up from wine: They had the wrong perspective and were under the wrong influence (not under the influence of the Holy Spirit). They were simply seeking self-gratification.

Erred in their vision: They saw things incorrectly.

Tottered: They did not remain strong. They stumbled.

Tottered in judgment: They were unable to make right decisions.

Verse 8: *“For all the tables were full of vomit and manure without a clean place.”*

Tables: These would be the places where the administrators (the judges) would sit and give out their verdict.

Vomit and manure: Their language was revolting – like vomit and excrement.

Without a clean place: Their judgments were corrupted.

Verse 9: *“Who will teach knowledge? And who will understand the report? Those just weaned from milk. Those just drawn from the breasts.”*

Those just weaned from milk: Those who were more knowledgeable were not those who had lived for a long time, those who were old and, presumably, wise. On the contrary, Isaiah gives us a description of very young children – slightly older than toddlers.

Note: The message in this verse is this: those who are young have not been significantly influenced by society. The implication here is that they are still innocent. They have not matured enough to become corrupted and are still at an age where they can be taught. This verse speaks of the next generation. God is putting together His plans to bring about a change through the next generation (an example of this would be similar to the 40 years spent in the wilderness. God waited for the 1st generation and their bad habits to die in the wilderness. He was able to work with the second/next generation and go into the Promised Land).

Verse 10: *“For commandment to commandment, commandment to commandment, line to line, line to line, a little here a little there.”*

Note: This speaks of a very simplistic way of understanding something. It is not looking at the whole structure but building up things slowly, one thing on top of the other - piece by piece.

God is going to continue with His plans and purposes, but He is going to do so through the young, uncorrupted people. He is going to teach them things little by little, one step at a time. They are the ones who are going to be able to follow His simple instructions.

Line: Frequently in the Bible a line refers to a measuring line.

Verse 11: *“For with a mocking lip and in a different speech He will speak to this people.”*

This people: The adults. The so-called ‘enlightened ones’. The rulers/leaders of society.

Note: God’s simple instructions are going to be seen by society, but society will not put any value in them. God’s instructions are going to be like a different tongue/foreign language to them. They are going to mock the simplicity of the gospel...the Word of God.

Verse 12: *“To whom He said unto them, ‘This is rest that they lay before the weary’ and ‘This is the relaxing.’ Yet they would not hear.”*

He said: God is speaking.

Rest...relaxing: Yeshua spoke about His yoke being light and His burden being easy (Matthew 11:28-30. Here God is inviting the people to take His yoke upon them so that they can rest. The people, however, do not respond to His invitation as they do not want to hear the simple truth from the Lord.

Verse 13: *“Nevertheless it shall come about to them the Word of the Lord: ‘A commandment to a commandment, a commandment to a commandment, a line to a line, a line to a line, a little here and a little there’. That they may go and fall backward and be broken and snared and caught.”*

Fall backward...be broken...snared...caught: God gives them simple truth but they do not take hold of it and nor do they respond to it. As a result, they stumble backwards, they are broken, and they are captured – they are taken. Instead of going forward they go backwards.

Verse 14: *“Therefore listen to the Word of the Lord, O men of scoffers, the ones who rule this people which are in Jerusalem.”*

Note: So far in this chapter God has been addressing the people of Ephraim – the northern kingdom. In this verse there is a change – here the southern kingdom (Judah/Jerusalem) are being addressed. Judah saw what happened to the northern kingdom. They knew that the leaders in the north were ungodly and sought the gratification of their flesh. The north was influenced by the nations - wanting to be like them rather than wanting to be a treasured and peculiar people, a people set apart by the Word of God and for the purposes of God. This caused the northern kingdom to go into exile. Isaiah is calling the people in the southern kingdom to listen, to pay attention so that those who are in Jerusalem do not go along the same path that their brothers did.

Verse 15: “For you say: ‘We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol are we in agreement. When the overflowing whip passes through, it will not come to us, for we have set a lie for our stronghold, and under falsehood have we hidden ourselves.’”

Made a covenant with death: This was the problem. Those in Jerusalem were not trusting in God and nor were they committed to the covenant of God. Their response to God's prophetic word of a coming judgment was not to humble themselves, not to repent, not to trust in the instructions of God but instead to make a covenant with death and Sheol (the place of the dead).

Whip: An instrument of punishment. They think that the punishment of God is just going to pass them by. The false prophets were saying that God's punishment would not touch Judah. They were trusting in the fact that their capital was Jerusalem and that nothing could touch Jerusalem.

Lie...falsehood: God is pointing out that their confidence is in lies and falsehood. The lies have led them to believe that they are going to be safe and protected around Jerusalem.

Chapter 28

Part 2: Isaiah 28:16-29

Verse 16: “Therefore thus said the Lord God: ‘Behold I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a stone of testing, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; whoever believes will not act hastily.’”

Note: This verse ushers in a change. The people of Judah (just like the people today) had wandered far from the will of God. God is going to do something to bring about great change – He is going to set Messiah in position. Messiah is going to be established in this world. He is going to rule and reign from Jerusalem. Yeshua’s presence is going to bring about great change in the world – just like His presence in our lives also brings great transformation in us each individually.

Therefore: Meaning: because of their spiritual condition, because of the behavior of the people of God.

Said: Written in the past tense but depicting a future event.

Lord God: This name of God, in this construction, does not appear that frequently in Scripture. Many of the rabbinical scholars point out that when this phrase appears it speaks about a unique occurrence - something that is happening that is not frequent, but something that is rare and highly significant.

Behold: God is calling us to pay attention.

I lay: God is doing this. He is active and He is moving in this situation to carry out His will.

Zion: Zion is a Kingdom word. Whenever it appears in the Scripture it gives that passage a Kingdom context.

Stone: No one in Judaism or Christianity disagree that this stone is a reference to Messiah. Judaism obviously disagrees with who this Messiah is. We know that this is referring to Yeshua (Jesus Christ).

A stone of testing: The tense used here (present tense) does not mean that this stone has been tried (tested) and found faithful – although Yeshua was tested and was found faithful.

Instead, the emphasis of this phrase is that this stone is going to be used as a stone of comparison. Human lives will be held up to this 'stone' and based upon the outcome (what this comparison reveals) there is going to be action. This action is going to be highly significant and very powerful. It is going to bring about a change in this world and among the true people of God.

Precious cornerstone: Yeshua holds everything together.

A sure foundation: This is referring to a foundation which has already been laid.

Whoever believes: The implication of this is that 'whoever believes in Him...'

Will not act hastily: That is, will not be easily moved.

Verse 17: *"Also I will make justice the measuring line, and righteousness the plumb line; the hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters will overflow the hiding place."*

Measuring line: A measuring line is used to build things properly. If we want the Kingdom to be built up properly that measuring line that goes out has to be based in justice.

Plumb line: Plumb lines make sure that what is being built is centered correctly. Both the measuring line and the plumb line bring order into a construction.

Hail: Both in the past (Exodus 9:13-32) and in the future, prophetically, God has used hail to to bring about a change, to destroy that which is not pleasing to Him. Hail causes destruction.

Sweep away the refuge of lies: Falsehood (eg from false prophets etc) is no longer going to be a shelter for individuals.

Waters: The word used here in Hebrew is a word that speaks about a flood that comes about very quickly. It is a flood that brings about destruction in a very fast manner.

Verse 18: *"Your covenant with death will be atoned for, and your agreement with Sheol will not stand, when the overflowing scourge passes through, then you will be trampled down by it."*

Note: This is God answer to the people in response to what they had claimed in Isaiah 28:15.

Covenant: A contract

Atoned for: It will be considered null and void.

You will be trampled down: Those who have made an agreement with death and Sheol (possibly participated with the antichrist – satan incarnate) are going to be trampled down.

Verse 19: *"For each time it passes it will take you; for morning by morning it will pass over, and by day and by night; it will be a terror just to understand the report."*

It: Referring to judgment.

Terror: Great fear. A fear which is astonishing and paralyzing.

Note: God's end time judgment on the children of Israel is going to go way beyond what they ever thought. This is reminiscent to the shock that they had when they saw the walls of Jerusalem broken into, when they saw the temple set on fire and the destruction that followed.

Understand the report: Paul tells us that faith comes by hearing (Romans 10:17). What God is doing here (to His land and to His people), and the report that they are hearing, is a way to bring about faith.

Verse 20: *“For short is the bed from stretching out, and the covering is too narrow to be wrapped up into.”*

Note: This is not a comfortable bed that they are lying in. The covering does not do what it is intended to do. All the promises that the false prophets made have not materialised. Their promises are far removed from reality. They are pale in comparison to the truth of what is happening here.

Verse 21: *“For the Lord will stand like Mount Perazim, He will be angry as in the valley of Gibeon – to do His deed, His strange deed, to work His work, His foreign act.”*

Note: We see two events happening here.

Angry as in the valley of Gibeon: See 1 Chronicles 14:16-17. David went to war with the Philistines, and he chased them from this location. Gibeon is also mentioned in Joshua 10.

His strange deed: Normally God moves to judge the enemy and give victory to His people. Some people see this as a strange action, as God is bringing judgment upon His own people.

His foreign act: Most of the rabbinical scholars see this relating to God behaving not as we would expect Him to behave. He is acting in a strange or foreign way by bringing judgment on His own people. He does this as a way of manifesting His righteousness and justice. He does this to bring about a change – so that His standards will be truly met by those who survive (the remnant).

Verse 22: *“Now therefore do not scoff lest your bonds be made stronger; a destruction determined, for I have heard from the Lord God of hosts concerning all of the land.”*

Now: This is a word of urgency.

Scoff: Mock. Do not speak about what God is doing in an incorrect manner.

Bonds: Cords. Some see this as a picture of exile. Others see this as their punishment. Either way, it speaks of something that is not good.

Destruction determined: God is going to bring things to an end. This end is an end of things as we know them now, but this end is the beginning of new things. God has determined an end of Israel's disobedience, of Israel not walking according to true prophetic revelation.

God is going to bring an end to His people believing deceiving, lying, false words.

The land: This could be referring to the land of Israel or it could be a reference to the whole earth.

Verse 23: *“Listen and hear My voice, pay attention and hear My speech.”*

Listen...hear ... pay attention: Three different words are used here for hearing. God is driving home to the people that they need to give ear to Him. God wants their attention. He wants them to recognise and to understand His words. And then ultimately, He wants them to respond properly to Him.

Verse 24: “Does throughout the duration of the day the plowman plow in order to sow? Does he open the land and break the clods?”

Open the land: This is an expression that refers to tilling – breaking up the soil.

Note: The farmer does not plow, and plow, and plow and just break up clods of soil all day. Plowing and breaking clods is only a small part of what the farmer does. He has more to his job than just preparing the soil. What this is speaking about is that we need to have a complete faith. We must not have a faith that emphasizes one or two things (those things that we like, those things that we are good at, things that come naturally to us or are convenient). We cannot do the same thing in the same way all the time. Doing the same thing over and over again will not produce a harvest.

Verse 25: “Surely if the surface of the land is equal, does he not sow the black cumin and scatter the cumin, plant the wheat in rows, the barley in the appointed place, and the spelt in its place?”

Equal: Levelled or flat.

Sow: Once the ground has been adequately prepared, the farmer begins a new stage – that of planting.

Cumin: The word used here is a very unusual word. Most scholars believe that all of these seeds mentioned here are very small, but they produce a very desirable crop.

Scatter: To throw. These little seeds are thrown randomly into the soil.

Plant the wheat in rows: The wheat is planted in a more orderly manner.

Appointed place: There is a methodology to planting. Once the ground has been tilled and made ready, the seeds are planted in a certain way and in very specific locations – the fields are not haphazardly mixed up with all seeds thrown in together. This is done in this way so that the harvest would have the greatest potential (Haggai 1:5-7).

Verse 26: “And He will discipline him for justice. His God will teach him.”

Discipline: Some point out that discipline comes first. After discipline comes teaching. God first disciplines His people and then He teaches them.

Verse 27: “For not with a threshing sledge is the black cumin threshed and not with a wheel of a cart upon the cumin. With a staff he beats the black cumin, and the cumin with a rod.”

Threshing sledge ... a wheel of a cart: The cumin is not harvested in the way that would seem to be the most obvious or logical.

Note: Just as there are specific ways to till the ground and to plant the seeds so also is there specific methodology in which to harvest the seed. The harvest is most successful when the right methodology is employed. In light of the last days, God knows how to plant and how to harvest most effectively so that the harvest produces the greatest results. Isaiah is telling us about God’s activity in the last days (John 4:34-38, Revelation 14:14-20).

Verse 28: “*Bread grain is ground down into powder, he does not thresh it forever, with the wheel of the cart he does not break, and with the hooves of his horses he does not grind.*”

Note: This is another example of God knowing what or what not to do.

Ground down ... does not thresh it forever: It is right to grind the bread grain into a powder, but it is an activity that is not done indefinitely. There comes a point in time where the grinding process reaches its end.

With the wheel of the cart he does not break, and with the hooves of his horses he does not grind: God uses only what is necessary to get the job done. If He does not have to use the cavalry or the millstone He doesn't.

Verse 29: “*All of this is from the Lord of hosts. His counsel goes forth marvelously and His resource is great.*”

This: Referring to all these things – preparing, planting, harvesting and grinding.

From the Lord of hosts: He knows what to do. The things that are going to happen in the last days come about as an outcome of God's activity, the work of Messiah in the last days, to produce a righteous and a just Kingdom.

Marvelously: Wonderfully.

Counsel ... resource: The counsel of God and the provision of God are wonderful and magnificent. God is going to bring about a change among His people. This is something that needs to be done. God perfectly understands the situation. He knows the best methodology of how to produce God-pleasing results. Our response to all of this is to submit. We need to believe in Messiah - serving Him, so that His righteousness and justice might be manifested in this world.

Chapter 29

Part 1: Isaiah 29:1-13

This chapter addresses those who are indifferent or uninterested in spiritual things. These people do not have a commitment to truth as they are unwilling to change.

Verse 1: “*Woe Ariel, Ariel, the city where David dwelt. They add year unto year; let festivals come around.*”

Woe: This is a word that warns us that if there is no change (repentance) then, in their current condition, this city/people are headed toward disaster. God's judgment is on the horizon.

Ariel: This name means ‘lion of God’. Most scholars see it as a nickname, so to speak, for Jerusalem. The rabbinical scholars, from the point of traditional Judaism, say that this word speaks about the altar at the temple of God – more specifically about the offerings and sacrifices made to God on the altar, and the hearts of the people who brought/made the sacrifices there. The sacrifices that the people offered up said a lot about the hearts of the people. These sacrifices were a good indicator of their understanding, commitment or interest in God.

The city where David dwelt: This is the clue informing us that Ariel is in fact referring to Jerusalem specifically – the city where David established his kingdom. When the name ‘David’ is used in the prophetic books we know that the passage we are reading has Kingdom implications.

They add year unto year: Years come and go but here is no change in the people. They are not growing or maturing. Neither their knowledge of God nor their lives reflect the passage of time. Do ours?

Festivals: The rabbinical commentators, because of the name Ariel which they interpret as relating to the altar, say that this is not simply referring to the festivals themselves but is referring to the sacrifices that were made at these festivals. They speak of this phrase as meaning that the festivals and the offerings are going to be cut off, being brought to an end. Biblically this did happen. Many of the festivals were not observed during the time of the kings. Instead of going up to Jerusalem to worship as the people had been commanded to do, they were embracing idolatry and things unrelated to spiritual truth.

Verse 2: *“I will distress Ariel; there shall be mourning and sorrow, and it shall be to Me as Ariel.”*

Distress: Pain and discomfort. In nature there are laws. If we fall off a ladder, gravity causes us to land on the ground. Spiritually there are also laws. Here we see a spiritual principle/law in play: When we are spiritually indifferent, that indifference (lack of commitment and lack of interest in the truth of God) leads to disaster and distress (physically, emotionally and spiritually). Indifference empowers the enemy.

Mourning and sorrow: This is the kind of grief and sorrow that accompanies death. When we are spiritually indifferent, we are inviting death into our lives. Spiritual laws do not only have spiritual implications. Spiritual laws spill over into our physical lives and cause physical sorrow, pain and death.

It shall be to Me as Ariel: Ariel, in this context, is a word that describes the worship that took place, specifically, at the altar. The people were not acting in obedience. Their disobedience and their unwillingness to serve God caused God to be displeased. God’s displeasure leads to God’s judgment. God’s judgment reveals to the people that God is displeased with them.

Verse 3: *“I will encamp against you all around, I will set siege against you with a mound, And I will raise up a siege against you.”*

Encamp against you all around: God is going to box the people in. They are not going to be able to easily escape. They will not be able to avoid God’s judgment. This is another spiritual law: Those who violate God’s laws are not going to escape their consequences.

A mound: God is going to lay the foundation for the city to be laid siege against. The people would dread having the city under siege. A siege brings a slow and distressing weakening of the people that gets worse and worse as time elapses. The only way out of a siege was to go out and fight. However, the people did not want to fight, as they understood that they were inferior in strength to the enemy that had managed to lay siege against them, and they also understood that they did not have God’s blessing on their side.

Note: The people were going to experience a long, painful and a fearful experience from God. This is what spiritual indifference and carelessness with the things of God brings about.

Verse 4: *“You will be made low; from the ground you are going to speak and from the depths you are going to be made low. Your words shall be like a medium’s out of the ground; and your speech shall chirp out of the dust.”*

Made low: This is a word for causing one to be emptied and publicly humiliated. God is going to show His displeasure with the people visibly, publicly. He is going to knock them down from their self-exalted positions. They are going to be spiritually humiliated, and it is going to have physical implications. Many interpret this to mean that they have exalted themselves financially. They are enjoying their prosperity (physical comfort and happiness) and this has turned them away from the spiritual.

Medium’s: An enchanter, a sorcerer. One who consults the dead. God is going to take Israel down so low that when they speak it will be like the voice of the dead (like Samuel speaking in 1 Samuel 28).

Chirp: The sound that birds make. When birds chatter to each other their words are unintelligible, and they seem to be saying the same thing over and over again. No one responds to the chirping of the birds. Neither is God going to respond to their cries.

Verse 5: *“And it shall come about as fine dust the multitude of your foreigners, and the multitude of the tyrants against you shall be as chaff that passes by; this shall be suddenly, and without any indication.”*

Fine dust: Small particles of dust (irritants) that are very difficult to get rid of.

Multitude: There will be many enemies that come against them.

Foreigners: Referring to Israel’s enemies that come from foreign lands. These enemies are going to be brought against the children of Judah.

Chaff that passes by: When someone is threshing, the chaff just keeps on and on blowing away in the wind. This is how Israel’s enemies will be. Continuously blowing around them like chaff on a threshing floor. This chaff just keeps rising up from the wheat and seems to be never ending.

This shall be suddenly, and without any indication: One day the people will be going along thinking that everything is going well (security, financial stability, happiness etc) and the next day everything would change – without any warning or indication (other than this prophetic revelation). This change would bring the armies around them and usher in instability. The people would suddenly find themselves in great need.

Verse 6: *“You will be visited by the Lord of hosts, with thunder and earthquake and great noise, with storm and hurricane and the flame of devouring fire.”*

Visited: The Lord is going to visit them this time to punish and not to bless.

The Lord of hosts: The Lord is the source of this discipline/judgment that they are receiving.

Thunder and earthquake and great noise: This punishment's going to come in a very visible and discernible way.

The flame of devouring fire: When a fire rages through a field (etc) it makes a sound that can be heard. This punishment will be visible to all, and it will be heard by all.

Note: God is using rich language to tell them how serious and devastating the outcome of their spiritual indifference is going to be for them.

Verse 7: “*And it shall come about as a dream, as a night vision, a multitude of all the nations will be upon Ariel. All of her armies, her stronghold and her fortresses are going to be distressed.*”

The nations: The warring nations – nations that have armies.

Distressed: They are going to experience pain, suffering and turmoil.

Note: This distress, pain, turmoil etc should not surprise us. This is the consequence of spiritual indifference. Those who serve God faithfully experience the opposite of this – these ones experience joy and gladness.

Verse 8: “*And it shall be just as the one who is hungry dreams, and behold he eats, but when he awakes there is emptiness in himself; just as the thirsty one dreams and behold he drinks, but he wakes up but behold he is dying and his soul still is full of distress: thus the multitude of all the nations shall be upon Mount Zion.*”

The one who is hungry dreams, and behold he eats: Those who are hungry dream of food, provision.

When he awakes there is emptiness in himself: The dream is very different to the reality. The dream does not bring about a change to their reality of hunger.

Dying: In modern Hebrew this is a word that means to be tired or exhausted to the point where someone does not want to get out of bed. In Biblical Hebrew it is a word that means to be on the point of death.

Note: Another spiritual principle/law regarding spiritual indifference: spiritual indifference brings attack against the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God will not be established in the midst of spiritual indifference. God will not move to fulfil His promises in the midst of a spiritually indifferent people. When we are spiritually indifferent, we are not going to have a Kingdom character and nor will we be Kingdom minded. We will also not be receiving the blessings of the Kingdom (Matthew 5:1-12)

Mount Zion: The location of where the promises and excellency of God dwell.

Verse 9: “*Pause and be amazed! Blind yourselves and be utterly blind! They are drunk, but not with wine; they stagger but not with intoxicating drink.*”

Pause: In modern translations this word has to do with a stopping, with a waiting. In Rabbinical language this is a word that implies a waiting in expectation for the Messiah to fulfil the promises of God.

Be amazed: The people are waiting for a future Kingdom, but this is not what they are going to experience. God is going to behave differently to how they expected Him to behave. Many of the modern rabbis teach that things are going to get very good (much like what the Kingdom Now ‘theologians’ in Christianity teach – ie that the church is going to usher in a time of peace and ‘goodness’ before Messiah comes again). This is not what is going to happen. This is what the people are expecting, but that is not going to be the reality. When the people see what is coming, they are going to be amazed, shocked with the actual reality.

Blind yourselves and be utterly blind: This is one way to translate this phrase. People are going to be blind to the reality until it is literally upon them. Some other indicators point out that this could also be related to screaming or crying out.

People are going to be waiting with expectation, but, when that expectation is not fulfilled, people are going to scream and cry out.

Stagger: Wobbling about due to weakness.

Not with intoxicating drink: This wandering backwards and forwards in confusion is due to the fact that they were caught off guard. Incorrect prophecy, false and deceptive teaching, improper leadership etc caused them not to reflect upon the truth of God. Being indifferent to God and passionate about the things of the world caused them to be taken by surprise.

Verse 10: *“For the Lord will pour upon you a spirit of slumber; He will close your eyes, namely the prophets; and the heads of the seers are going to be covered up.”*

Slumber: Literally the word ‘trance’. It can also be the word used for receiving anesthetic and going into a deep state of sleep. This is a false sleep. It is not a normal sleep; it is a spiritual one. These people have no idea of what is going on around them spiritually. Wealth, prosperity, security etc had blinded and dulled the people so that when they were confronted with the reality it caused them great confusion, ensuring that they were unable to respond correctly.

He will close your eyes: They will not have any type of perception or revelation.

Namely the prophets: God is against the false prophets.

Seers: These are the ones who supposedly have visions.

Covered up: This is an idiom which means that these seers and prophets are not going to receive any revelation from God. God is going to be silent toward them and will not give them any instruction. In 1 Corinthians 11:4-7 Paul reveals that it is a shameful thing for a man to cover up his head while he is praying or prophesying.

Verse 11: *“And the vision of everything that will be to you will be like words of a book that are sealed, which men deliver to one who is literate, saying, ‘Read this, please’, and he says, ‘I cannot. For it is sealed.’”*

Words of a book that are sealed: Anything spiritual will not be able to be discerned.

Note: The literate man will not be willing to break the seal to read what the book has to say. This is not talking about a seal that cannot be opened due to unworthiness (Revelation 5:1-4). This literate man had the opportunity to open the seal, but he was uninterested and unwilling to find out what had been written.

Verse 12: *“Then the book is delivered to one who is illiterate saying, ‘Read this, please’; and he says, ‘I am not able to read.’”*

Note: Most people will find any excuse not to read the revelation that God has plainly put forth in His Word. If we do not know how to read, we need to learn how. We must never be careless, indifferent or uncaring about God’s revelation to us.

Verse 13: “*And the Lord said: ‘Because this people approach Me with their mouths, and with their tongues they honour Me, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men,’*”

Lord: Adonai. This name of God speaks of His Lordship, the fact that He is our Master.

Note: The people are giving lip service to God (they say nice things about Him) but in truth their hearts are far removed from Him. Outwardly they appear Godly, but inwardly their thoughts (hearts) are far removed from God.

Fear: Fear is synonymous with behavior. Fear produces action or a response (flight or fight). The response of the people is not based in God’s revelation. Instead, their response to God is based upon what man has taught them. Men laid the foundation for their current behaviour (their indifference, their unrepentance etc) so God has to bring about a change, in order for His will and promises to be fulfilled. This change will happen in the remnant.

Chapter 29

Part 2: Isaiah 29:14-24

So far in this chapter we have seen that God is displeased with His people. Although they approach Him with their mouths and honour Him with their words their hearts are far removed from Him. Israel is not a covenant keeping people. But God is a covenant keeping God! God is going to bring about a change for the people of Israel – not because they deserve it, and not because they repent (because initially they do not). God brings about a change because of His covenant with them.

Verse 14: “*Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work among this people, a marvelous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise ones shall perish, and the understanding of those who are knowledgeable shall be hidden.*”

Behold: The word that reminds us that something significant and important is about to be said so we need to pay special attention.

I will again do: God is going to do something. What God does is the catalyst that is going to bring about a change – a change that is going to be pleasing to Him.

A marvelous work: The word used here is a synonym for something miraculous (which is going to be done within a last day’s context).

Note: Many Prophetic passages indicate that, within a last day’s context, God is going to be faithful to show His covenantal love and fulfil His covenantal purposes with the people of Israel.

Marvelous work ... a marvelous work and a wonder: Three times this word for something which is supernatural is used (signs and wonders are miraculous/supernatural events).

Knowledgeable: Those who possess understanding. Men are going to realise that their wisdom and knowledge is so much less in comparison to God’s wisdom and knowledge.

Verse 15: *“Woe to those who conceal deep their counsel far from the Lord, and their works are in the dark; They say, ‘Who sees us?’ and ‘Who knows us?’”*

Woe to those: How awful it is going to be for those who do not change. Some are not going to submit to the change that God is going to bring about. They will not acknowledge the wondrous, miracle-working God of Israel.

Conceal deep their counsel: They try to hide or bury their counsel (advice) from the Lord. The implication here is that there will be those who will try to counsel or give rebellious advice to others – wanting others to also resist the change that God is bringing about.

Who sees us?’ and ‘Who knows us?: Their advice and works are done under the cover of darkness. They think that no one will see or know what they are doing. This attitude attacks the real identity of God, who sees and knows all (Psalm 139:1-4).

Verse 16: *“Surely you have things turned around! Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay? For shall the thing made say of him who made it, ‘He did not make me’? Or shall the thing formed say of him who formed it, ‘He has no understanding’?”*

Surely you have things turned around: God is pointing out that there needs to be a total overturning of how people think, their attitudes.

Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay: The clay (human beings) wants to think of itself as on the same level as the potter (their Creator). The clay, in other words, wants to think of itself as God. This thinking is incorrect.

He did not make me ... He has no understanding: The people (clay) believe that their counsel and ways are right, even though their ways are not the ways of God. They believe they can hide things from God so that in the end their own desires will be triumphant. God is going to overturn this way of thinking.

Verse 17: *“Surely in just a little while Lebanon will be returned to a fruitful land, and the fruitful land will be esteemed as a forest.”*

Surely: This is a strong word that is emphatic that something is going to be.

Lebanon: Lebanon was famous for its beautiful, very large cedar trees. This pride of Lebanon was cut down (Isaiah 10:33-34) and Lebanon became just like other nations – fertile land, but no longer known for its glorious cedar trees.

Esteemed: Thought of.

Note: The implication of this verse is that when God makes a change that which was considered great is going to be lessened (humbled) and that which was not so great is going to be exalted (Matthew 23:12)

Verse 18: *“On that day the deaf will hear the words of the book, and from gloom and from darkness the eyes of the blind they will see.”*

On that day: A phrase that is a Scriptural clue that the context of this passage is related to the last days (Judgment Day).

Book: The rabbinical scholars say that this is a book (or a scroll) that has to do with God's revelation.

This is another change that God is going to bring about in the last days – those who could not hear God’s Word (His revelation) are going to have their ears unstopped and they are going to be able to hear it.

Gloom ... darkness: According to the sages of old this gloom and darkness is a representation of this world. This world conceals the truth of God.

The eyes of the blind they will see: In the last days illumination to going to be given to those who could previously not see it (Isaiah 44:18)

Verse 19: *“And the humble ones they will increase their gladness in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.”*

They will increase their gladness in the Lord: This is another change we are going to see in that day - God is going to add to those who are humble and poor. He is going to give them joy.

Verse 20: *“For the terrible one is brought to zero. The scornful one is consumed, and all who watch for iniquity are cut off –“*

The terrible one: A tyrant who is a source of terror.

The scornful one: Those who scoff at or mock the things of God are going to be brought to an end.

Watch: This is a word that means to be diligent, to be hardworking or committed to something. These people are committed to wickedness and ungodliness.

Cut off: They are going to be cut off from the covenantal promises of God.

Verse 21: *“Who make a man an offender by a word, and lay a snare for him who reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of naught.”*

Note: This verse has to do with justice. In Biblical times justice was administered at the gates of a city. In this verse we see that the place where justice was supposed to be administered has become a snare to both the guilty and the innocent who were judged there. A perversion or corruption of justice happens at these gates. Justice lacks order.

Make a man an offender by a word: There are those who try to convict or shame an individual with just a word.

Lay a snare for him who reproveth in the gate: Instead of true justice being administered at the gate a trap is going to be laid for this (guilty) individual to cause him to be brought down in a more extreme way.

Turn aside the just for a thing of naught: This one being brought to the gate is innocent but false words are said to cause him to appear guilty. Those judging at the gates make righteousness into nothing.

Verse 22: *“Therefore thus said the Lord to the house of Jacob, who redeemed Abraham: ‘Not now will Jacob be ashamed, and not now will his face be pale.’”*

Redeemed Abraham: Mention of Abraham should remind us of the Abrahamic covenant.

Whenever we have a reference to Abraham we should think about God's promise to Abraham and Abraham's faith in the promises of God. Messiah (the promised Seed) is the One who is foundational in this covenant.

Not now: No longer will they be ashamed. Why not? Because of the outcome of redemption.

Pale: Having a pale face is an idiom, Biblically, for being ashamed or embarrassed (In English we would say "red-faced") A pale face speaks about those whose colour drains out of their skin when they are exposed.

Verse 23: *"For when he sees his children, the work of My hands, in his midst, they will sanctify My name, they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and the God of Israel they will fear."*

He: Jacob. Jacob was passionately committed to pursuing the promises of God (this can be seen by him holding on to his brother's heel, buying the birthright from Esau, wrestling with the angel etc – Genesis 25:26, Genesis 32:24-28)

His children: As has been said previously: the rabbis say that whenever there is a reference to the next generation it is an indicator that we need to prepare for the coming of Messiah, as the 'next generation' might be the last generation (the Kingdom generation – the generation within which God works to fulfil His covenantal promises and establish His Kingdom). God is putting together His plans to bring about a change through the 'next generation' (an example of this would be similar to the 40 years spent in the wilderness. God waited for the 1st generation and their bad habits to die in the wilderness. He was able to work with the second/next generation and take them into the Promised Land).

Sanctify: Sanctification has to do with the plans and purposes of God.

The Holy One of Jacob: Referring to the God of Jacob. This name of God shows a close relationship between God and Jacob.

Fear: To fear God means to give Him priority. God is going to cause a change to happen in them. They are no longer going to be rebellious, pervert justice, be disobedient or prideful. They are going to begin to give God priority in every aspect of their lives.

Verse 24: *"These also who erred in spirit will come to understanding, and those who murmured will learn doctrine."*

Erred in spirit: Went astray. They have not followed the leadership of the Spirit of God.

Murmured: Complained. Those who have not rejoiced in the things of God - like the children of Israel in the wilderness. Those in the wilderness did not want to go where God was taking them. They did not want to learn what God was teaching them.

Will learn doctrine: Those who did not want to do the things that God wanted them to do are going to experience a change. They are going to learn the lessons that God wants to teach them.

Note: God in His faithfulness is going to bring a glorious and miraculous change to Jacob, to Israel, to His covenant people, so that the Kingdom promises may be fulfilled.

Chapter 30

Part 1: Isaiah 30:1-17

As people of faith, we are called to demonstrate faith by trusting God. This trust is most noticeable (or absent) by how we hold up during very difficult or hard situations in our lives. Our words and actions during trying times speak volumes about our trust in God. The children of Israel were not willing to demonstrate trust, as they did not have faith. Difficult circumstances are an opportunity for us to demonstrate faith. They are an opportunity for us to show testimony that we belong to God and that we have faith in Him to move in our circumstances so that we are able to be overcomers (Revelation 2 and 3). Israel was not interested in being a faithful witness. They were not interested in demonstrating trust.

Verse 1: "Woe to the rebellious children," declares the Lord, "Who take counsel, but not from Me, they cover it up, but not with My Spirit, that they may add sin unto sin."

Woe: This speaks of the people having a dismal and awful future if they do not repent and change their ways.

Rebellious: This is the same word used in Deuteronomy 21:18 to speak of a stubborn and rebellious young man. His parents had taught him, they had educated him in the things of God. They had disciplined him when he had gone astray. However, nothing caused this young man to behave properly. He was a great menace to society. He was a danger and a threat and, as a last resort, his parents had to bring him before the elders at the city gate for judgment. On the parent's testimony that their son was unwilling to hear their words of instruction, that he had rebelled and utterly rejected the things of God and could not be controlled, the young man received a death sentence and was put to death. This is the same word that God is using to describe the children of Israel. If they do not change, they are going to experience the consuming judgment of God.

Counsel: They plan their actions, but do not include God in their plans.

Cover it up: The words used here have to do with pouring water on the situation (they try to downplay what they have done by attempting to get it to sound not so bad) in order to cover up their guilt.

Add sin unto sin: Being sinful is what motivates them. They are not interested in the righteousness of God. If we set aside the righteousness of God for our own plans, or if we believe that our destiny should turn out exactly as we want it to be, then we are no different in this situation than the children of Israel.

Verse 2: "Who walk to go down to Egypt, and have not asked My advice, but in the refuge of Pharaoh they have taken cover, they trust in the shadow of Egypt."

Walk to go down to Egypt: They know that judgment is coming but instead of seeking help from God they look to their enemies for deliverance (Isaiah 31:1, Jeremiah 17:5-8). Biblically Egypt is a metaphor for the world. The children of Israel were trusting in worldly means, in worldly provision, rather than in the promises of God.

Have not asked My advice: They were not interested in speaking to God and getting revelation from Him. They did not want to be in the presence of God.

This shows that they had no trust and did not walk in faith. They were not interested in what God can do, but they wanted to take care of the matter themselves, in their own way.

Verse 3: *“And it shall come about to them the refuge of Pharaoh for shame, and trust in the shadow of Egypt shall be for your humiliation.”*

Note: Because the children of Israel trusted in Pharaoh (Egypt, the world) rather than in God they will not have a pleasing testimony. Trust in the world (trust in man) leads to shame and humiliation.

Verse 4: *“For his princes were at Zoan, and his ambassadors came to Hanes.”*

Princes: The leading government or cabinet officials in the land. They left Jerusalem, the land of Israel, and went to this well-known place (*Zoan* – Numbers 13:22) in Egypt.

Ambassadors: These were the messengers – those who were supposed to take the truth to the people.

Hanes: They did not go to encourage the people of Israel, instead they went to this place called Hanes. According to Jewish tradition this was a royal city of great wealth. These messengers chose financial security rather than trusting God and being faithful stewards of His Word. These princes and ambassadors demonstrated a lack of trust and faith. They were rebellious in the things and the purposes of God.

Verse 5: *“All that causes a stench upon the people, it is not a benefit to them. It is not profitable but is a shame and a reproach.”*

Stench: What they are doing shows a spiritual decay of the leadership.

Not a benefit to them: This lack of trust in God is of no benefit to the people.

Note: Biblically there are one of two possible extremes that people will find themselves in. Either they are going to experience shame (and be a stench in God’s nostrils) or they are going to be rewarded (and a sweet-smelling aroma in God’s nostrils). With God there is no middle ground – either we are classified as hot or cold (Lukewarm has no place in God’s vocabulary, and it joins the “side” of cold – Revelation 3:16)

Verse 6: *“A burden of the animals of the Negev. Through a land of trouble and distress from which came the lioness and the lion, the viper and the fiery flying serpent, they will carry their riches on the backs of young donkeys, and their treasures on the humps of camels, to a people who shall not benefit them.”*

Note: This is a message to the animals in the land of trouble and distress.

Negev: A desert region in the south of Israel. Egypt is also to the south of Israel.

Lioness and the lion: Two different words are given for a lion.

The viper and the fiery flying serpent: This also mentions two different kinds of snakes. A viper is a regular kind of snake whose bite is very harmful. The viper is seen as an instrument of suffering. The fiery flying (jumping) snake is a snake that cause great fear because it suddenly seems to appear out of nowhere.

Backs of young donkeys ... humps of camels: The people are fleeing from the land of Israel; they have loaded up the camels and donkeys with their treasured possessions.

The fact that they are fleeing from the Promised Land shows that they really do not seek the promises of God. They are not committed to the promises God made to Israel. If the people wanted to be a part of the promises they would have been committed to the land of Israel (eg: Elimelech left Israel because he did not trust in the God of Israel – Ruth 1:1-2. Boaz stayed in the land of Israel, and he was abundantly blessed).

Verse 7: *“For the Egyptians shall help in vain and to no purpose. Therefore, I have called her Rahab-Hem-Shebeth.”*

For the Egyptians shall help in vain and to no purpose: The children of Israel will turn to Egypt for help, but Egypt will not help them, as all Egypt can think of is themselves.

Rahab: A term for pride or arrogance.

Hem: Them

Shebeth: Idle. Egypt is going to be idle. They are not going to respond to the people of Israel and their matters. Egypt is not their hope for deliverance. All of Egypt’s promises are empty and vain and come to nothing.

Verse 8: *“And now come and write upon the tablet before them, and upon a book a statute, it is for the last day until eternity.”*

Before them: In their presence.

A statute: Make it into a law, legislate it. What God is saying is that Isaiah can write this down, he can engrave it and make it into an eternal law, because what God has said will come to be.

For the last day until eternity: These words set this within a last day’s context, and it has Kingdom implications.

Verse 9: *“For a people of rebellion are the sons, they are children of falsehood, sons that do not want to hear the law of the Lord.”*

The sons: Referring to the children of Israel.

Do not want to hear the law: They do not want to know what righteousness is. They are not interested in the purposes of God. They are not motivated by what is pleasing to the Lord. This is informing us of what the spiritual condition of Israel will be like in the last days before God brings about a glorious change in them.

Verse 10: *“Who say to the seers, ‘Do not look’, and to the prophets, ‘Do not have visions for us – everything will be alright; speak to us flattery, have visions which are false.’”*

Seers: These are the ones who see visions.

Do not have visions for us: They do not want revelation from God.

Everything will be alright: They think that there is no reason for them to be concerned.

Flattery: Words that are pleasing, words that are smooth – ie in agreement with their desires.

False: They have misplaced hopes and desires, and they want these false hopes and desires to be affirmed.

They are not interested in the truth but want to hear and believe what they want to hear and believe. This is also what characterises a large group within the body of believers (1 John 2:18-19) in the last days (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

Verse 11: *“Get out of the way, turn aside from the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.”*

Get out of the way, turn aside from the path: The people are turning to the faithful and Godly leaders (eg Isaiah) and telling them to get off the good and right path that they are on.

The Holy One: The word ‘holy’ is related to the purposes of God. The people do not want the purposes of God. They do not want righteousness, or anything connected to the plans and purposes of God.

Verse 12: *“Therefore thus said the Holy One of Israel: ‘Because you have despised this word, and trusted in oppression and perversity, and think that will save you,’”*

Despised: Strong feeling of rejection or disdain.

Trusted in oppression and perversity: They have trusted in the wrong things.

Verse 13: *“Therefore this iniquity will be to you as a breach that bursts forth, that falls upon you as a bulge in the wall up high, which suddenly bursts and quickly.”*

Wall: Related to security.

Up high: They were unable to see their weakness, it was out of their line of vision.

Bursts: Another word for destruction

Suddenly ... quickly: Without warning this destruction will suddenly be upon them.

Verse 14: *“And the breaking will be as the breaking of that which the potter has created, and it will be broken into pieces, there will not be any lessening. It will not be found among the pieces of pottery a shard to take fire from the stove, or to remove water from the cistern.”*

There will not be any lessening: There will not be any movement of God (regret, mercy or pity) when He brings this judgment.

Not be found among the pieces of pottery a shard: This judgment is going to be so thorough, and the ‘pottery’ (Jeremiah 18:1-11, Romans 9:20-23) shattered into such small pieces, that no pieces big enough will be found to scoop up the fire and water to take them to another place.

Fire... water: Both of these elements are related to judgment. God’s judgment is coming and nothing will be able to stop or remove it.

Verse 15: *“For thus said the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: ‘In returning and comfort you will be saved, in quietness and trusting will be your power.’ But you would not.”*

Said: This verb is written in the past tense and not in the present tense – even though it is yet a future event. God is absolutely committed to bringing this about and so, from His standpoint, it is as good as done, it is as good as has already taken place.

Returning: This is a word that is related to repentance. It could also be a word related to Him returning to His people (renewing His presence/His activity among the people).

Comfort: This is a word that could be related to rest or a word that could also be related to retribution (God takes comfort in His judgment against His enemies as it manifests His righteousness).

In returning and comfort you will be saved: God has just been speaking to them about the horrific judgment that they are going to experience, but then His language abruptly changes, and He (mercifully and graciously) tells them what they can do to be safe.

Quietness: They are not bringing about their own deliverance. It will not be brought about through their deeds or activities.

Trusting: This is a word that shows dependence.

Power: This is the power that is related to salvation (Romans 1:16). It is a power that enables people to take hold of their deliverance and therefore live as a victorious people.

But you would not: This is the problem. God can save them, but they do not want what God has to offer. It was because of their rejection of God that the people went into a very hard and a very long exile.

Verse 16: *“And you will say: ‘No, but upon horses we will flee’ – therefore you shall flee! And ‘We shall ride on swift horses’ – therefore those who pursue you shall be swift!”*

No: They do not want God to deliver them. They want to make their own plans and do it in their own ways. They want to do anything in their power to not have to rely on God. Foolishly they think that their way is the best way. We need to realise that our way is NEVER the best way.

Those who pursue you shall be swift: The implication here is that although they are on swift horses the horses of their pursuers will be even swifter.

Verse 17: *“And one from among them will cause a thousand to flee because of the terror that this one is going to bring. And from before the terror of five shall flee all the ones who remain, and it will be at the end as a flagpole upon the top of a mountain, and as a pole on a hill.”*

Pole: Referring to a flagpole that has no flag. It is an empty flagpole. It will be as though the nation did not exist. For a moment not even the remnant of Israel is going to be seen. The situation is going to look dreadful and hopeless.

Chapter 30

Part 2: Isaiah 30:18-33

God keeps covenant with His people. This means that what He has promised He will be faithful to fulfil. In the last days God is going to bring about a heart change among the people through discipline, judgment, and adversity. Adversity brings the people to repentance. God's faithfulness to bring about a change in the people manifests His steadfast love for His (old and new) covenant people.

Verse 18: “Therefore the Lord will wait to be gracious unto you; and, therefore, He will be exalted for your mercy. For the God of justice is the Lord; blessed are all those who wait for Him.”

The Lord will wait: The people are not responding to God, but He does not cancel His covenant with them or reject them, replace them, or cast them aside. He waits to be gracious to them.

Exalted: Lifted or raised up. This could also be a reference to the cross. Yeshua was lifted up (exalted) on the cross (He lay down His life for His people) so that He could show us mercy.

Gracious... mercy: There is a correlation between the grace of God and the mercy of God.

Blessed: This word is parallel to the New Testament word where we get the concept of the beatitudes from (Matthew 5:3-12). Beatitude means ‘happy’ and ‘blessed’. This word combines blessing with the feeling that one has because of the blessing that has been received.

Blessed are all those who wait for Him: The commentaries agree that this waiting is a waiting for God to move – waiting for God to bring the Redeemer, to bring His Messiah. There is a connection between Messiah, the grace and mercy of God and the expectation to be waiting for Him.

Verse 19: “For a people in Zion will dwell in Jerusalem; crying will no longer be. With grace He will be gracious unto you to the sound of your scream; when He hears it, He answered you.”

Zion: Zion is a Kingdom word. It is speaking about the location of the physical Jerusalem, but it is Jerusalem in a different state, her redeemed state. Zion is Jerusalem redeemed.

Crying will no longer be: Crying will be cut off (Revelation 21:4).

The sound of your scream: When they cry or yell out God is going to respond to their screams or crying out. He is going to show them grace and He is going to answer them.

Answered: This is a future event but is written in the past tense in the Hebrew Bible. This shows assurance and certainty. In God’s eyes this is as good as already done. When the past tense is used regarding a future event, it is to teach us that this is certainly going to take place.

Verse 20: “For the Lord will give to you bread of adversity and water of affliction, and not will be in the corner anymore your teachers, but your eyes will see your teachers.”

Lord: Adonai. The name of God referring to Him as the Master.

Bread of adversity... water of affliction: This bread is not good; this water is putrid. This speaks of the fact that the people are going to go through terrible times of suffering. God has given the children of Israel wonderful promises. He is going to be gracious and merciful to them, He is going to hear their cries and He is going to respond to them. However, to bring these promises to fruition Israel is going to go through a very difficult and unpleasant time of trouble and persecution known as Jacob’s trouble (Jeremiah 30:7). God uses the difficult time to bring about an inward change in the remnant of the Jewish people – the 1/3rd that is left (Zechariah 13:8-9, Romans 9:27-28, Romans 11:5).

Note 1: ‘Jacob’s trouble’ is an end time persecution and time of trouble specifically for the Jewish people.

Before this time of trouble for Jacob, and before the wrath of God falls (as believers we are not appointed to be here on earth when the wrath of God falls – 1 Thessalonians 5:9), there is going to be a Great tribulation that is specifically aimed at the believers – those who believe in Yeshua, ie the Lamb (Revelation 7:13-17). This Great tribulation happens just before our blessed hope (the rapture- Titus 2:13. The rapture is NOT the second coming of Messiah to earth. At the rapture, Yeshua only comes as far as the clouds – 1 Thessalonians 4:17). It is through this Great Tribulation that believers are called to overcome (Revelation 2-3). Why do we need to go through tribulation? To be purified and made spotless, made ready (Daniel 12:10, Revelation 6:11, Revelation 7:9,14, Revelation 19:7-8)

Note 2: To give a timeline: the Great Tribulation for the believers happens during the opening of the seals in Revelation. After the sixth seal, the Believers who have not been martyred during this time (Revelation 6:9-11) are raptured and, at the same time as the rapture takes place, there is a sealing of the remnant of the Jewish people (Revelation 7). These sealed Jewish people ARE going to go through the wrath of God (which commences with the trumpet and bowl judgments), and, at the same time as the wrath of God is falling on the world, they are going to go through an intense persecution or time known as Jacob's trouble (Daniel 12:1). The church will not be around to see this (we would have been martyred or raptured), but at the end of this time we will be coming with Messiah as a part of His second coming (Revelation 19:11-14, 1 Thessalonians 3:13).

Affliction: Pressure, anxiety, stress.

Not will be in the corner anymore your teachers: Those who have the truth are no longer going to be in the corner – set aside.

Your eyes will see your teachers: This means that they are going to perceive (through experience) the revelation of God. His truth and prophetic revelations are no longer going to be put in the corner, shelved, ignored.

Verse 21: *“Your ears shall hear the word which is behind you, saying, ‘This is the way, you shall go in it, from the right or from the left.’”*

Your ears shall hear the word: This is clearly speaking about revelation.

The word which is behind you: The word ‘behind’ shows something that has been left, they ‘moved past this truth’ so to speak and it is now ‘behind’ them. Most scholars see this as a word related to the necessity of repentance.

Way: This is such an important word. The first believers were called the people of the Way (Acts 9:2, 19:9 etc) Messiah is known as the Way (Moses was asking who the Messiah -the Way, God Himself- was, the One who was going to go with him in order to lead the people into the Promised Land – Exodus 33:12-17, see also John 14:6).

From the right or from the left: They need to change their direction (not going right or left) and they need to walk in the straight and specific way of the Lord (Proverbs 3:5-6). Hardship is going to put the people on the right course.

Verse 22: *“You will defile the covering of your statues of silver, and the coverings of your molten statues of gold. You will throw them away as a menstruating rag. You will say to them, ‘Get away!’”*

Note: Right up to the last days Israel will be in idolatry.

Defile: Render unclean.

Statues: Idols

You will defile...your statues: This is a good thing.

Menstruating rag: That which is unclean.

You will say to them: Some would say that this phrase is related to a confession. They are going to confess that their idolatry is a defilement, and they are going to turn away from it.

Verse 23: *“And He will give rain for your seed which you will sow in the ground, and you will have a produce of bread from the ground. Your cattle will graze upon the fatness and richness of the land in that day, your flocks will feed in broad pastures.”*

Note: Once the change in the hearts and the lives of the people has happened, then this is what God will do for them.

The fatness and richness of the land: This land is going to be very fertile.

Flocks: Sheep, lambs.

Your flocks will feed in broad pastures: In Hebrew this is an idiom that speaks of a time of great prosperity. God is going to give His people an opportunity to take hold of a (true) Kingdom prosperity.

Verse 24: *“And the oxen and the young donkeys, those who are workers of the ground, will eat cured fodder, which has been winnowed with the shovel and fan.”*

Oxen: A herd of cattle (ie many of them).

Cured fodder: Food (provision) which is good; food which is healthy and nutritious.

Winnowed: Winnowing is the process whereby the good food is separated from the bad.

Verse 25: *“And it will come about on every high mountain and upon every hill that is lifted up there are going to be streams and tributaries of water, in the day of a great slaughter, when the towers fall.”*

On every high mountain and upon every hill that is lifted up: These are the preferred places.

Streams and tributaries of water: An abundance of water speaks of an abundance of blessing. God is going to exalt His people. He is going to bring them up onto a high land and give them a new perspective. There they are going to behold the blessings of God.

The day of a great slaughter: In the last days there is going to be a massive slaughter of the nations (Revelation 14:19-20)

When the (watch)towers fall: This is an idiom for the nations - those that persecuted Israel. At the end, all the nations of the world are going to come against Israel, but all of these nations are going to fall down.

Verse 26: *“And it shall come about that the light of the moon is going to be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be sevenfold, as a light of seven days, in the day that the Lord binds up the fracture of His people and brings healing to the wound of their blow.”*

Brings healing to the wound of the blow: God is going to bring healing to the pain and suffering (wound) that Israel experienced through their time of trouble (their blow/striking). This time of suffering for the Jewish people is a way of bringing them to repentance.

After Jacob's trouble God is going to restore, heal and provide Kingdom prosperity (blessing) for His Old (to be New) Covenant people [It is interesting to note that although we are a New Covenant people this New Covenant was not a covenant made with the church. Jeremiah 31:31-34 tells us that God is making this covenant with the house of Israel – this house includes the church that has been grafted in (Romans 11:18-27) – as well as with the house of Judah – the Jewish people or Old Covenant people.]

Verse 27: *“Behold, the name of the Lord will come from a distance, burning with anger, and with a heavy burden; His lips are full of wrath, and His tongue like a devouring fire.”*

The name of the Lord will come from a distance: Name is synonymous with character. God's character is so far removed from the people, but He is going to come to them, He is going to return.

Burning with anger: This is how God is going to return.

Note: This verse clearly spells out that God is a Judge. His wrath is going to be poured out on the nations who come against Israel in the last days.

Verse 28: *“And His Spirit is as a flowing river that sweeps through unto the neck (of the enemy), to divide and scatter the nations with the sieve of futility; and there shall be a bridle of deceit in the cheeks of the people, causing them to err.”*

Divide and scatter: God is going to scatter and sift the nations.

Sieve: The instrument that separates the bad from the good (Matthew 25:32).

Unfortunately, not too much good will be found in the nations – only a remnant in the nations will be found (Matthew 7:13-14). The wrath of God, found in the book of Revelation (specifically the trumpet and bowl judgments), does not bring about a change to the nations. The nations continue in their defiance of God. However, through that time a tiny remnant of Gentiles will be saved – not because of the wrath of God, but because they see the faithfulness of God to His covenant that He made with the Jewish people (this parallels what we read about in Exodus 9:20 and Exodus 12:38 – a mixed multitude includes both Jews and Gentiles).

Note: There are two lots of 144,000 people found in the book of Revelation. The first lot of 144,000 (found in Revelation 7:4-8) speaks of the remnant of Israel (Ezra 9:8, Isaiah 10:22, Romans 9:27). The second lot of 144,00 (in Revelation 14:1-5) speaks of the remnant of the Gentiles and some Jews -those who were saved in the time/age of the Gentiles (Luke 21:24, Romans 11:25).

Futility: Vanity. Everything they do is going to be meaningless.

Bridle: A bridle serves the purpose of leading an animal straight, in the right path. Here, however, this bridle leads them to destruction.

Bridle of deceit: Strong delusion (2 Thessalonians 2:11)

Verse 29: *“The song will be to you as in the eve that you sanctify a festival, gladness of heart as one who walks with a flute, to come to the mountain of the Lord, to the Rock of Israel.*

Song: Worship

You: God's people, Israel, the Jewish people.

Festival: A festival is a time of joy and happiness.

The Rock of Israel: This term is used as a description for Messiah, thereby giving a Messianic hint to this verse. Messiah is the Rock of Israel, the Rock of our salvation (Psalm 62:1-2). At the second coming of Messiah, He is going to bring His Old Testament people to a New Testament faith!

Verse 30: *“And the Lord will cause to be heard His glorious voice, and He will bring down His arm, with the indignation of His anger and the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, tempest, and hailstones.”*

Bring down: Make visible.

Arm: The word used here refers to a sacrificial part of an arm. It is also a word that can be used to refer to a descendant. Messiah is frequently referred to as the ‘arm of the Lord’.

Bring down His arm, with the indignation of His anger: This could be referring to the second coming of Messiah to earth.

Verse 31: *“For from the voice of the Lord there is going to be the destruction of Assyria, struck with a rod.”*

Destruction: The breaking of.

Assyria: This is a last day prophecy. Assyria is being used symbolically here to speak of the massive last days empire that is also going to want to thwart the plans and purposes of God.

Struck with a rod: God is going to strike with a rod (bring retribution upon) those who are against the things of God.

Note: The Roman exile began around 70AD, and it lasted for almost 2000years – ending in 1948 when Israel became a nation. The Babylonian exile lasted for 70 years.

The Assyrian exile (Assyria took Israel/the Northern kingdom captive) began long before the Babylonian and Roman exiles. It began around 722 BC. We have not yet seen a true/full restoration taking place from this Assyrian exile. Prophetically we know, however, that in the last days (The days of Messiah) God is going to bring about a reunification – a final redemption - of all the tribes (Ezekiel 37:15-28). This is going to take place in the millennial kingdom.

Verse 32: *“And in every place where the staff of discipline passes, which the Lord will set upon him, it will be with drums and harps in battle, of brandishing, He will fight with it.”*

The staff of discipline: The purpose of this rod/staff is to manifest the miracles and truth (revelation) of God (eg: like the rod of Moses – Exodus 4:1-5). It is a staff that leads the people in the proper way ie into the will of God.

Him: God’s enemies.

Harps: Violins.

Brandishing: A lifting up and a moving or a waving of arms in victory. In these battles that are going to take place, God is going to manifest victory.

Verse 33: “He has arranged from yesterday Tophet. Yes, for the king it is prepared. He has made it deep and large; its pyre is fire with much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, kindles it.”

Yesterday: Referring to a time in the past.

Tophet: The Rabbinical commentaries see this term as a synonym for gehenom, gehenna or hell.

The king: Referring to the antichrist and satan. Hell has been prepared for them (Matthew 25:41, Revelation 20:10).

Much wood: There is so much wood that it will never run out.

The breath: The very essence of a person.

Brimstone: Sulphur

Chapter 31

God wants us to realise that He is greater than all things. When we encounter difficult situations, we need to look to Him for help and not rely on human provision. God can use humans to provide His help, but it should never be to a human that we look to as our primary source or first port of call. When we do not trust God, the implications are disastrous.

Verse 1: “Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong, but who do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor the Lord do they desire.”

Woe: How awful something is going to be if repentance does not take place. It is not going to end well if there is no change.

Egypt: Prophetically Egypt is related to the world. When the word ‘Egypt’ is used in prophecy, it is simply teaching us about not relying upon the world but relying upon the King of the true Kingdom for His truth and provision.

Go down to Egypt for help: They are looking for worldly provision, a worldly solution to their problems. The consequences of this are going to be awful, it is not going to end well. We are going to be terribly disappointed if we rely on earthly means for our salvation.

Chariots ...they are many: Egypt had an abundance of chariots. This however in no way can compare to the power and provision of God.

Horsemen: Soldiers who rode upon horses.

Very strong: Egypt was a strong military power. God, however, does not see the world as any match for Him.

Holy: Holiness is always related to the purposes of God. This is a very important Biblical principle: When we are thinking about (Godly minded), committed to, and passionate about the purpose (will) of God then when opposition arises, we are going to naturally look to God for the solution. When we are trying to fulfil our own will and purpose then when opposition arises, we are going to look to the world for help. Being focused upon the purposes of God will keep us mindful of God - His presence, His provision, His power in our lives.

Desire: A word of strong or passionate demand. Desiring God is what we should be doing. There is a degree of exclusiveness attached to this word.

Our minds should not be on worldly things but first and foremost, exclusively, on the Lord and His will and purpose. We are not dependent upon the things of this world but are very dependent upon God's presence and provision in our lives (His insight, His wisdom, His counsel).

Verse 2: *“Also He is wise and will bring evil, and will not call back His words, and He will stand against the house of evildoers, and against the help of those who practice wickedness.”*

Also He: The language is constructed grammatically in a way that makes this emphatic.

Evil: This is the literal word that is used here. Evil is anything which is contrary to God's plans and purposes. God's plans and purposes would be considered 'good'. Faithlessness, men violating the principles of God (not relying on or trusting in Him) and not receiving the goodness of His plan causes God to move in a way that is contrary to what men (and Himself) would desire. God wants to provide a full and abundant life for all people (that is His good and perfect will for mankind), but He will move against that will when we behave in a way that is not mindful of Him.

Will not call back His words: What God has said God does. God never makes empty threats or promises, but He makes good on all that He has said. God speaks truth – exactly what is right and proper for a given situation.

Stand against: God is going to rise up against those who do evil, in order to discipline or punish them.

Evildoers: Those who violate truth.

The help: Referring to Egypt and those who wickedly help Israel to continue in her wickedness and rebellion. Israel do not want to turn to God as they know He will not help them to achieve their own wicked and sinful desires. Egypt, however, will gladly help her achieve her sinful desires and personal objectives.

Verse 3: *“Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses are flesh, and not spirit. When the Lord stretches out His hand both he who helps will stumble and he who is helped will fall down; they will all perish together.”*

The Egyptians are men, and not God: It is not wise to place our trust and futures on human beings (Matthew 10:28).

Their horses are flesh, and not spirit: The spirit is greater than the flesh. The Spirit is frequently related to the purpose or order of God (Gen 1:2). It is the Spirit of God who brings things into the framework that God wants. These people are not interested in the purposes and order of God.

The Lord stretches out His hand: This is an idiom for God exercising His authority (in other words, He is going to manifest His power).

He who helps: Referring to Egypt.

Stumble: This is a word that means to fail.

He who is helped: Referring to Israel.

All perish together: They will all experience disaster together. Rather than eternal life they are going to be confronted with their mortality.

Verse 4: *“For thus said the Lord unto me: ‘Just as the lion meditates and a young lion upon his prey, a multitude of shepherds will call to him, he will not be afraid of their voice nor respond to their noise, so the Lord of hosts will come down to fight for Mount Zion and for its hill.’”*

Said ... unto me: Isaiah is hearing from God.

Meditates: The word used here speaks of concentration and focus.

A young lion upon his prey: The image here is of a lion just having killed its prey. Very little will distract it from eating its kill.

Shepherds will call to him: They will try to get the lion's attention by yelling at him etc.

So the Lord of hosts will come down: In the same way that the lion cannot be disturbed from its kill is the same way that God will be focused on carrying out His discipline or punishment. There is going to be no human intervention that is going to hinder, distract or cause God to not be able to fulfill what He has intended to do.

Lord of hosts: Lord of the armies.

Come down: This is a word of manifestation, a word of God's presence.

Fight (war) for Mount Zion: This is God's objective. He is going to act and behave for Mount Zion. Mount Zion is a Kingdom term.

For its hill: Many of the rabbinical sources see this as relating to the temple mount. The temple mount should cause us to think of worship. Israel is not behaving in a worshipful manner. God is not the priority or focus of their lives. Because of this God is going to move in great power to restore their Kingdom focus and to bring about worship. It is only worship that will put the people in the right condition to hear from God and behave properly.

Verse 5: *“As birds fly about so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem. Defending, He will also save it; passing over, He will preserve it.”*

As birds fly: Birds are quick to respond. When they hear a noise or see a slight movement they scatter immediately. Birds move quickly.

So will the Lord of hosts defend: God is going to be quick to respond. There will be no delay. He will move to quickly defend Jerusalem.

Passing over: This is a term used for redemption. God is going to move in a way that brings redemption and salvation (rescue and deliverance) to His people. Through repentance we find a way of escape. God is going to move in a redemptive way to bring about escape, deliverance and an exit from sin for His people.

Verse 6: *“Turn, children of Israel, to Him, you who have been led deep into rebellion.”*

Turn: This is a word of repentance. God is calling the children of Israel to repentance.

Him: The Lord God.

Led deep into rebellion: The children of Israel had fallen deeply into rebellion. They needed to repent from this. Their only hope is turning to God.

Verse 7: *“For in that day a man his idol of silver and his idol of gold he will despise which your hands have made for you a sin.”*

Day: Judgment Day. This phrase always has end time/last day application. It is a clear reference to a future event.

A man his idol of silver...of gold: Israel will be in idolatry up until the very end. This will be their mentality – a love of silver and gold (idols) – until God brings about the final repentance.

Despise: A word of loathing and rejection.

Your hands have made for you a sin: The implication is that idolatry (having the mindset and desire to pursue what we want) ends in sin. Sin brings about judgment. God will use that judgment to bring about repentance!

Verse 8: *“Then Assyria shall fall by a sword not of man, and a sword not of mankind shall devour him. But he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall become forced labour.”*

Assyria: Assyria was a vast and strong empire. It was an empire that covered a large land mass, and they overthrew many nations in the world. This is reminiscent of (it parallels) what we should expect concerning the last empire (ie the antichrist empire – the last/final day enemy).

Fall: The destiny of the enemy is that they are going to fall, they are going to be devoured – not through human means, but by God Himself (Revelation 19:15, 2 Thessalonians 2:8).

He: Referring to Assyria but written in the singular (ie the leader of this empire/the antichrist).

His young men: Those who follow the antichrist’s leadership.

Forced labour: Indentured servants. They are going to be enslaved.

Verse 9: *“His rock from terror will pass away, and his cabinet officials shall be afraid of the banner,’ declares the Lord, who is a flame to him in Zion and a stove to him in Jerusalem.”*

His rock: The enemy’s stronghold, the things he trusted in.

Terror: One of the enemy’s greatest weapons is fear. God, however, is going to cause him to become full of fear and terror.

Pass away: The antichrist will be enslaved, defeated and ultimately destroyed.

Cabinet officials: His main leaders.

Banner: One of the names for the Lord is ‘the Lord my Banner’. This is a word that relates to Messiah.

A flame: This could be the manifestation of God the Son, the Messiah.

Flame...stove: A reference to fire - which is the tool that God will use in the last days to bring about His judgment.

Chapter 32

The terms 'righteousness' and 'justice' are words that are associated with God and with His Kingdom. Messiah's rule, in the Kingdom of God, will manifest justice and righteousness. If we submit to Messiah's authority then He will supply us with the anointing of His Spirit, whereby we can be instruments for truth, righteousness and justice – even in this age. These things cause the glory of God to be manifested.

In this chapter, we are shown a dichotomy (a contrast) between two very different approaches to life. Those who embrace the rule and authority of Messiah in their lives make different decisions to those who do not embrace Messiah's rule. Those who embrace God's rule are given wisdom and understanding, their eyes and ears are opened to the revelation of God. This contrasts with those who reject God's authority in their lives. Their eyes and ears remain closed, and they continue in their pursuit of personal gain, even to the detriment of others.

Verse 1: *“Behold, a king will rule for righteousness, the cabinet officials for justice they will officiate.”*

Behold: A word that announces a revelation or a truth.

King: Messiah

Will rule: Speaking of a future event.

Cabinet officials: Those who have a high position in the government. These will be those who rule and reign with Messiah (2 Timothy 2:12, Revelation 20:4). If we are wise, we will not wait for the millennial Kingdom to serve with righteousness and justice. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we should embrace and be serving with righteousness and justice right now.

Officiate: Serve.

Verse 2: *“A man will be as a hiding place from the wind, and a secret place from the flood, as streams of water in an arid place, as the shade of a great rock in a weary land.”*

Man: This is referring to Messiah.

Note: This verse defines how we should understand Messiah – a very present help in a time of need (Psalm 46:1). It gives us assurance that in difficult times God will not forsake or abandon us, but He will protect and provide for us.

Wind: Wind can be very destructive (eg. a tornado). Messiah is our hiding place (a refuge) in the midst of that which has the potential for danger and destruction.

Secret place: That which is not visible.

Flood: That which quickly sweeps through a land causing destruction in its wake.

Hiding place ... secret place: Messiah is our protection.

Streams of water ... shade of a great rock: Messiah is our provider and our defense.

Weary: Tired

Weary land: A land that is not favourable.

Verse 3: *“And not closed are the eyes of the one who sees, and the ears of those who hear will listen.”*

Not closed are the eyes of the one who sees: In this age many people close their eyes, they reject, the revelation of God. This will change under the rule and reign of Messiah. People will not close their eyes from seeing.

The ears of those who hear will listen: When Messiah is ruling (when He is manifesting His character and His provision) people that were not paying attention are going to undergo a change. There is going to be a remnant who embrace God's perspective and His revelation.

Verse 4: *“And the impetuous heart will understand knowledge, and the tongue that stutters will be ready to speak plainly.”*

Impetuous: Those who are rash in making decisions. They do not take everything into consideration and nor are they prudent.

The impetuous heart will understand knowledge: They will experience a change of heart.

The tongue that stutters: These people did not have the ability to convey things clearly. They did not present things verbally in a way that was easily understood.

Speak plainly: Their words will be clear and understood. They will be able to bring clarity into a situation.

Note: All this change is due to one reason – Messiah is ruling and reigning. We can expect this change to happen when He takes His throne on earth. As believers, with Messiah ruling and reigning in our hearts, we can expect Him to help us to think and behave properly, we can expect to have our eyes opened now to His revelation.

Verse 5: *“No longer will be called the foolish one generous, nor will the miser be thought of as bountiful.”*

Note: In this verse we see a change in perspective. Those who are foolish will no longer be seen in a positive light, and those who are stingy will not be thought of as rich. These people will be seen from God's vantage point or perspective.

No longer will be called the foolish one generous: Foolishness causes us to not participate in the things of God. The foolish person will no longer be seen as someone who is investing himself properly. Foolishness implies that he is not interested in the things of the Kingdom. He is not about the purposes of God.

Generous: A word that speaks of abundance.

Miser: Someone who is stingy and cheap.

Bountiful: The miser will not be thought of as someone with resources. When the miser acquired things, he held them for himself rather than extending himself and giving to others who were in need.

Verse 6: *“For the foolish one foolishness he will speak, and his heart will work wickedness; to practice ungodliness, to utter error against the Lord, to keep the hungry unsatisfied, and he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail.”*

Foolishness he will speak: There is going to be a recognition that he is foolish.

His heart will work wickedness: Those who are foolish do not embrace the truth of God. They do not make wise decisions.

Practice ungodliness: Their deeds become defiled.

Error: Deceit. They teach deception.

Keep the hungry unsatisfied...and the drink of the thirsty to fail: He will not respond to or provide for those who are hungry (Romans 12:2-21). The foolish person will not be interested in setting things in order - giving drink to the thirsty and sustenance for those who are hungry. The foolish person does not want to meet the needs of others. As believers, with the change that the Holy Spirit has wrought in our hearts, we need to be people who are interested in, committed to and invested in the plights of others. We need to alleviate suffering and minister to others.

Verse 7: *“A scoundrel his vessels are evil; He counselled schemes in order to harm the poor with lying words, and when speaks a destitute one justly (the scoundrel) stands in opposition.”*

Scoundrel: Someone who is rogue. He is not behaving correctly and is not faithful to his commitments.

His vessels: Those things that he possesses.

Poor: Those who do not have much. He devises a way to take advantage of those who are needy.

Lying: Words of falseness.

Destitute one: Someone who has absolutely nothing.

Stands in opposition: Those who are scoundrels are never about helping others. They never want to bless. They never take interest in anyone else - it is always about themselves. This is a satanic character. Satan does not care about who he harms in his pursuits. He does not care about suffering, pain, disaster and death as long as they aid in helping him to achieve his own goals.

Verse 8: *“But a generous man generous things he will counsel, he will take a stand for generous things.”*

Take a stand: Rise up.

He will take a stand for generous things: A generous man not only recognizes generous things, but he is also committed to them.

Note: In the next few verses there is an emphasis on women. Frequently in the Bible, when women are at the forefront of a passage, we can expect redemption and the consequences (or the lack thereof) of redemption (Shiphrah and Puah in Exodus 1:15-17, Rahab, Ruth etc).

Verse 9: *“Complacent women, rise up, listen to My voice, O daughters, give ear to My speech.”*

Complacent women: Women who are relaxed, still and quiet. They are not burdened or upset about the status quo of wickedness (those things which conflict with the rule and authority of God). These women are at ease with the world in its present state.

Rise up: God is calling for there to be a change in their position. They should no longer trust in the things of the world. A worldly perspective is not going to lead them to the place where they need to be.

Voice: God's Word or revelation. His instruction.

Verse 10: *"In a year and days you will be troubled, you complacent women; for the end of the grape harvest will come to an end, that which is gathered up will not come."*

In a year and days: God has mercifully given them an allotment of time in which they can change their ways. They still have time for action. God is warning them, however, that a critical time is fast approaching when things will be very different.

Troubled: Those who are going along with the status quo, the way that the world is heading, are going to, very shortly, be greatly disturbed.

Grape harvest: A time of joy and celebration. The status quo of how the world is being administered - this time of ease, joy and happiness, not being burdened for the things of God – is about to come to an end.

That which is gathered up: The gleanings.

Will not come: In a short while there is going to be a dramatic end to life as they know it. God will reach a point when He cannot tolerate anymore.

Verse 11: *"Tremble, O women who are at ease; be troubled, O complacent ones; strip yourselves, make yourselves bare, and gird yourself around the loins."*

Tremble: This is a word for great fear. God wants them to fear as this fear will lead them to repentance. In modern Hebrew it is the word used for being in medical shock – the body goes through a dramatic physical change and if medical attention is not received there is a high risk of death.

Troubled: Disturbed

Strip yourselves, make yourselves bare, and gird yourself around the loins: This means that they need to take off their current garments and put on sackcloth and ashes – garments of repentance. Now is a time to repent. Now is the time to mourn over the unrighteousness and injustice in this world.

Verse 12: *"Upon breasts lament, mourn for the desirable fields and the fruitful vine."*

Upon breasts lament: An idiom meaning to beat their chests. This is the action that goes along with sorrow, grief and repentance.

Mourn: Mourn because things are about to change.

Desirable fields: Good land, land which was very prosperous for them.

Desirable fields and the fruitful vine: These are all going to be done away with. When God's righteous King comes, He is coming for judgment and discipline. All the things that were a source of joy, provision and wealth are going to be dramatically and drastically changed.

Verse 13: *“Upon the ground of My people thistles and thorns will come up, Yes, upon every house of joy and every joyous city.”*

Thistles and thorns: The ground will no longer be fertile. No one will be able to sow or produce a harvest in this ground.

House of joy ... joyous city: When God’s judgment comes, every house and city, those who lived the so-called ‘good lives’, will suffer.

Verse 14: *“For the palace will be abandoned, the bustling city will be forsaken. The mounds and towers will become dens forever, A joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of herds.”*

Palace: This can be a king's palace, or it can simply mean a very beautiful estate of the wealthy.

Abandoned...forsaken: People just leave their homes and cities.

Mounds: A Hebrew term for land being built up. Raising up the land so that watchtowers can be placed on it.

Towers will become dens: They are not going to be used for their intended purposes. These places that were meant to provide protection are going to be dealt with severely. They gave people a false sense of security and turned their eyes off God as their protector.

A joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of herds: Wild animals are going to make their homes in these places once inhabited by humans. This foreshadows God’s utter contempt for the corruption that took place on this land.

Verse 15: *“Until will be poured out upon us a Spirit from up on high, and the desert becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is counted as a forest.”*

Until: This word speaks of a change that is going to happen, an interruption. God is speaking here primarily to Israel and the people of Judah. The implication here is that if God did not act then nothing would change...this desolation would have gone on forever.

Poured out upon us a Spirit: God's Holy Spirit is going to be poured out upon individuals. A time of refreshing is coming for the Jewish people (Acts 3:19-21). God’s Spirit brings about a change.

Fruitful: Fertile.

The fruitful field is counted as a forest: An elevation of the land takes place in the eyes of the peoples. This land will become abundant and will produce fruit. This is what a righteous and just rule will bring about.

Verse 16: *“And will dwell in the desert justice, and righteousness in the good land.”*

Verse 17: *“And it will come about the work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever.”*

The work of righteousness will be peace: The deeds of righteousness will bring about peace. Peace is what we experience as the fulfillment of God's will.

Quietness: Being relaxed, being at ease, being still.

Assurance: Security or safety.

Verse 18: *“My people will dwell in an oasis of peace, in dwelling places that are sure and in abundant rest.”*

Abundant rest: Absolute tranquility. This is how we are going to live in the Kingdom of God.

Verse 19: *“Though hail comes down on the forest, and in the lowland the city will be humbled.”*

Note: This verse ushers in the same dichotomy found in Revelation 22:14-15. In the city of God (the New Jerusalem) will be those who live in a blessed way, outside the city will be darkness, weeping and gnashing of teeth. This same concept is at play here in Isaiah.

Hail: A sign of God’s judgment (hail was one of the plagues in Egypt).

The city will be humbled: God’s judgment will be on certain places.

Verse 20: *“But you shall be blessed who sow upon all types of waters, who send out freely the feet of the ox and the donkey.”*

Blessed: Happy.

All types of waters: We tend to think of still or calm water as the desired waters (Psalm 23:2). However, those who have great power benefit from all types of waters. These people can overcome all things. They are not dependent upon a perfect situation but are overcomers in every situation. These are people who are fruitful in calm waters and in rushing waters.

Send out freely the feet of the ox and the donkey: These people set their animals free. They do not need the work or the labour of their ox or donkey. They are in a place of fruitfulness and abundance and do not need to rely on others to maintain this place for them. God gives them abundance and He is the One who maintains it for them.

CHAPTER 33

Part 1: Isaiah 33:1-12

Judgment is one of the central themes of the Scripture - not only in the Old Testament but also in the New. Yeshua, when He comes to earth again, is coming for the purpose of judgment (and ultimately to take charge of His creation again). God’s judgment is going to bring about our vindication. It is going to be a blessing for us, because the outcome of that judgment is the establishment of His Kingdom. Within His Kingdom we can experience the goodness and blessings of God, we are going to see the fulfillment of the promises of God.

The most predominant position and interpretation of this 33rd chapter is that it is against the Assyria of old and that it has already been fulfilled. However, we shall see that it is a chapter that has far more implications for the last days than many people think.

Verse 1: *“Woe to you who plunder, though you have not been plundered, and you who deal treacherously, though they have not dealt treacherously with you. When there is an end to his stealing he shall be stolen; and when comes to an end his treacherous behaviour, they will be treacherous against you.”*

Woe: Something awful (God’s judgment) is going to happen if there is no change. This is a word of warning.

Plunder: Stealing, but not in a small way – they take a very great amount. Those who plunder are not at all bound by anything other than their desire for profit and their commitment to what they want for themselves. They are people who are spiritually out of control. They make the foolish assumption that they can do as they like without suffering any consequences.

Treacherously: Those who deal in a treacherous way can be thought of as betrayers. These people cannot be trusted as they are not at all faithful.

Note: Sometimes Isaiah says ‘you’ and sometimes he changes the pronoun and says ‘him’. Isaiah is sometimes speaking directly to the antichrist (to this enemy) but at other times he is speaking about him to the people of God. Ultimately the antichrist is going to be betrayed (Matthew 12:25-26). The measure that he has used will be measured back to him.

Verse 2: *“O Lord, be gracious to us; for we have hoped, He will be their arm every morning, our salvation in the time of trouble.”*

Be gracious to us: One group is going to suffer something awful (‘Woe’) but another group is seeking God’s grace. If we are not seeking God’s grace, and if we are not recipients of His grace, then we are going to experience His consuming judgment. There is no position inbetween.

Hoped: This is a word that means to be gathered or assembled together. Hope is rooted in the promises of God.

He will be their arm: This is one of God’s greatest promises to us. In the prophecy of Isaiah this word זֶרְעוֹ (zə·rō·‘ām) is often translated ‘arm’ but it comes from the same word for seed - like the seed of Abraham (a male offspring or a son). The arm of the Lord, in this prophecy, is a reference to Messiah. The arm of God is the Son of God.

Note: In this verse someone is seeking the grace of God. Our hope is rooted in receiving that grace. Immediately after the request for grace and hope, this verse speaks of Messiah.

Mornings: This term ‘morning’ usually speaks of revelation (light), things being brought into clarity. It is not a coincidence that although Messiah was resurrected in the nighttime the empty tomb was manifested in the morning (Luke 24:1-3). Like the morning, Messiah manifested Himself to mankind.

Salvation: Parallel to the phrase ‘arm’ is this word ‘salvation’.

Time of trouble: Messiah will manifest Himself firstly to the believers in their time of tribulation by coming for them in the rapture (He is our blessed hope). After this, He will then also manifest Himself to the Jewish people in their time of trouble (Jacob’s trouble).

Verse 3: *“From the sound of the multitude peoples will wander around aimlessly, When You are lifted up the nations are going to be scattered.”*

Sound: Voice. Noise

Multitude: An exceedingly large number.

The sound of the multitude: Some people have interpreted this to mean the pronouncement in heaven for God to bring about judgment and the vindication of His people.

Peoples: Referring to the peoples in the nations.

Wander around aimlessly: It is a word of confusion. The people will not know where to go. They will not have any clear direction. The nations who came up against Israel in the last days are going to see their leader (the antichrist) defeated. They are going to realise that their hopes have been misplaced. When God's wrath is falling it is going to bring about great confusion among the peoples.

You are lifted up: This is speaking about God being lifted up (Yeshua has been lifted up as the Son of man – John 3:14, and He will also be lifted up and shown to be the Son of God – Zechariah 12:10).

Peoples ... nations: Parallel to each other.

Wander aimlessly...scattered: Parallel to each other. Wandering aimlessly and being scattered are words that speak of an upcoming and pending defeat.

Verse 4: *“And Your plunder shall be gathered, like the gathering of the locust; like the sound of a multitude rushing to a place, He shall run upon them.”*

Note: In the Scripture there are about four or five different words used to describe different locust plagues. Some locusts are kosher to eat (Matthew 3:4) and some are not. Locusts are frequently used to mete out God's judgment (Exodus 10, Revelation 9).

Your plunder: God's spoils of war. God will take back (gather) from the antichrist and his evil empire all that they have robbed and stolen from others.

The gathering of the locust: When a locust feeds on a plant it spares nothing on that plant. It strips it bare.

The sound of a multitude: When locusts swarm and devour they make a loud sound.

Rushing: God is going to take plunder quickly.

Verse 5: *“Lifted up is the Lord, for He dwells in the heights; He fills Zion with justice and righteousness.”*

Lifted up: The Lord is lifted up for the purpose of manifestation. God's glory is going to be manifested in the world.

He fills Zion with justice and righteousness: It is God's judgment, the pouring out of His wrath, that is going to cause God to be exalted or lifted up. His judgment manifests His greatness to all of the world. After God's judgment comes justice and righteousness! This means that God's Kingdom (Zion is a Kingdom word – it is Jerusalem in her glorified or redeemed state) is going to be established! Without judgment, God's Kingdom will not be established.

Verse 6: *“And it will come about faithfulness in Your time: power, salvations, wisdom, knowledge and the fear of the Lord it is His treasure.”*

Faithfulness: God is always faithful, but He is going to manifest/show Himself faithful in a discernable way – through judgment.

Salvations: Written in the plural. This means abundant salvations.

The fear of the Lord it is His treasure: Almighty God, who lacks nothing, and who can speak anything into being, **treasures** it when we give Him priority (when we fear Him).

Verse 7: *“Behold their heroes are going to cry out outside, and the angels of peace are going to weep bitterly.”*

Note: Israel is going to experience God’s deliverance, but it is not going to come easily for them. Their enemies are going to want to destroy the holy land (holy, meaning that it is a land that has a purpose, it is a land set apart to fulfil the purposes of God).

Heroes: Mighty or valiant ones.

Outside: Most of the Rabbinical scholars say that this has to do with exile. In the end there is going to be another (shorter) time of exile – during the time of Jacob’s trouble (Zechariah 14:2, Revelation 12:14). During this time a remnant of people will remain in Jerusalem, but the majority of the people are going to go into exile, into the wilderness.

The angels of peace are going to weep bitterly: All of this has to do with the sadness of Jacob’s trouble.

Verse 8: *“And the highways are going to be made desolate, and the guest is going to cease to travel, he will void the covenant, he will loathe the cities and will not give any consideration to humanity.”*

Highways: The roads that people can travel on throughout Israel.

The guest: The tourists are going to cease going to Israel. What is going on in Israel in the last days is going to be very severe that even tourism will cease. The hatred against the Jewish people will be very intense. This hatred will be led by the antichrist and those who are part of his empire.

He will void the covenant: Referring to the antichrist (Daniel 9:27)

Voided: Transgressed. Broke. Made it nul and void.

Not give any consideration to humanity: God shows mercy and compassion to humanity. The antichrist does not.

Verse 9: *“Miserable is the land. Lebanon will be made despicable and shrivelled up. Sharon will be a desert. Bashan and Carmel are going to be shaken.”*

Land: This word could refer to the land of Israel, or it could be a word referring to the whole earth.

Lebanon: Throughout the generations, Lebanon has been seen as a fertile and fruitful place.

Sharon: Fertile land along the Mediterranean.

Bashan: Near the Golan Heights today.

Carmel: In Haifa.

Bashan and Carmel: Both of these are high places. This land is going to be stripped away – but not by natural erosion (ie: not by wind, water or ice)

Verse 10: *“Now I will rise up,’ says the Lord. ‘Now I will be lifted up, and now I will be raised up.’”*

Rise up...lifted up...raised up: Three different words are used here to speak of God manifesting Himself at this time. When we look at the land of Israel and we see that these places are again destitute then we will know that God manifesting Himself is at hand.

Verse 11: *“You will conceive chaff, you shall give birth to stubble; your spirit is going to be a fire that consumes you.”*

You will conceive chaff: God begins to proclaim judgment and destruction upon His enemy.

Chaff: The unusable part of a plant, the part that is discarded.

Spirit: Desire or objective.

Your spirit is going to be a fire that consumes you: The antichrist and his empire are going to plot and plan things, wanting to carry them out, but these things are going to backfire on them.

Verse 12: *“And the people will be burned up like lime that is mixed with thorns and with the shavings of grass. With fire they will be ignited.”*

People: Those who have no covenant with God. These are the people who have sided with the antichrist and his evil empire.

Lime: Whitewash. A fine powder.

Lime...thorns...the shavings of grass: All very combustible or flammable.

CHAPTER 33

PART 2: Isaiah 33:13-24

Every decision we make, and our every action, needs to be decided and carried out based upon the reality of the Kingdom of God. Life on earth is short (James 4:14). We should not waste our time on things which have little consequence. This world is coming to an end, but the Kingdom of God lasts forever. We need to be doing the things that are going to impact our eternity.

Verse 13: *“Hear, those who are far away, to what I have done. And know, those who are close, My might.”*

Hear: This is a word that demands a response. God is speaking to us, and He wants us to receive His revelation and respond to it appropriately.

Those who are far away: Many commentators say this is speaking of the Gentiles.

Those who are close: Speaking of the children of Israel.

What I have done...My might: There is a relationship between what God has done and His might/power. It is because of God's might that He has done this.

Note: What God does in the last days is going to have an implication for all of humanity.

Verse 14: *“The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness has seized the hypocrites; who will dwell with us, in the midst of this devouring fire? Who will dwell with us with eternal burning places?”*

The sinners in Zion are afraid: God, in His Kingdom, will not tolerate any sin. In the millennial kingdom (the word ‘Zion’ is often used to reference this millennial kingdom), under the administration of Messiah Yeshua, sin will be dealt with quickly.

Afraid...fearfulness: The words used here are words that depict great fear - trembling or shaking. The sinners and hypocrites are going to be afraid of God’s righteous rule.

Hypocrites: Hypocrites say one thing but do another.

With us: ‘With us’ might be a reference to the triune God (the trinity).

Devouring fire: Speaks of God's judgment. God will not tolerate, and will destroy, sin in His Kingdom. Our God is a consuming fire (Hebrew 12:28-29).

Devouring fire... eternal burning places: God is going to consume all those things that are not of His Kingdom character -all those things that conflict with it.

Verse 15: *“The one who walks righteously and who speaks uprightly, he who loathes profit achieved by oppression, who gestures with his hands refusing bribes, who seals his ears from hearing of bloodshed and shuts his eyes from seeing evil.”*

Righteously...uprightly: These two words are written in the plural. The plural often speaks of an abundance...abundant righteousness, abundant uprightness.

Gestures with his hands: This would be a gesture to say ‘no’. He rejects bribes.

Note: Those who are going to be in the Kingdom of God are those who are committed to righteousness. They are going to in no way pervert justice and righteousness. They are going to want to have nothing to do with evil.

Verse 16: *“He will dwell in the upper places, in the fortress of the rocks is his exalted place; his bread is given, and his waters are faithful.”*

Note: This verse is speaking about what the benefits are for the person who dwells in the Kingdom of God.

Fortress of the rocks is his exalted place: He will dwell in a place of safety. The high or exalted places are places that manifest God’s pleasure (if they are used in regard to Him and not in regard to idol worship).

His bread is given, and his waters are faithful: With God's pleasure comes His provision. God is going to provide for him in a faithful and consistent way. This provides us with peace, joy, contentment, and a feeling of security. This is what God is promising for those who fear and honour Him.

Verse 17: *“A King in His beauty your eyes will see, and the land that is far away.”*

King: Referring to Messiah.

See: Perceive, have a vision (clarity) of.

The land that is far away: Hebrews 11:13-16. Although this Kingdom, this land of God's eternal dwelling place, may currently be far away we should have a vision of it, a perspective for it.

Verse 18: *“Your heart was meditating upon this fear: Where is the scribe? Where is the one who weighs? Where is the one who counts the towers?”*

Note: This verse deals with a future change.

Heart: This refers to our thoughts (Proverbs 23:7)

Meditating: Paying great attention to something.

Fear: Dread

Scribe: Those who write things down. They take note of what is happening around them.

The one who weighs: The commentators say that this is referring to those who counsel others – they weigh the words of others.

Counts the towers: Counting the towers of the city was a way of estimating the strength of the city.

Note: All of the above people would take into consideration the battle (possibly the antichrist battle) that was about to begin. They were fearful and began to act, to assess what they would be up against. God, however, is the One who is going to fight this battle. God does not need to scope out the enemy to see what He is up against - like us humans do. What this passage is saying is that those who have feared in the past, those who are fearful about the future, do not need to be. God does not need the scribes, the counsels or the tower counts. He has this under control!

Verse 19: *“You will not see the fierce people, and a people that have a deep speech which is difficult to understand, and those who have a tongue that stammers so they cannot be understood.”*

Fierce: Those who are bold or brash. This is speaking of a barbarian, an enemy. We will not see those who set themselves against us.

Deep speech: Speech that is not easily grasped or understood.

Tongue that stammers: Those who do not communicate well.

Note: God does not have to size up the enemy. Nothing or no one is too difficult for God. This enemy does not understand who he is going up against.

Verse 20: *“And Zion will gaze upon the city of our appointed times, your eyes will see Jerusalem, a quiet habitation, a tent that cannot be moved, not one of its pegs will ever be moved, nor will any of its ropes be severed.”*

Zion: The city of God’s Kingdom

Gaze upon: Will see.

Appointed times: Festivals. These Biblical festivals (Passover, Feasts of Tabernacles, Shabbat etc) are so important in helping us to understand Kingdom reality. In Colossians 2:16-17 Paul tells us that these things (the festivals etc) are a shadow of the things which are to come. The substance that casts the shadow is Messiah. A kingdom is coming. We see hints of this Kingdom in the festivals (redemption, rest, etc), but the reality of this Kingdom is found in Messiah Himself. The more we understand the festivals the better we will be able to understand Messiah.

Cannot be moved: Will not travel.

Pegs: The pegs that are driven into a tent cord to hold it up.

Severed: Disconnected or broken.

Verse 21: *“For since there is the mighty Lord for us, a place of wide rivers and bodies of water larger than rivers, in which no sailboat with oars will sail, nor majestic ships pass by.”*

There is the mighty Lord: This is why this Kingdom is eternal. This is why things do not change or move or get disconnected. The mighty God is there!

Wide: Massive. These rivers are going to be huge. Big rivers usually have strong and powerful currents which, together with the distance, make a massive river difficult to cross.

Majestic ships: Referring to a naval group of ships.

Nor majestic ships pass by: God's city, His Kingdom, is not going to be approachable by the enemy. Isaiah is using poetic terms to tell us that the enemy will not be strong enough to even bring an attack against it. God's Kingdom, His city, will be a place where people will be safe. We will not need to fear anything in the city of God.

Verse 22: *“For the Lord He is our judge, the Lord He is the One who makes the law, the Lord is our King and He is our Saviour.”*

Note: God judges us by His laws.

Verse 23: *“Your cords will be abandoned, and they could not strengthen their mast, they could not spread the sail. Then will be plundered until the great plunder is divided, the lame take the spoils.”*

Note: This verse is speaking about how the enemy is not going to be successful. He, and his things, are going to fail.

Cords: Ropes

Strengthen their mast: Boats, in Isaiah's day, were powered by the wind. Therefore, these boats had sails which were attached to long poles called masts. The enemy that is going to come is not going to be successful. His ropes are going to be abandoned as they are not going to be strong enough for the task. Without the ability to hoist the sails the boat is going nowhere. This is a picture of how weak the enemy is going to be. He will not be able to attack and, in fact, is going to be defeated.

The lame take the spoils: The enemy will have a lot. However, all of this great plunder will be stripped from him and divided up. Even the lame, those who are not usually appropriate for physical battle, will be able to plunder the enemy. God is using a variety of ways to let us know that this enemy will not be able to defend himself, that this enemy will be defeated and ultimately able to be plundered by even the least in the battle.

Verse 24: *“The one who dwells let him not say ‘I am sick’. The people who dwell in it will have iniquity removed from them.”*

Note: This verse is a great promise of what is going to be a Kingdom reality. Many today preach the Kingdom promises and reality (prosperity gospel) as if they are a current reality - which they are not. We live in a sinful world – full of disease, violence and ungodliness. In this age we may not experience the promises of God, but in the Kingdom, God, who is absolutely faithful, has promised that we will.

I am sick: Another false teaching going around is that we should not say things like this, as they say, that what we speak creates reality.

However, in this age this is the reality for many people. People should not be shamed into keeping silent about what they are suffering (James 5:14-15). Being well will, absolutely, be a Kingdom reality (Revelation 21:4).

It: Zion

Have iniquity removed: Neither sickness nor sin will be a reality in the Kingdom of God. However, both of these things are still very much a reality in this age.

CHAPTER 34

Yeshua taught that the vast majority of humanity is not going to experience salvation – they will not be in the Kingdom of God but will encounter His eternal wrath and punishment (Matthew 7:13-14). We need to acknowledge and respond to this reality through, firstly, our own repentance. Secondly, we do not want others to experience the wrath of God, so we need to accurately share the Word of God with those around us so that we can lead them to salvation (1 Corinthians 9:22).

Verse 1: *“Draw near, O nations, to hear; and heed you people! Hear O earth in its fullness, the world and all of its offspring.”*

Note: There is an emphasis on the world/the nations in this verse because it is the world that is going to experience God's judgment. They are going to be the recipients of God's wrath. God reveals His plan ahead of time so that people can make the necessary preparations (ie: seek salvation through Messiah, if they should desire to do so, before this wrath of God falls).

Nations: Gentiles.

Hear: Not to hear for the sake of hearing, but to hear in order to respond.

Heed: Hearing what is being said and being able to discern it accurately.

Offspring: The next generation.

Its fullness...its offspring: This is applicable to every single person on this planet. God's message is all inclusive – it is for us, no matter who or where we are, no matter what generation we live in.

Verse 2: *“For the indignation of the Lord is against all nations, and His hot anger against all their hosts; He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to the slaughter.”*

Indignation: A very hostile anger. When this word is applied to an animal it speaks of one that is almost out of control – frothing at the mouth. This frothing is a physical, discernible sign of anger. This discernable anger is what this word is emphasising – except that God is always perfectly in control.

Hosts: The word used here is the simple word for army. However, when the Bible speaks of a 'host' it is also a word that can be applied to things that are powerful in this world and things even powerful in the heavens.

Utterly destroyed: In the Bible the word used here is a word used for a special type of commandment. At times, God would send the children of Israel to a people, to a city, and He would command them to devote everything to Him. What this meant was that they had to destroy everything – not taking any plunder or spoils (1 Samuel 15:3).

All of the spoil had to be offered up to God – usually it was burnt up, totally consumed. The word used here is a word of absolute destruction.

Slaughter: Massacre. God is going to bring about a massacre in this world, a massacre upon humanity and every aspect of His creation that has not surrendered to Him.

Verse 3: *“Also their slain shall be stretched out; their stench shall rise from their corpses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood.”*

Stretched out: Cast forth throughout the earth.

Stench: Foul odour. God’s judgment is going to bring physical death to people, as well as eternal spiritual torment.

Corpses: A body that is empty – ie it is a body that is without its soul.

Mountains shall be melted: Prophetically a mountain often speaks of a government or a seat of authority.

Verse 4: *“And all the host of heavens they decay, and the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; all their host shall wither as the withering of a leaf from the vine, and as the withering of a fig tree.”*

Decay: Rot away. Most of the scholars, both Rabbinical and Christian, see this as not speaking of the heavenly hosts (ie armies/angels) but rather it is speaking about the sun, the moon and the stars (Matthew 24:29).

Withering of a leaf... withering of a fig tree: God uses terminology, images, that were very well known by the people.

Verse 5: *“For My sword from the heavens shall be saturated; behold concerning Edom it shall come down, and concerning the people of My destruction, for judgment.”*

My sword shall be saturated: When a war took place in Isaiah’s day the swords of the people who were fighting would become full of blood – saturated with the blood of those they slain. This is the imagery of God’s sword that is being used here.

Edom: The offspring of Esau - an eternal enemy of God.

Destruction: Absolute annihilation. These people are going to be like the plunder and spoils that were completely consumed – wholly devoted to God – utterly destroyed.

Judgment: The retribution that God is going to bring upon this world is because of sin and rebellion.

Verse 6: *“The sword of the Lord is filled with blood. It is made fat with fatness from the blood of lambs and goats, and from the fatness of the kidneys of rams, for the Lord has a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Edom.”*

Sacrifice: Most people see this word as meaning a slaughter, a massacre.

Bozrah: At Messiah’s second coming (not speaking of the rapture) He will put His feet in three places primarily:

1. He is going to judge the mountain of Esau in the land of Edom, specifically this place called Bozrah (Isaiah 63:1-6).

2. He is going to go to Armageddon (in the Jezreel Valley) to pour out His judgment upon all the nations who have come against Israel (Revelation 16:16, Revelation 19:11-21).
3. He is going to stand on the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4, Acts 1:11-12).

Verse 7: *“The wild buffalo shall come down with them, and the young bulls with the mighty bulls; their land shall be saturated with blood, and their dust from the fatness is going to become fertile.”*

Fertile: Death, and the decay that follows, is going to cause a change to the land. The land will become fertile. Judgment is going to bring a glorious change to the earth - the establishment of the millennial Kingdom, which a remnant will inherit.

Verse 8: *“For it is a day of vengeance unto the Lord, it is the year of recompenses for the conflict of Zion.”*

Recompenses: Written in the plural, therefore speaking of an abundance of payments. God is going to make abundant payments back upon those who have violated His truth, rebelled against His grace and who have been in defiance against His plans and purposes. He is going to set things in order and is going to establish His Kingdom in righteousness.

Conflict of Zion: God is going to be in conflict with the world over Zion (a Kingdom word – ie His Kingdom). God makes peace by punishing and destroying His enemy.

Verse 9: *“Its rivers shall be turned into pitch, and its dust into brimstone; its land shall become burning pitch.”*

Rivers shall be turned into pitch: Earth’s rivers are going to be turned into tar.

Pitch(tar)...brimstone (sulphur): These are words that also point to an end time wrath.

Burning pitch: Everything that the world emphasized (what it sought, wanted and pursued) is going to become nothing more than sulphur, brimstone, tar. What the world worked for is going to turn into that which no one wants.

Verse 10: *“Night and day it shall not be extinguished; forever will go up its smoke. From generation to generation, it will be destroyed; no one shall pass through it forever and ever.”*

Note: Scholars say this is speaking about the place of judgment which is outside of God’s Kingdom - this place where there is outer darkness, weeping and gnashing of teeth.

No one shall pass through: No one will want to go there. When something is good, a beautiful place, people want to travel there to visit it. This is not the case here.

Verse 11: *“But the pelican and the porcupine shall possess it, also the owl and the raven shall dwell in it. And He will stretch out over it the line of confusion and the rocks of emptiness.”*

Pelican...porcupine...owl...raven: All of these are unclean (unkosher – ie rejected) animals. Isaiah is using symbolic language to refer to those who are going to inherit and dwell in this wasteland.

Line: A tool that builders (surveyors) use to help them bring order into what they are constructing.

Confusion... emptiness: The same words used in Genesis 1:2 to speak of chaos (a word that was used to describe creation in its original form – empty, void and lacking order). This place is going to be devoid of the Word and Spirit of God.

Verse 12: *“They shall call its nobles to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all its princes shall be nothing.”*

Nobles: The political leaders. They had clout, power and authority but they were not submissive to God. They did not use their positions for the things of God.

None shall be there: These leaders will not have a kingdom to rule over.

Princes: High officials.

All its princes shall be nothing: Everything that they had achieved, all their glory in this world and honour from a world’s perspective, will bring about nothing whatsoever before God.

Verse 13: *“Thorns shall come up in its palaces, thistles and briars in its fortresses. It shall be a habitation of jackals, a courtyard for ostriches.”*

Jackals...ostriches: Unclean animals (Revelation 22:15). God is using symbolic language to say that this place is unclean, this place is not a place of purpose, this place is rejected by God.

Verse 14: *“The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the jackals, and its wild goat shall bleat to its companion; also the night creature shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest.”*

Note: All of those who were rejected and who were an abomination are going to be placed in this place. None of these are a blessing for man. None of them have a purpose in the life of man.

Verse 15: *“There the serpent will make a nest and lay her eggs; she will hatch them and will gather them (her babies) up under her shadow; there the unclean fowls and their mates will gather.”*

Note: This is not the kind of place a man would want to live in. It is not a place that humanity would place any value on. This is not a place of blessing.

Verse 16: *“Seek from the book of the Lord, and read: Not one from it will be absent; a woman and her mate will not be missing. For the mouth has commanded it, and His Spirit has gathered them.”*

Note: In this verse there is a transition. The foundation for the next chapter in Isaiah begins to be laid in this verse.

Seek from the book of the Lord, and read: A call to utilize the Word of the Lord.

Not one from it will be absent: Most scholars say that not one promise, not one word from Scripture (prophecy etc) is going to be absent. This means that everything God has said is going to be fulfilled.

A woman and her mate will not be missing: Based upon His promises, God is going to work with the family. In the same way that God saw and provided for those things that were not acceptable, is the same way that He is going to provide for those who are acceptable - those who base their life upon the revelation of the Word of God.

The mouth: The mouth of the Lord.

Note: In the midst of God's wrath being poured out there will be those who seek the revelation of God. God takes note of this, and the Holy Spirit gathers them up so that none of them are missing or lacking anything.

Verse 17: *"For He will cast upon them the lot, His hand is going to divide it out to them with a measuring line. Unto forever they will inherit it. From generation unto generation, they will dwell in it."*

For He will cast upon them the lot: God is going to gather them (His people) up and is going to fulfill their lot (what He has promised them).

Divide it out to them with a measuring line: The reward/inheritance that has been prepared for them is going to be perfect. It is going to be stretched out according to the right measurement.

CHAPTER 35

Climate change is not the greatest threat to this world. The greatest threat to this world is not the activity of man, but rather it is the wrath of God. In the last days God (the God of salvation) is going to bring great destruction to this world. The Earth will survive, but things are going to happen in the heavens that are going to impact life upon earth. Many, many people are going to lose their lives. This will be a true crisis, stemming from two things: man's sin and God's wrath. However, this crisis will lead to a wonderful outcome – the establishment of the Kingdom of God on Earth. This earth is going to be transformed. Creation is going to reflect the glory of God. God is faithful and what He has promised will take place!

Verse 1: *"The wilderness and the dry land will be made joyful; the desert way shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."*

The wilderness and the dry land will be made joyful: These places that were oppressed are going to undergo a wonderful change. This change will find its expression in joy, happiness and gladness. There will be no concern about the past, but everyone will be looking toward the future.

The desert way: A dry, arid and empty stretch of land

Rose: (could also be translated 'lily'). Flowers that have a natural glory (glory that only God can provide) are going to grow here.

Verse 2: *“Utterly blossoming and rejoicing, even with joy and shouting. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God.”*

Utterly blossoming: The word for blossoming is repeated twice – therefore speaking of an abundance of blossoming.

Glory of Lebanon: Everyone knew that Lebanon was a good and fertile land.

Carmel and Sharon: In Isaiah’s days these were beautiful and fruitful parts of the country of Israel.

They shall see the glory of the Lord: This change is taking place because the presence of God is coming into this land. The return of God’s Presence relates to His redemption.

Verse 3: *“Feeble hands be strong, weak knees be firm.”*

Feeble hands be strong: This transition is not going to be easy.

Feeble ... weak: Two different words that relate to a lack of strength.

Strong... firm: Two different words relating to strength.

Verse 4: *“Say to the ones who are fast-hearted, ‘Be strong, do not fear! Behold your God has brought vengeance, the recompense of God. He will come and save you.’”*

Fast-hearted: Those whose hearts are pounding (palpitating) from stress and anxiety.

Recompense: Payment, retribution, punishment. God pays them out with His vengeance. This is the wage He gives them for their sin and rebellion.

He will come and save you: God saves those who are in a covenant relationship with Him through His Son. God’s covenant people are going to win, we are going to experience victory – triumph over the enemy.

Verse 5: *“Then the eyes of the blind will be open, and the ears of the deaf will be open.”*

The eyes of the blind ... the ears of the deaf will be open: These are Messianic signs (John 9, Mark 7:31-37)

Verse 6: *“Then the paralyzed one will skip like a deer, and the tongue of the mute will shout for joy, for waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.”*

Paralyzed: The lame man (Mark 2:3-12)

Burst forth: A word for splitting. The desert is going to be split and water is going to be found in it.

Streams in the desert: Rivers are going to flow in the desert. There is going to be water in places where there was once no water.

Verse 7: *“The parched ground shall become a lake, and the thirsty land springs of water; an oasis for jackals to lie down, and its grass shall be reeds and rushes.”*

Parched ground: A dry, arid and desolate place.

Springs: Water that bubbles up out of the land.

Reeds and rushes: This type of grass requires much moisture. God is promising that there will be no shortage of water. In Revelation, God brings destruction upon the lakes, rivers springs, seas and oceans (Revelation 8:8-11). People are going to die because the water becomes so bitter. In an instant God can change this bitter water back into fresh water (Exodus 15:22-27). This is what He is promising to do.

Verse 8: *“And it will come about there that there will be a pathway and a Road of Holiness it will be called. And none will pass upon it who are unclean, but it is for them a way of walking, and even the foolish one will not go astray.”*

Pathway: Like a runway – it is a pathway that has a very specific purpose or designation.

Foolish one: Those who are not the most highly intelligent.

A way of walking: This describes the way of faith. This is the way that believers are called to walk – on a pathway of holiness (set apart for God and His purposes). There is no sinful activity on this path.

Verse 9: *“There will not be there a lion or a dangerous beast that springs forth and devours, it shall not be found there. The redeemed ones shall walk there.”*

There: On that road that we are called to travel.

Verse 10: *“And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with eternal gladness on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”*

Ransomed: A different word to ‘redeemed’ but the same concept. The redeemed ones are those who have been paid for, bought, by the Lord.

Zion: A word that should always call to our minds the Kingdom of God.

Singing: Shouts.

Eternal gladness: One of the greatest powers that God has entrusted to humanity is the power to choose. When we choose redemption (the blood of Messiah) we are going to experience eternal gladness. Choosing unwisely leads to eternal torture and condemnation.

Sorrow and sighing: Those things which bring physical and emotional exhaustion.

CHAPTER 36

When we have a problem (when we are under attack – whether physically and/or spiritually) who do we listen to? When we are going through difficult times it is important that we seek wise counsel and Godly perspective. We should not take counsel from individuals who do not represent truth, but who (consciously or unconsciously) align themselves with the enemy’s strategy.

In the next few chapters there is an emphasis on King Hezekiah – one of the kings of Judah. For the most part he was a Godly king, but, unfortunately, he did not finish well. (For background to this chapter read 2 Kings 18:7, 13-37).

Verse 1: *“And it came about in the fourteenth year of the rule of Hezekiah that Sennacherib king of Assyria went up against all the cities of Judah that were fortified, and he took them.”*

He took them: This means that he took possession over them, he was in control of these cities. However, he did not take control of the city of Jerusalem.

Verse 2: *“And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh with a great army from Lachish to Jerusalem to King Hezekiah. And he (Rabshakeh) stood at the canal of the upper pool on the road that leads to the launderers field.”*

Rabshakeh: Probably the name of one of the Assyrian generals.

Great: A vast or large army

The upper pool: See Isaiah 7:3. Traditionally, the sages of Judaism say that this was where the people would go out and have their clothes washed.

Verse 3: *“And went out to him a man by the name of Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah who was over the house, Shebna the scribe and Joah the son of Asaph the secretary.”*

Eliakim: This name means ‘God will establish’ or ‘God rises’. His name has led some to believe that Eliakim was of priestly origin, and he was leading in the temple at this time.

House: There is a debate as to whether this is speaking of the temple or the king’s household.

Secretary: Probably the one who saw to all the business affairs and actions that took place in Jerusalem.

Note: These three men were clearly leaders in Judah at that time. One was possibly in charge of the priests, another was a Biblical expert and the third was possibly a leader in business and finance.

Verse 4: *“Then Rabshakeh said to them, “Say now to Hezekiah, ‘Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: Why are you so confident in what you are trusting in?’””*

Note: Rabshakeh was speaking to these three leaders in the name of the king of Assyria.

Verse 5: *“I say you speak of having counsel and strength for war; but they are vain words. Now in whom do you trust, that you rebel against me?”*

Whom do you trust: The king of Assyria wants to know who Hezekiah is taking counsel from, who he is listening to. This Assyrian king cannot believe that Hezekiah would have the audacity to rebel against him.

Note: This conversation is taking place when Jerusalem was under siege – no food could go into the city, no garbage could go out of it. People are getting very hungry, and the city is filling up with garbage. The situation in Jerusalem is dire, but, Hezekiah is refusing to cave in to the demands of Assyria.

Verse 6: *“Behold, you are trusting upon the staff, which is nothing more than a broken reed, concerning Egypt, upon whom, if a man leans, it will puncture his hand and go into it. So is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him.”*

Broken reed... will puncture his hand and go into it: Rabshakeh is saying that Egypt is broken. He says that those who trust in Egypt will come to more harm than good. All the other countries who had trusted in Egypt had found themselves broken or defeated by the Assyrian army. Rabshakeh was making an assumption. He was assuming that Hezekiah was trusting in Egypt’s assistance, and he was saying that that was a foolish thing to do.

Verse 7: *“But if you say to me, ‘We trust in the Lord our God,’ is it not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away. And say to Judah and Jerusalem, ‘Before this altar you cannot worship’?”*

Note: See 2 Kings 18:4-5. Hezekiah removed the high places of idolatry in Judah. Worshipping at these high places had been very gratifying to the flesh of the people who worshipped there. This kind of ‘worship’ was all about gratifying the flesh. Rabshakeh is reminding the people that they no longer have the pleasure that they were accustomed to as a result of their ungodly worship. He is also reminding the people that the lack of worship has now led them to a place of suffering (a siege) rather than to a place of blessing. Rabshakeh is trying to undermine the decisions that Hezekiah had made for the (spiritual) good of his people.

Before this altar you cannot worship: Hezekiah said they could not worship their false gods on the high places, at these altars. He said they were only allowed to worship at the altar in Jerusalem.

Verse 8: *“Now, therefore, I urge you, give a pledge to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses – if you are able on your part to set riders on them!”*

Note: Rabshakeh is trying to get the people to rebel against Hezekiah. He tries to bribe the people to come out of Jerusalem and submit to Assyria’s leadership.

Give a pledge: A token, a guarantee, a sign of their submissiveness.

Give you two thousand horses: If they showed submission to Assyria then Rabshakeh promised to give them horses to strengthen their army.

If you are able on your part to set riders on them: Rabshakeh is mocking them. He does not think they would even have 2000 fighting men left who would be able to ride on these horses. The siege has caused the people of Judah to lack food and to become weakened. Rabshakeh’s propaganda was very unsettling to the leadership, because people wanted a change. They were in a desperate situation. Often, desperate situations will cause people to make foolish and ungodly decisions.

Verse 9: *“How then will you repel one captain of the least of my master’s servants, and put your trust in Egypt for chariots and horsemen?”*

One captain: A small, almost insignificant, leader in Assyria. Judah were unable to go out and fight the Assyrian army that was laying siege to them.

Isaiah calls it a great/vast army (Isaiah 36:2), but to the Assyrians it was just a small part of their whole army. If Judah could not fight this army, how could they expect to fight several more of Assyria's armies?

Put your trust in Egypt for chariots and horsemen: This was Assyria's assumption – that Judah was trusting in the Egyptian army.

Verse 10: *“Without the Lord we came up against this land to destroy it. For the Lord has said unto me, ‘Go up to this land and destroy it.’”*

Without the Lord: Without any opposition. Rabshakeh says the Lord God of Israel did nothing to stop the advance of the Assyrian army against Judah.

The Lord has said unto me: Rabshakeh is again mocking. He is asking the people of Judah how they can be so sure that the Lord hadn't brought this punishment upon them.

Rabshakeh is saying the only way they can escape is through surrender and to acknowledge those who the Lord had sent to rule over them. These were false statements.

Verse 11: *“And Eliakim, Shebna and Joah said to Rabshakeh, ‘Speak, please, to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand it. Do not speak unto us in Hebrew in the ears of the people who are upon the wall.’”*

Speak, please, to your servants in Aramaic: These three leaders did not want the people of Judah thrown into confusion or to be unsettled by this Assyrian leader.

Verse 12: *“But Rabshakeh said, ‘To your master and to you I have come to speak, this is why my lord has sent me to speak these things and surely concerning the people who sit upon the walls who will eat and drink their own waste with you.’”*

Your master: King Hezekiah.

My lord: The Assyrian King – Sennacherib.

Eat and drink their own waste: This siege against Jerusalem was so bad that people were either eating and drinking human waste because of this dire situation, or this is what they were about to start doing.

Verse 13: *“And Rabshakeh stood, and he called in a great voice in Hebrew, and said ‘Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria.’”*

Called in a great voice in Hebrew: He paid no attention to what the three Jewish leaders had requested of him, and he called out to the people on the walls, in a loud voice in the language that they understood what he was saying.

Verse 14: *“Thus said the king, ‘Do not behave in a futile way in regard to what Hezekiah is saying. He is not able to save you.’”*

Note: Rabshakeh is telling the people of Judah not to trust Hezekiah.

Verse 15: *“Nor let Hezekiah cause you to trust in the Lord saying, ‘The Lord will certainly save us, and will not be given this city into the hands of the king of Assyria.’”*

Nor let Hezekiah cause you to trust in the Lord: Rabshakeh thought that the words that Hezekiah was speaking about God (His salvation) were false words.

Note 1: Assyria was a very vast empire with a vast army (so much so that prophetically the antichrist is often paralleled to the king of Assyria, as to how he is going to rule over the world). Assyria conquered many nations and cities and, in comparison to these other nations, Judah was really small and should have been easily conquered.

Note 2: The king of Assyria was an ungodly idol worshiper. He hated the Lord God of Israel, and he sent his army to Jerusalem to defeat it.

Verse 16: *“Do not listen to Hezekiah; for thus said the king of Assyria, ‘Make with me peace and come out to me; every man will eat from his own vine and every man from his fig tree, and every one of you drink the waters of his own cistern.’”*

Do not listen to Hezekiah: Rabshakeh was encouraging the people to not remain under Hezekiah’s leadership.

Peace: An agreement.

Every man will eat from his own vine and every man from his fig tree, and every one of you drink the waters of his own cistern: When people are starving, and their wives and kids are crying out from hunger and thirst, this would have been a very tempting offer.

Cistern: Well

Verse 17: *“Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards.”*

I: Referring to the king of Assyria himself.

Take you away to a land like your own land: Assyria wanted to conquer Judah and take them away from the land of Israel, away from their holy city. With a very tempting offer they wanted Judah to be lured into exile. Sennacherib was counting on the people of Judah to blaspheme God and surrender to a man rather than to obey God.

Verse 18: *“Do not let Hezekiah incite you saying, ‘The Lord He will save us.’ Has any one of the gods of the nations delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria?”*

Incite: Deceive

Has any one of the gods of the nations delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria: This was a very true statement and is backed up historically. Wherever the king of Assyria went he conquered. No one was able to defeat him. None of the Gentile nations had remained in their own lands, but all of them had been carried off once they had been defeated by Assyria.

Verse 19: *“Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Indeed, have they delivered Samaria from my hand?”*

Hamath: A border town in the northern part of Israel - close to Syria.

Note: Israel/Ephraim (the 9 tribes and some from the tribe of Levi) were all captured and taken into exile by Assyria. The Northern kingdom had almost five times as many people as Judah. They were strong militarily and had formed strong alliances with other countries. They were wealthy and prosperous and had built up their military. They had many more soldiers than Judah, but they fell. Judah would have seen Israel fall and it would have made her extremely fearful that the same would happen to her at the hands of Assyria.

Verse 20: *“Who among all the gods of these countries were able to save their land from my hand? Will the Lord be able to save Jerusalem from my hand?”*

Who among all the gods of these countries were able to save their land from my hand?: The answer: None of them.

Verse 21: *“They were silent. They did not answer him a thing, because the king commanded them saying, ‘Do not respond.’”*

The king: Hezekiah

Verse 22: *“And Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, which was over the house, Shebna the scribe and Joah the son of Asaph, the secretary, came to Hezekiah having torn their garments, and they declared to him all the words of Rabshakeh.”*

The words of Rabshakeh: Propaganda is not new. Hezekiah heard this threat. What Assyria did to its enemies would have been frightening for the people. It would have been tempting for Hezekiah to have fallen into faithlessness at this stage – submitting to Sennacherib to preserve life, and enjoy, once again, the pleasures of life – food and drink. Hezekiah, however, remained faithful during this great threat. It was under Hezekiah’s leadership that spiritual renewal took place in Judah. Assyria was never able to conquer Judah, and Judah experienced deliverance and victory over Assyria.

CHAPTER 37

PART 1: Isaiah 37:1-20

When we find ourselves in a very difficult situation, under attack from the enemy, we need to pray, believing that God wants to move and work in our lives to change the situation we find ourselves in. God wants to defeat the enemies that stand in opposition to us. If we want to receive God’s deliverance, we need to be serious about prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17, Ephesians 6:18).

Note: This chapter is found, almost word for word, in 2 Kings 19

Verse 1: *“And it came about when King Hezekiah heard he tore his garments and he covered himself with sackcloth and he went into the house of the Lord.”*

Heard: Hezekiah heard the threats and the words of blasphemy spoken by Rabshakeh.

Tore his garments: Traditionally the tearing of garments is a sign of mourning and of repentance. It is an action that shows great remorse, an action that shows a desire to experience God's presence. When we only want God to do things for us (save us from our enemy, provide for us, solve our problems etc), but we do not want to experience Him and His Presence in our lives, we are displaying spiritual immaturity.

Covered himself with sackcloth: Another outward/physical sign of repentance.

The house of the Lord: The temple. People went to the temple for a variety of reasons, but the main reason was to worship.

Note: This verse teaches us a very important Biblical truth: No matter what we are going through (good or bad) it is wise for us to worship God. Worshipping God should be our first and foremost response to every situation in life that we find ourselves in. We worship Him firstly because of who He is, and, secondly, for what He has done. Even if God seems silent, and we are perishing at the hands of our enemies, He is still worthy of worship.

Verse 2: *“And he sent Eliakim who was over the temple, Shebna the scribe and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz.”*

He sent: Not only did Hezekiah go to pray and worship God but he also sent his leaders to Isaiah as he wanted to hear what God had to say – he wanted prophetic revelation from God. We can learn so much about God and His plans through prophecy (the prophetic books of the Bible). Prophecy teaches us principles for life. It is rich in wisdom and in helping us to gain understanding of the times that we live in (1 Chronicles 12:32).

Verse 3: *“And they said to him, ‘Thus said Hezekiah: ‘This is a day of trouble, it is a day of rebuke and blasphemy; for the children have come to birth, but there is no strength to bring them forth.’”*

Trouble...rebuke and blasphemy: Hezekiah is saying that this day is full of evil. People are blaspheming God and are causing trouble for the people of God.

There is no strength to bring them forth: In a physical sense, this siege has so weakened the pregnant women in Jerusalem that they are too weak to deliver their babies. The situation in Jerusalem is dire, and the next (even unborn) generation is being directly affected by it.

Verse 4: *“Perhaps the Lord your God will hear the words of Rabshakeh which his master the king of Assyria has sent to bring reproach upon the living God, and to rebuke with words, which the Lord your God has heard. Therefore, lift up prayer for the remnant that is found.”*

The Lord your God has heard: God is aware of what is going on and He knows what Rabshakeh has said.

Note: Hezekiah was hoping that Isaiah would pray for those who were still left alive in the siege. He desired a response from the Lord. He wanted the Lord to move in this situation.

Verse 5: *“And the servants of the King Hezekiah arrived at Isaiah's place.”*

Verse 6: *“And Isaiah said unto them, ‘Thus you shall speak to your lord, ‘Thus said the Lord: ‘Do not fear because of the words which you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me.’”*

Your lord: Referring to King Hezekiah.

Thus said the Lord: The Lord God responded to Hezekiah’s faith (and actions) and gave him the revelation he asked for.

Do not fear: God has the situation under control.

Blasphemed: God was aware that His Name was being blasphemed by the Assyrians.

Verse 7: *“Behold I am setting in him a spirit, and he will hear a rumour and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.”*

Him: Referring to the king of Assyria

A spirit: The context here is that this is an unclean spirit, a spirit of deceit. God, through His angels, affords humanity a degree of protection from evil spirits (Psalm 91:11). This is the same principle we see at play in Matthew 5:45, whereby God makes the rain fall upon the just and the unjust. However, God can also remove His hand of protection from people. In this case, allowing an evil spirit to have access to the king of Assyria.

He will hear a rumour: This spirit is going to lie to the king of Assyria. God does not cause the spirit to lie, but God does allow it.

I will cause him to fall by the sword: God does not personally slay Sennacherib, but He uses others to slay him.

Verse 8: *“So Rabshakeh returned and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah, for he had heard that he had departed from Lachish.”*

The king of Assyria warring against Libnah: Another military matter, unrelated to Jerusalem, occupied the king of Assyria’s time and mind.

Verse 9: *“And he heard concerning Tirhakah king of Cush, ‘He has come out to make war with me.’ So when he heard it, he sent messages to Hezekiah saying,”*

Cush: Ethiopia

He has come out to make war with me: This is the rumor that the king of Assyria heard.

Ethiopia, at that time, was a mighty empire. Rabshakeh, while he was also travelling, heard the rumour and sent a message from himself back to Hezekiah.

Verse 10: *“Thus you shall say to Hezekiah the king of Judah saying, ‘Do not allow your God, whom you are trusting in, deceive you saying that He will not give Jerusalem into the hands of the king of Assyria.’”*

Note: This is Rabshakeh’s parting shot and threat to Hezekiah as he travels out to meet and help Sennacherib. Over and over again the enemy is feeding Judah with lies of hopelessness.

Verse 11: *“Behold! You have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by utterly destroying them; and you will be delivered?”*

Note: Rabshakeh is reminding Hezekiah of the successful military battles and conquest of land associated historically with Assyria at that time.

Utterly destroying: Annihilating

And you will be delivered: Rabshakeh is asking Hezekiah, in a kind of incredulous tone, why he thinks he will be saved when all the other nations around Judah have fallen to Assyria. Rabshakeh is trying to get Hezekiah to believe that there is nothing unique about the God, the people or the land of Israel. This has been a very effective lie of the enemy – even in the past 2000 years. There is, however, a difference and Israel is unique. The people of Judah had a covenant with God, which no other nations had.

Verse 12: *“Did the gods of the Gentiles save those who were destroyed by our fathers, Gozan and Haran and Rezep and the people of Eden who were in Telassar?”*

Our fathers: Referring to the fathers/ the kings of Assyria.

Gozan and Haran and Rezep and the people of Eden: The names of some of the peoples who were destroyed by the Assyrians.

Telassar: A region located in Mesopotamia.

Verse 13: *“Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of the city of the Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivah?”*

Note: All of these kings and their cities had been conquered. Many commentators think that these cities had been utterly destroyed. Rabshakeh is reminding Hezekiah that Assyria successfully defeated many counties.

Verse 14: *“And Hezekiah took the books from the hands of the messengers and read it. And Hezekiah went up to the house of the Lord and spread it before the Lord.”*

Verse 15: *“Then Hezekiah prayed to the Lord saying,”*

Verse 16: *“Lord of hosts, God of Israel, the One who sits among the cherubim. You are God, You alone. All the kingdoms of the earth You have made, also the heavens and the earth.”*

Lord of hosts: Lord of the armies. This is a name of God associated with power.

You alone: There is no other.

You have made: Our God is the God who has created everything. The Creator is always greater than the creation. If God, who is Sovereign, is able to create it, He's able to handle it, manage it, destroy it and move it.

Verse 17: *“O Lord incline Your ear and hear. Open, O Lord, Your eye and see. Hear all the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to bring reproach upon the living God.”*

Incline: Set or turn.

Living God: God is present, He is active, and He is able. He is different to all the other gods - who do not live.

Verse 18: *“Indeed, O Lord, the kings of Assyria have destroyed all the nations and their land.”*

Destroyed all the nations and their land: The modus operandi of satan is to bring destruction and devastation to people and to places (1 Peter 5:8). Assyria, satanically influence, behaved in the same way as their father, the devil – tearing things down. God works differently to this. God wants to build up, edify and bless. When God is involved in our lives it is to build us up, to grow us, to mature us. Those who are always tearing or putting others down in order to build themselves up are not disciples of Messiah. Disciples of Messiah are humble and seek to build others up (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

Verse 19: *“Place their gods in fire, for their gods are not gods but are the work of human hands – made from wood and stone. And those will perish them.”*

Their gods: Referring to the Assyrian gods.

Place ... in fire: Referring to judgment. Hezekiah is asking God to judge the spiritual condition of the Assyrians.

Those will perish them: These gods only know how to bring destruction. The Assyrians followed after them. This is going to cause the Assyrians to be led to destruction and death.

Note: For the first part of Hezekiah’s reign he had spiritual discernment, which caused him to accomplish a great deal. Hezekiah knew that those who were led by the enemy of God (satan), and those who were not committed to the Kingdom of God, were on a pathway of destruction.

Verse 20: *“Now, O Lord our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth might know that You are Lord, You alone.”*

His hand: The hand of the king of Assyria.

You are Lord, You alone: We want God to move in our lives so that we can experience deliverance. Our deliverance bears witness that it was God who came to our help. He delivered us and provided victory for us because we belong to Him.

CHAPTER 37

PART 2: Isaiah 37:21-38

We are instructed to walk by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). This means that when we find ourselves in a very difficult situation, we should not look at the obstacle with our natural eyes and, seeing no clear way for success, be tempted to compromise or turn away from faith (embrace the ways of the world). Faith is believing that God is all-powerful and can take victory where none seems possible. Walking by faith involves remaining faithful and not compromising, but doing what is right by behaving according to the truth, the instruction of, and the commandments of God.

At this point in the book of the Isaiah we have seen that the city of Jerusalem is under siege and is in a dire situation. Many of the nations around them, greater nations with larger armies, have fallen to Assyria. The fortified towns belonging to Judah have also fallen to Assyria (Isaiah 36:1). In the natural, according to what they can see, there is not much hope for the people inside Jerusalem. However, through faith and through the promises of God, we are going to see that victory takes place here. God can make great changes in a moment and bring about victory for His covenant people.

Verse 21: *“And Isaiah, the son of Amos, said to Hezekiah, ‘Thus said the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘You have prayed unto Me concerning Sennacherib the king of Assyria.’”*

Isaiah...said to Hezekiah: There is a response from the prophet to the king regarding what to do.

Thus said the Lord: Isaiah has heard from God.

Verse 22: *“This is the word which the Lord spoke concerning him: ‘The virgin, the daughter of Zion, has shown contempt for you, the daughter of Jerusalem has wagged her head at you.’”*

Him: The king of Assyria. This king is full of himself. He does not care about what is right or wrong but does according to his own desires.

Virgin: She was designated for the Lord God of Israel. This is His bride. A bride and groom build together. With His bride, God builds His Kingdom. Sennacherib is moving to destroy the bride. He is moving to destroy the purposes of God. However, he will not be successful in his endeavour to do this.

Shown contempt: Mocked. Despised.

The daughter of Zion: God had a covenant with the Daughter of Zion. He had a purpose and a plan for her.

Verse 23: *“Whom have you despised and whom have you blasphemed? According to whom have you lifted up a voice, and your eyes lifted up exceedingly? Against the Holy One of Israel.”*

Whom have you despised and ... blasphemed?: Sennacherib has despised and blasphemed God Himself.

Eyes lifted up exceedingly: He has lifted up his eyes to the high places, i.e he has put himself in the same category as God.

The Holy One of Israel: ‘Holy’ is a word associated with being set apart for the purposes of God. The God of Israel has a purpose for Israel, but Sennacherib had a plan for Israel which was against the purposes of God.

Verse 24: *“In the hands of your servants you have reproached the Lord. You have said, ‘With the abundance of my chariots I will go up to the high places of the mountains, to the extreme portions of Lebanon; I will cut down the heights of his cedars and the choice ones of his cypress trees, I will come to the end of the high place, to its fruitful forest.’”*

Hands: Power.

Your servants: Example: Rabshakeh was one of Sennacherib's servants. For the sake of Sennacherib, Rabshakeh acted in a contemptuous way against the Lord.

You: Referring to Sennacherib

The high places of the mountains: Sennacherib thought he was greater than humanity, that he was a type of god – invincible.

Lebanon: Many scholars teach that when 'Lebanon' is mentioned in this kind of a context it is not talking about the physical location of Lebanon but is an indirect reference to the temple – Lebanon's trees were chopped down to build the temple (1 Kings 5). This battle with Sennacherib is a spiritual battle. He wants to conquer Jerusalem, and the temple, in an attempt to show that he is greater than the God of Israel (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)

I will come to the end of the high place: The king of Assyria thinks he is going to reach the very pinnacle, the place where God is. This king wants to take the place of God. He thinks that he can wage war against the God of Israel and be successful.

Fruitful forest: Plentiful land.

Note: All of this terminology is telling us that the king of Assyria wants to come into Israel (the mountains of Zion). He wants to destroy the God of Israel and set himself up in the Holy of holies as a god. He wants to be worshipped as a god (Daniel 11:41, 45, 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4).

Verse 25: *"I have dug wells and drunk water. I have dried up with the steps of the soles of My feet all the rivers of Egypt."*

Note: This is God's response to Sennacherib. If God wants water, He can get it for Himself. If God wants to dry up the water, He can do that too. He is Sovereign and has control over His creation.

All the rivers of Egypt: The waters of Egypt were plentiful with its Nile River and all of its tributaries that feed it.

Verse 26: *"Surely you have heard from a distance what I have done from the days of old, how I have created it and now I bring it about? And it shall be for an absolute catastrophe; heaps of destruction will be your fortified cities."*

Absolute catastrophe: A word of annihilation. All that Sennacherib is planning, all that he wants to accomplish, is going to be destroyed, annihilated.

Verse 27: *"Their inhabitants are short in power, they are dismayed and ashamed; they are going to be like the grass of the fields, like the herb of the greenlands, like the grass on top of the roofs, like the cornfields before they rise up."*

Inhabitants are short in power: The soldiers in the fortified cities are going to lack power.

Like the cornfields before they rise up: When the corn is very young, before it has grown much, it is very susceptible to things and can be injured and destroyed quite easily. God is warning Sennacherib that he is like the grass – here today and gone tomorrow. Likewise, it doesn't take a lot to destroy the herbs of the field, or the corn while it is still young. Sennacherib (his strongholds and his armies) could be easily destroyed by the Lord.

Verse 28: *“Your dwelling place, your going forth and your returning I know. And your anger against Me I know.”*

Your dwelling place, your going forth and your returning I know: God, who is omniscient, knows all things, He is familiar with all of our ways. He knows what we are going to say even before we say it (Psalm 139:4). Nothing is hidden from God.

Anger: The word used here is the word shaking or trembling with anger. It is referring to uncontrolled rage that presents itself by a shaking of the body.

Verse 29: *“On account of your anger against Me, and the noise that went up into My ears, I will set My hook in your nose and My bridle between your lips, and I will bring you back in the way which you have come on.”*

Note: Sennacherib’s purpose was to send his troops into Judah to take it. He had already destroyed the Northern kingdom, Israel, and had taken the nine tribes plus half of Levi into exile. He, however, wanted the remaining two and a half tribes (Judah, Benjamin and some of Levi) to be in his hands. With Sennacherib’s vast army victory over Judah was more than possible, but God did not allow this victory to take place because Sennacherib had shown contempt for God and had disrespected and blasphemed Him.

Verse 30: *“This to you is the sign: Eat this year the growth that comes up naturally; in the second year what springs from the same; in the third year you will sow and you will reap, you will plant vineyards and eat from their fruit.”*

Note: In this verse God is speaking to the children of Judah. He is telling them about how He is going to miraculously provide for them.

The growth that comes up naturally: God is going to cause food to grow supernaturally for them in this first year.

In the second year what springs from the same: Not much food comes up after a year of not planting, but even less food comes up the second year after not planting. God, however, is going to supernaturally provide food for His people, and allow them to have enough to eat despite the fact that they would not have planted for two years.

Verse 31: *“And again the remnant who have escaped of the house of Judah are going to be like a root down below and they will make fruit up above.”*

And: This is a word of continuation.

Remnant: This a very significant concept. Prophetically we know that it is the remnant that are regarded as victors. It is the remnant that are the Kingdom inhabitants as they are regarded as the faithful ones (those who trust God’s prophetic revelation).

Note: God is going to sow the remnant in the land. They are either not going to be put into exile or, if they do go into exile, ultimately God is going to bring them back to plant them. This remnant is the root, and, in the future, they are going to yield a great harvest. The remnant will carry out God’s will.

Verse 32: *“For from Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and those who escape are going to go forth from Zion. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.”*

From Jerusalem: Even though this prophecy took place over 2700 years ago, it teaches us about a future reality. We can count on this to be the *modus operandi* of what God is going to do in the last days. At the end, God is going to deliver a remnant, and that remnant is going to produce great fruit (Matthew 24:15-21, Revelation 12:13-

Those who escape: The refugees, the survivors.

Those who escape are going to go forth from Zion: The survivors have a Kingdom hope.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this: This remnant is not spared to become fruitful because of their own merit, or their own wisdom or ability. They are spared and are fruitful because of God’s zeal and will.

Verse 33: *“Therefore, thus said the Lord to the king of Assyria: ‘He will not come to this city, he will not shoot there an arrow, he will not move forward with the shield, he will not pour out upon it the ramp.’”*

Ramp: This is referring to the siege ramp to get into the city over the walls.

Verse 34: *“On the way which he came upon it he will return. And to this city he will not enter,’ declares the Lord.”*

This city: Referring to Jerusalem.

Declares the Lord: This is a term of promise.

Note: Hezekiah had two choices: either he could believe what God had said (that God was going to provide supernaturally for the people) and endure what they were going through, or he could surrender to the temptation that Sennacherib would look after them if they pledged allegiance to him. God, however, had promised that if they remained faithful to Him that Sennacherib would not enter the city.

Verse 35: *“And I will defend this city, to save it on account of Myself, on account of My servant David.”*

I will defend this city: This is a promise the Lord has made regarding Jerusalem.

To save it: God did save Jerusalem from Sennacherib 2700 years ago, but this is also a picture of a future event – in the last days God is again going to save Jerusalem (Zechariah 12).

On account of My servant David: God made a promise to David, a Messianic promise (Jeremiah 33:17-21), and God keeps His promises! God brought the people back to the land after the Babylonian exile so that Messiah could come the first time. God has been bringing the people back into the land since 1948, in preparation for Messiah’s second coming. He is not bringing them back because of any merit on their part – they do not deserve it and nor have they earned it, but He is bringing them back for His sake and for the sake of His promise to His servant David. Yeshua is not coming back to London, Paris, Rome or Beijing. He is coming back to the land of Israel, back to the capital city (His capital city), Jerusalem.

Verse 36: *“And the angel of the Lord went forth and he struck 185 000 in the camp of the Assyrians; and the people got up in the morning and they saw, behold all of them – dead corpses.”*

The angel: God sent one angel, not an army of angels.

The angel of the Lord: This is a very unique angel.

The people: Those who were alive – possibly referring to those in Jerusalem and not referring to the Assyrians.

Verse 37: *“So Sennacherib king of Assyria he travelled, and he went, he returned and he dwelt in Ninevah.”*

Ninevah: The place where Sennacherib had originally come from.

Verse 38: *“And it came about as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god that Adrammelech and Sharezar his sons struck him down with a sword, and they fled into the land of Ararat. Then Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.”*

And it came about: God brings about the fulfilment of His Word. This is a testimony to the authority and power of God to carry out what He has said.

Worshiping in the house of Nisroch: Sennacherib went to worship in the temple of his god.

CHAPTER 38

Note: This account is also related in 2 Kings 20:1-11

How would you respond if a prophet of the Lord told you that you were going to die? Would you accept it and give thanks to God for the time you have had, or would you ask God to allow you to live for longer? Up to this point, King Hezekiah had done what was right in the eyes of the Lord. Unfortunately, however, after Hezekiah was miraculously healed, he did not live in a God honouring way. It would have been better for him to have simply accepted what God had planned for him, rather than negotiating and trying to change the plans of God. From a Kingdom perspective, the plans and purposes of God for our lives are always for the best. We should not argue with God and try to change things, but we need to simply submit to the revelation of God.

Verse 1: *“In those days Hezekiah became sick unto death. Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, went to him and said to him, ‘Thus said the Lord, ‘Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.’”*

Set your house in order: This is a command. In one sense this is a blessing for Hezekiah. God is giving Hezekiah an opportunity to set things in order and to do the things that he has left undone, the things he had wanted to accomplish before he died.

Verse 2: *“Hezekiah turned his face to the wall, and he prayed unto the Lord.”*

Turned his face to the wall: There was an unwillingness in Hezekiah to accept the fact that he was going to die.

Verse 3: *“Please O Lord, how I walked before You remember. I have walked before You in truth and in a heart of completeness, good in Your eyes I have done.’ And Hezekiah cried a great weeping.”*

Please: The word used here is a term of beseeching. It is a very polite form of making a request.

How I walked before You remember: Hezekiah reminds God of how he has lived before God.

A heart of completeness: Hezekiah’s heart was completely given over to God’s will.

Good in Your eyes I have done: Hezekiah puts before God a testimony of his faithfulness and of his commitment to how he lived before God.

Hezekiah cried a great weeping: He is a broken individual when he hears of his pending death.

Verse 4: *“And it came about the word of the Lord to Isaiah, saying,”*

Verse 5: *“Go and say to Hezekiah, ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father: ‘I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold I am adding to your days fifteen years.’”*

The Lord, the God of David your father: This is a unique and rare Biblical expression. David was a man who greatly desired to worship God. Before David died, his desire was to build the temple for the Lord. His hands were stained with blood, however, so he was not allowed to build the temple. David accepted this, but, before he died, he made preparations for the temple so that his son Solomon could build it. Many of the Rabbinical scholars say that this expression should have been a hint to Hezekiah to remind him to be Kingdom minded. God gave Hezekiah a unique amount of time (an additional period of years to live) but He desired that Hezekiah (like David) would use that time wisely and be Kingdom minded.

Fifteen: This is a unique number in Judaism. In Jewish culture, letters can be used instead of numbers (much the same concept as Roman numerals in English). The letters for the number fifteen would be the first two letters used for the sacred name of God, therefore these letters are not written for the number 15, but other letters are used instead. Most scholars say that it was significant that 15 years were given to Hezekiah. They say that the 15 years should have been a reminder to Hezekiah that he needed to live for God.

Verse 6: *“I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city.”*

I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria: God promised that Assyria would not defeat Judah at all (historically this is correct. Babylon were the ones to take Judah into exile many years later).

I will defend this city: God Himself defends Jerusalem.

Verse 7: *“And this for you is a sign from the Lord that the Lord will do this thing which He has spoken.”*

Verse 8: *“Behold I am going to bring back the shadow of the sundial, which has already gone down with the sun on the sundial of Ahaz, ten degrees backwards.’ So, the sun returned ten degrees on the dial by which it had gone down.”*

The sundial of Ahaz: God was specific about which sundial this miracle would be observed on.

Ten degrees backwards: Possibly around 40 minutes. There would be no earthly explanation for this, and no man could fabricate this to look like a miracle. This miracle confirmed two things:

1. That Assyria would not defeat Judah.
2. That Hezekiah was going to be given an extra 15 years. In those 15 years Hezekiah had the opportunity to demonstrate the purpose and presence of God in his life. He had the opportunity to carry out God’s will.

Verse 9: *“A writing of Hezekiah the king of Judah, when he became sick and he lived from his sickness.”*

Note: This verse ushers in a change. In the first 8 verses of this chapter, we had a narrative, but now we have a letter written by Hezekiah.

He lived from his sickness: His sickness did not bring about his death.

Verse 10: *“I have said when my days are silent, I shall go to the gates of Sheol; I am deprived of the remainder of my years.”*

Silent: Some Bibles will translate this word as being cut off, coming to an abrupt end. Literally though it is a word for silence, nothing going on. This is what Hezekiah is saying about his life – he has heard that it is coming to an abrupt end, it is going into silence, it was not going to continue.

Sheol: This was the place where all the dead went before the resurrection and ascension of Messiah. Sheol had two compartments in it. One of these compartments was known as Gehinom, which is hell - a place of fire, torment, punishment and suffering. All of those who did not have the faith of Abraham went into this compartment when they died (Luke 16:19-31). The second compartment was known as Abraham’s bosom or Paradise. If one believed like Abraham in the promises of God (ie that God was going to send the seed of Abraham, Messiah, to deal with our sins) then when they died they would go to Paradise (Luke 23:42-43).

Deprived: A word of God’s visitation to punish Hezekiah.

The remainder of my years: Hezekiah was not going to experience the fullness of life. Many take this to mean that Hezekiah was not an old man when he was told that he was going to die, but he was relatively young.

Verse 11: *“I have said I will not see YAH, the Lord, in the land of the living; I will not look again upon men among the inhabitants of the world.”*

YAH: The way that the number 15 would be written if it wasn't related to the name of God.
I will not look again upon men: His ability to see, to perceive, to have a consciousness of what's going on in this world is all coming to an end.

Verse 12: *“My life span is passed away, being rolled up from me as a shepherd's tent; I have cut off my life like a weaver. My life from the loom is cut off; from day until night, You bring an end to me.”*

Life span: Generation. His allotted time.

Rolled up: Removed.

A shepherd's tent: As a shepherd travels on to new pastures he rolls up his tent and carries it to the next place. Hezekiah is using an idiom that was known in his day - rolling up the shepherd's tent meant that he was passing on to another place.

My life from the loom is cut off: When a weaver is finished weaving, he removes the cloth from the loom. Hezekiah feels like his life is being taken away in this same way.

An end: A completion.

Verse 13: *“I have cried out unto the morning – like a lion, thus my bones are all broken; from day until night, You bring an end to me.”*

Cried out unto the morning: He cried all night.

Like a lion: His cries were loud – like the roaring of a lion.

My bones: The very foundation of his life.

From day until night...: This phrase is repeated, therefore emphasised.

Verse 14: *“Like a crane or a swallow thus I will chirp; and as a dove I mourned; my eyes have grown weak from looking up on high. O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me!”*

Crane or a swallow: Hezekiah is referring to two different types of birds. The exact types of birds are not known but are translated as 'crane' and 'swallow'.

Chirp: Birds make an unintelligible noise when they want something. This is what Hezekiah had done.

As a dove I mourned: When a dove's mate dies, she mourns for a significant period of time.

Mourned: To meditate, to pay close attention to.

Looking up on high: Hezekiah has prayed and prayed and looked to God for a response.

Undertake for me: Hezekiah wants God to get involved with him. He wants God to change the situation that he finds himself in.

Verse 15: *“What do I speak? He has said to me, and He is done. All my years will go forth in the bitterness of my soul.”*

Note: The implication of this verse is that Hezekiah is bemoaning the fact that his life is so short. He feels that because it is so short his life has been a bitter experience. He seems to have forgotten how God has used him to accomplish so many good things.

God brought Godly change to Judah through him. Hezekiah had a testimony of being a man of faith. He has forgotten all of these things and instead paints a brush stroke of bitterness over his whole life.

Verse 16: *“O Lord, concerning these they live; and for all of these is the life of my spirit; You restore me and give me life.”*

Concerning these they live: Men (people) live to experience great things in their lives.
For all of these is the life of my spirit: Hezekiah wants these great things in life as well. He does not want his life to be cut off prematurely so that he never gets to experience these things again. Hezekiah did not feel like he was ready to die. He pled with God to intervene and to bring about a change in his situation.

Restore: Heal.

Give me life: Hezekiah strongly petitioned God that he would not die but that he would recover.

Verse 17: *“Behold, for peace I have lived, but to me is great bitterness, but You have desired that my life will be delivered from the pit of destruction, for You have cast all my sins behind Your back.”*

Peace: This is a word which is related to the will of God. Hezekiah, up to this point, had lived for the will of God, the fruit of which is peace, to be evident in his life.

My life will be delivered ... You have cast all my sins: Hezekiah believed in a Redeemer who delivers us and takes away our sins.

Cast all my sins behind Your back: He knows that he is forgiven. He does not want to experience bitterness or death, but he wants to experience the Kingdom of God.

Verse 18: *“For Sheol cannot thank You, Death cannot praise You; those who go down to the pit cannot hope for Your truth.”*

Sheol cannot thank You, Death cannot praise You: Hezekiah cannot thank or praise God in this world if he is dead, therefore he is pleading to live so that he can still do these things publically.

Your truth: Here truth is synonymous with the outcome of the promises of God.

Verse 19: *“Life, the one who is experiencing life, he is the one that gives thanks to You, like I do today; the father shall make known Your truth to the children.”*

Like I do today: Hezekiah is saying that if God changes His plans (which Hezekiah has heard through prophecy) he is going to give thanks to and praise God.

The father shall make known Your truth to the children: We need to be very careful about the promises we make to God if we decide that we are going to negotiate with Him (eg Judges 11:29-40). It is better not to negotiate with God at all, but we should submit to His will with thanksgiving and praise. Hezekiah promised God that if God gave him more time, he was going to speak God’s truth and teach it to the next generation.

Verse 20: *“The Lord is for my salvation. We will play music unto You all the days of our life at the house of the Lord.”*

Note: This is Hezekiah’s final petition.

Play music: This is how this phrase is translated literally. Singing often accompanies the playing of instruments. Hezekiah committed to praising God publically – singing praises and making melodies to Him.

All the days of our life: Hezekiah did not faithfully carry out these promises that he made to God. God gave him an additional 15 years, but he used those years very poorly.

Verse 21: *“And Isaiah said, ‘Take up a lump of figs, and spread it upon your boils and you shall live.’”*

A lump of figs: This is a mixture that would have the consistency of fig jam or jelly.

Figs: Figs are uniquely related to the people of Israel (Hosea 9:10). It is significant that God brings about healing through the use of figs.

Boils: Hezekiah had boils, just like Job and Lazarus (Job 2:7, Luke 16:20). This is also the same word used for the plague of boils in Egypt (Exodus 9:10-11). Boils cause great suffering.

Verse 22: *“And Hezekiah said, ‘What is the sign that I will go up to the house of the Lord?’”*

CHAPTER 39

Note: This is also narrated in 2 Kings 20:12-19

A fundamental principle in Scripture is to care about, and be a Godly influence in, the lives of other people. When we have received the love of God into our lives that love manifests itself in a love for others – and, prophetically, in a love for the next generation. We are called to prepare the next generation for the Kingdom. Even most unbelievers have this principle of setting up the next generation (their children and grandchildren) to have success.

For most of his life Hezekiah walked faithfully and obediently before God. However, he did not finish his life well. We should be individuals that are sensitive to the time that God has given to us. As we grow older, we should mature in the faith and should understand spiritual things better. We should desire to grow more faithful, more obedient, and be a greater vessel for good regarding the purposes of God in our lives.

In trouble and in war time, when threatened by an enemy, Hezekiah trusted God and God proved Himself to be a Deliverer. God restored Hezekiah's kingdom, and the Assyrians did not capture Jerusalem.

Verse 1: *“At that time the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, Merodach-Baladan, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that he had been sick and had recovered.”*

At that time: Immediately after King Hezekiah was healed.

King of Babylon: At this time the Assyrians were still the leading empire. The Babylonians were not yet as strong as they were going to be. People were not yet intimidated by Babylon.

Recovered: Become strong again.

Sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard: The king of Babylon was intrigued and interested in how Hezekiah had been healed from a fatal disease. This miracle captured this Babylonian king's attention.

Verse 2: *"And Hezekiah was glad concerning these things and showed them his house and the house of his treasures – the silver and gold, the spices and precious ointment, and all his armoury – all that was found among his treasures. There was nothing in his house or in all his government that Hezekiah did not show them."*

Hezekiah was glad: Hezekiah rejoiced that word had reached Babylon about how God had heard his prayer and had healed him.

Them: The king of Babylon had sent many individuals to Jerusalem to visit King Hezekiah and to verify what had taken place.

The house of his treasures: A type of warehouse where Hezekiah stored his personal possessions and possibly a warehouse where he stored the kingdom's treasures (the wealth of the nation).

Precious ointment: Anointing oil

Note: When Hezekiah received this envoy from Babylon it does not appear as if he gave any glory to God. Instead, Hezekiah showed these people what he considered his glory (his own personal treasures) as well as the glory of the nation of Judah – the kingdom's wealth and treasures.

Verse 3: *"Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah, and said to him, 'What did these men say, and from where did they come to you?' And Hezekiah said, 'They came to me from a far county, from Babylon.'"*

Note: We can surmise from the context that Isaiah knows what has happened and he knows what Hezekiah has done.

They came to me from a far county: Many scholars see this as a statement of pride.

Hezekiah emphasises that these people have come from far away to see him. The problem here was that these men had come to hear a testimony about what God had done in Hezekiah's life, instead they received a tour of all his material wealth.

Verse 4: *"And he said, 'What did they see in your house?' Hezekiah answered, 'They have seen all that is in my house; there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them.'"*

He: Isaiah

They have seen all: God's miraculous healing of Hezekiah did not lead him to humility.

Instead, it caused him to become proud. Showing off his wealth symbolised his pride. God's work in Hezekiah's life did not lead him to have a greater appreciation for God, but rather it caused Hezekiah to think that he himself was great.

Note: It is very dangerous when people who have been entrusted with leadership over others think that all the power, resources and authority belong to them, and that they can use it all for themselves. This mindset and activity leads to disaster – physically and spiritually.

Verse 5: *“And Isaiah said to Hezekiah, ‘Hear the word of the Lord of hosts:’”*

Hear: This is a word that demands a response. We hear in order to obey. Hezekiah needed to hear what Isaiah said and then he had the opportunity to respond (correctly or incorrectly). Hezekiah did not respond appropriately. He did not repent of what he had done, nor of the attitude in his heart.

The Lord of hosts: This prophetic name of God (the Lord of the armies) carries great authority and power. It is a name which is akin to a declaration of war – the Mighty and Sovereign Lord will be against the one spoken against if there is no change, no repentance. When God reveals Himself as the Lord of hosts it usually speaks about a coming judgment.

Verse 6: *“Behold, the days are coming when Babylon will lift up all which is in your house, which your forefathers have acquired until this day will be lifted up and carried to Babylon; nothing shall remain,” says the Lord.*”

Behold, the days are coming: This was going to be a future reality for Judah.

Nothing shall remain: It has been emphasised twice in this chapter that Hezekiah showed the Babylonians everything and that there was ‘nothing...that Hezekiah did not show them.’ (Isaiah 39:2, 4). God now emphasises here that the kingdom of Judah is going to suffer a total loss where every single thing of value will be carried off to Babylon, and whatever is left in the land will be destroyed.

Verse 7: *“And they shall take away of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.”*

Take away of your sons who will descend from you: This judgment was not only upon Hezekiah’s sons, but also upon the future generations who would descend from him (This judgment lasted for 70 years). Many of these people would not make it back to the land of Israel. They would either die in exile or decide not to go back to the land once the exile ended. Many of the children of Israel would not remain committed to the call of God upon their lives.

Palace: In the Hebrew this is a word that often has spiritual connotations attached to it. It does not only mean a palace but can also be referring to a sanctuary or a temple.

Eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon: These children, grandchildren and great grandchildren are going to play a role in the Babylonian government, some of them even getting involved in idol worship. This is not a good thing but is bad news.

Note: When Hezekiah heard this devastating prophetic proclamation about exile for his posterity and that all was going to be lost, we would expect him to become repentant, humble himself and beg for God’s mercy and forgiveness. We would expect him to pray as fervently as he did, with his face to the wall, when he had heard that he was going to die.

We would expect that God would be gracious to him and, in the same way that He removed Hezekiah's disease, that He would remove this horrible prophetic punishment from Hezekiah. Hezekiah, however, did not behave like we would have expected him to.

Verse 8: *"And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, 'Good is this thing of the Lord which you have spoken.' For he said, 'At least there will be peace and truth in my days.'"*

At least there will be peace and truth in my days: Hezekiah was unconcerned with the next generation. He was only concerned about the fact that all went well for him while he was still alive. This was not a good response on Hezekiah's part. He thought too much about his own life and about his own experiences. As believers this should never be the way that we think or behave. As believers we should be very concerned about the next generation, influencing them to value the will, plans and calling of God.

CHAPTER 40

PART 1: Isaiah 40:1-11

There is a change coming to Israel - not only to the people of Israel but also to the land of Israel.

Verse 1: *"Comfort, comfort My people,' your God will say."*

Comfort: In Hebrew this word is 'Nahum'. At the start of Yeshua's earthly ministry, He left the Galilean city of Nazareth and went down to Capernaum (Kfar Nahum – which means 'village of comfort'). This move to Capernaum fulfilled Isaiah 9:1-2 (see Matthew 4:13-16). Yeshua (the Messiah) came to do a work of comforting a people in distress (the work of redemption). Even the Rabbis understand that this section of Isaiah is related to Messiah.

Comfort, comfort My people: This is a commandment.

God will say: The use of the future tense lets us know that this was not going to happen in Isaiah's day but was for a time in the future.

Verse 2: *"Speak unto the heart of Jerusalem, that they will proclaim unto her, for her warfare is ended, for her iniquity has been reconciled, for she has received from the hand of the Lord double for all of her iniquities."*

Heart: This is not the word for 'comfort' but is the word for 'heart'. This is a word that is related to thoughts. God is going to do a work. He is going to bring comfort to His people and this in turn will give Israel (the Jewish people) a different perspective – they are going to start to see things differently.

Her: Referring to Jerusalem.

Warfare: Conflict

Her warfare is ended: Her warfare has been made complete. Israel's struggle, opposition and persecution is going to come to an end. Instead of experiencing the conflict of battle they are going to experience comfort.

Her iniquity has been reconciled: Her condition of iniquity is going to change. She is going to be found to be in an acceptable state, as her sins are going to be dealt with.

This phrase foreshadows a very important Biblical truth – future redemption. In the end, Israel is going to be made acceptable to God (Zechariah 13:1). A time is coming when there is going to be reconciliation, peace and comfort between the Jewish people and God. *She has received from the hand of the Lord double for all of her iniquities:* This foreshadows the great suffering that the Jewish people are going to go through throughout their history. This suffering, the cause of it which was faithlessness (sinfulness), is going to come to an end.

Verse 3: *“A voice calls in the wilderness: ‘Clear a way unto the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.’”*

Note: This is a verse related to John the Baptist (Luke 3:3-6, Matthew 11:7-11). John the Baptist was the forerunner of Yeshua. This is a verse that speaks of the divinity of Yeshua. It makes it very clear that Yeshua was not just a messenger from God, but that He is God in and of Himself.

Verse 4: *“For the valley will be lifted up, and every mountain and every hill is going to be made low. Every crooked place is going to be made straight, and the mountain range is going to be made into a valley.”*

Note: Here Isaiah is again speaking of the change that is coming. Israel is going to go through a great change, a metamorphosis, a different reality. God is not ‘done’ with Israel. *Valley:* The word ‘valley’ used here speaks of a very deep, very narrow, steep valley. *Valley...lifted up...mountain and...hill ...made low:* Part of this change is that those things that were low are going to be raised up, those things that were high or exalted are going to be levelled. *Mountain range:* This word speaks of the smaller mountains with a range that goes on for a long distance – like a plain. *Valley:* This is a different word to the valley spoken of above. This is referring to a valley that is not steep or narrow, but it is almost level, a valley which is almost a plain (a gentle valley). This kind of valley is very broad, wide and long.

Verse 5: *“The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”*

Note: This change has an outcome, it produces a result, a consequence.

All flesh: This is a term for humanity.

All flesh shall see it together: This should not surprise us. Israel’s purpose and call was to be a blessing to this world, to the Gentiles (Genesis 12:3), through revelation and truth (Romans 9:4-5). When Israel is made right with God, when Israel is comforted, it is going to have implications for the whole world (Romans 11:11-15). Israel is going to be a tool that God uses in the last days to bring about a great change to humanity.

The mouth of the Lord: The foundation for bringing this change is the Word of God. We need to be committed to His Word. Nothing else in this world is going to give us revelation and insight like the Word of God. When we apply faith to His Word (utilize it in our lives, respond in obedience to His instructions and commandments) our lives are changed, and we bring glory to God in our individual lives.

Soon this will not only be applicable to individual believers but, after God brings about a change, it will be global! His glory will be seen by all flesh!

Verse 6: *“The voice says, ‘Cry out!’ And he said, ‘What shall I call out?’ All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field.”*

What shall I call out: What is the revelation that needs to be revealed to man?

All flesh is grass: The revelation being made known is regarding the frailty of humanity.

All its loveliness: All human beauty – those things that are pleasing to us.

Like the flower of the field: Because of sin, beauty is temporal, fleeting – here today and gone tomorrow. Through God’s work of redemption and His Kingdom covenant, mediated through Messiah, we find that He brings that which is eternal – that which lasts forever. Yeshua defeated and destroyed death and He gives life, eternal life.

Verse 7: *“The grass dries out and the flower withers, but the Spirit of the Lord has blown upon it; surely the people are grass.”*

The grass dries out: This is what happens to humanity in our natural state. Sin produces mortality.

The Spirit of the Lord: The Holy Spirit is the One who brings about Godly order from chaos (Genesis 1:2). This is what this prophecy is speaking about – God is bringing about a change to bring things back into His order. The order of God relates to the will of God, which is going to produce the desires of God - and all of this is the outcome of the work of the Spirit of God.

The people are grass: The symbolism of the grass is interpreted for us. We do not need to guess what God is referring to here.

Verse 8: *“The grass withers and the flower fades, but the Word of our God will stand forever.”*

The Word of our God: His promises

The Word of our God will stand forever: This is what gives us hope! God’s promises will be established forever. We may not be experiencing them right now (they may not be taking place in the physical realm) but God has promised, and so they will be and we will see them as an eternal reality.

Verse 9: *“Go up into the high mountain, O evangelists of Zion; lift up with power your voice, O evangelists of Jerusalem; Lift it up, and do not be afraid; speak unto the cities of Judah, ‘Behold your God!’”*

Proclaim good news: Literally the word for an evangelist. An evangelist proclaims good news about redemption. This word lets us know that this passage has a gospel connection.

Go up ... you who proclaim good news: The evangelists of Zion are the ones who need to go up on this high mountain.

Zion...Jerusalem: These names are often used together and show parallelism. Zion is Jerusalem in her redeemed or glorified (changed) state.

Lift it up, and do not be afraid: Most of the Rabbinical scholars say this is a call not to be afraid - as there is going to be a lot of opposition to this change. This opposition is going to be rooted in a worldly perspective – wanting to hold on to the things of this world. Paul tells us that a great time of apostasy is coming (2 Thessalonians 2:3). This time of apostasy is going to be rooted in an earthly mindset rather than a Kingdom mindset. Many will claim to be disciples of Messiah, they claim to be believers and part of the body of Messiah, but their thinking is going to be more in light with the thoughts of the world rather than in line with prophetic truth.

Behold your God: Everyone agrees that this passage is Messianic. This phrase is speaking about the coming of Messiah - the return of Yeshua of Nazareth into this world to establish His Kingdom.

Verse 10: *“Behold the Lord God with power He will come, and His arm will rule for Him. Behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.”*

Arm: Hebrew can be very specific. The name for the portion of the arm from the elbow to the hand is called a ‘yad’, but the upper portion of the arm, above the elbow, is called the יָדָאֵל (yā·zə·rō·’ōw). This name comes from the same root word as a seed/offspring. This word is written in the masculine, so is referring to a male offspring. This word also has a sacrificial aspect to it. When an animal was sacrificed the chief portion, i.e. the upper section of the arm, was the most desired portion for sacrifice.

His arm: In light of the above, this refers to God’s sacrificial Son - Messiah Yeshua.

His reward is with Him, and His work before Him: God is going to bring a reward and the purpose of giving that reward is to bring about His activity. There is a relationship between the reward and the Kingdom that His work is going to bring about.

Verse 11: *“As a shepherd His flock He feeds with His arm. He will gather the lambs with His arm and carry them to His chest, He will lift up the young ones and He will guide them.”*

As a shepherd His flock He feeds with His arm: Messiah is going to shepherd His flock and He's going to do so sacrificially (by providing what is required). John 10:11

Note: This verse is very symbolic of what we read in the New Covenant. Messiah is the Good Shepherd. He goes after the missing sheep and carries them back to the flock. Psalm 23 tells us that He will lead us and guide us to safe pastures and still waters. This is all imagery telling us that Messiah leads His flock, His disciples, into the Kingdom of God.

CHAPTER 40

PART 2: Isaiah 40:12-31

Our God is the One and Only true God. God is beyond comprehension, but He reveals Himself to us as One who can do all things. He is all powerful, forever wise. As humans we are wise if we submit, obey and seek His influence in our lives (taking hold of His Word and applying it to our lives). When we do this, God will supply to us what we need (His supernatural guidance, power and wisdom) for victory. We are completely dependant on Him for victory. If we do not recognise God in the proper way, He absents Himself from moving in our lives. He will not empower us, nor will He give us wisdom and knowledge.

Note: In this next portion God begins to speak about His uniqueness.

Verse 12: *“Who has measured in the palm of his hand waters? Or the heavens with the width of a finger? All the dust of the earth He has measured and weighs with a balance. Who has weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?”*

Who has measured in the palm of his hand waters: The implication is that this is what God has done. He has measured all the waters on the face of the earth, and He has done so in the palm of His hand. It is difficult to hold onto water, as it just slips through our fingers – however, this is not a problem that God has to deal with. Even the water obeys Him and stays in its place (Matthew 8:27, Job 38:8-11). From this phrase we learn of God’s greatness and the fact that He is beyond measure. He is the Only One who can hold all the water on this earth in the palm of His hand.

Measured: Sometimes this concept of ‘measuring’ relates to understanding God. We can ‘measure’ or ‘size up’ others (form an opinion of them).

(Measure the) heavens with the width of a finger: God can measure things, that seem very large to us, with just His finger. This speaks to us about the vastness of God.

Weighs with a balance: He makes sure that it is in correct proportions.

Note: God understands creation with a perfect knowledge. He can measure it, direct it and balance it.

Verse 13: *“Who directs the Spirit of the Lord? A man who is His counselor God does not have.”*

Who directs (regulates) the Spirit of the Lord: No one does. He does not need any man to counsel Him or give Him knowledge.

Verse 14: *“Who counsels Him? Who gives Him instructions? And who will teach Him in the way of justice? Who taught Him knowledge, and showed Him the way of understanding?”*

Note: The answer to all of these questions...No one. No one can supply anything to God. He has all He needs and lacks nothing. He does not need resources, extra knowledge, or counsel. Instead, He is the source of all wisdom, knowledge and understanding.

Verse 15: *“Behold the nations are like a drop in a bucket, as the dust upon the scales are they thought of; Look, Behold, islands are like a thin measurement that can be tossed.”*

Note: God is adequately and fully acquainted with all things - all nations, all peoples and His creation.

Dust upon the scales: When people measured something it was usually because they wanted to ascertain its value. Payment was then made based on the weight. The weight of dust is so negligible and insignificant that no one was concerned about its weight on a scale when they were measuring their item. When compared to God, the nations (humanity) do not have any significance.

Islands are like a thin measurement that can be tossed: Islands (we could also think in terms of continents here, as continents are also surrounded by water on all sides) are so small and thin in comparison to God that He could easily pick them up and throw them. God is very great and is way above and beyond His creation.

Verse 16: *“And Lebanon there is not enough to burn, nor its beasts sufficient for a burnt offering.”*

Lebanon there is not enough to burn: Lebanon was famous for its great forests. What Isaiah is revealing to us is that God is so great that even if we had to burn, in a sacrificial way, all the trees of Lebanon they would not be able to generate enough heat.

Nor its beasts sufficient for a burnt offering: God is so great that even if we had to sacrifice every single beast, they would still not be enough for a burnt offering that is appropriate for God. All the trees in Lebanon and all the animals would not be sufficient to make a proper offering or sacrifice unto God.

Note: Over and over again Isaiah is showing us that God is beyond, He transcends, His creation. God is NOT a part of creation. He transcends creation.

Verse 17: *“All the nations are as nothing before Him. They are counted by Him as less than zero and worthless.”*

Note: If we had to add up all the nations, they are nothing, zero, of absolutely no significance, when compared to God.

Verse 18: *“For to whom can you liken God? And to what is a likeness of that which is of His value?”*

Note: When it comes to measuring the likeness of God, trying to find something similar to put up against Him, there is no measurement. Nothing is of the same value or worth when compared to God. He cannot be compared to anything else.

Verse 19: *“The craftsman molds a statue; a goldsmith overspreads it with gold; the silversmith casts silver chains.”*

Note: This verse speaks of the futile attempts of man to worship (idolatrous worship).

Verse 20: *“The one who is impoverished chooses a tree that will not rot; he seeks for himself a skillful craftsman to prepare a carved image that will not fall down.”*

Impoverished: One who is very poor. This one has experienced harsh things in his life that have left him empty. This one cannot afford the statues of gold and silver, however, he too desires to bring an offering.

A tree that will not rot: He chooses a tree that has good wood.

A carved image: A statue.

Note: In the last two verses we have been shown an example of humanity in darkness. Nevertheless, even these in darkness understand the need to worship. They understand that it is right to worship.

Within their limitations or means, and with their poor understanding, they try in their own way to ascribe some kind of worship to God. This worship is inadequate. All human attempts to worship God fail and fall far short of what is appropriate or right. It is ONLY when we respond to God's instruction (which He has given us in His Word), not thinking according to the imaginations of our own minds, that we will be able to worship God in a way that is pleasing to Him – in Spirit and in truth (John 4:22-24). If we do not worship God in the way that He desires to be worshipped, then we are not true worshippers but are idolators. True worship involves making ourselves dependant upon God's instruction and revelation and, through the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives, approaching God in a way that He finds acceptable. We are dependant on God's revelation to know what is acceptable to Him.

Verse 21: *“Surely you know? Surely you have heard? Surely it is been told to you from the beginning? Surely you understand from the foundations of the earth?”*

Surely you know... These questions highlight man's inadequacy.

From the foundations: From a very long time ago.

Note: Human beings have never understood God. In and of ourselves we are not in a position (unlike God) to see things correctly. Isaiah is laying the foundation to tell us that we are completely dependent upon God's revelation.

Verse 22: *“The One who sits upon the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; for He is the One that stretches forth as a curtain the heavens, and he stretches them as a tent for dwelling in.”*

The circle of the earth: When the Bible speaks of the four corners of the earth it is not saying that the earth is flat. The four corners refer to the four directions – north, south, east and west. Isaiah, nearly 2800 years ago, knew that the earth was not flat but that it was shaped like a circle, of a round circumference.

Note: Yet again Isaiah shows us how great God is. God, in His goodness, has revealed to us a degree of revelation concerning Himself. He has let us know what we need to know in order to approach Him, to serve Him to worship Him and to experience Him. We are fully dependent upon Him for all things.

Verse 23: *“The One who sets the noblemen as nothing, and the judges of the earth as useless.”*

The One who sets: God is the One who positions or puts others (and us) in specific positions or locations (Acts 17:26).

Noblemen: Those who have prestige and honor and who are often given positions of leadership within in a community - usually because of their wealth.

Sets the noblemen as nothing: The implication is that they are nothing in comparison to God. God is great – human beings are completely inadequate without Him – even those human beings who are looked up to as having great significance are as nothing before God.

Useless: The word used here is the same word used for confusion, chaos, disorder.

Verse 24: *“Scarcely shall they be planted, scarcely shall they be sown, scarcely shall their stock take root in the earth, when He will also blow on them, and they will dry up, and the storm will lift them up like stubble.”*

Scarcely shall they be planted: This verse is uniquely constructed. It reveals to us that God could have chosen to do even greater things, but He choose to work instead in a smaller way. When the seed (a human life) is still seemingly in its infancy God chooses to allow it to wither and fade away. Creation does not show us God’s maximum potential or reflect the fullness of His ability. We see only a very small portion of what God can actually do.

He will also blow on them: God is in control. He can blow away whatever He chooses to.

Verse 25: *“To whom do you liken Me, that I should be compared?’says the Holy One.”*

Note: Similar to Isaiah 40:18

Verse 26: *“Lift up upon high your eyes and see Who it is that has created these things, and the One who brings their host out with number, all of them by name He will call, in the abundance of strength and power not a man is missing.”*

See: Behold something, to look and have understanding.

Host: The host of heaven

Brings their host out: God can bring out His host (His armies) at the right time and in the proper order.

With number: The armies of God are massive in number.

All of them by name He will call: God knows the name of every single one in His massive army.

Not a man is missing: None is lacking. Everything with God is complete. There are no imperfections.

Verse 27: *“Why do you say, O Jacob. And speak, O Israel: ‘My way is hidden from the Lord, and my just claim is passed over by My God?’”*

Note: We cannot escape God’s judgment if we do not submit to Him and do not obey Him. It is not difficult for Him to bring annihilation to His creation.

My way: Referring to Jacob or Israel’s way.

Hidden: That God is unaware or not concerned about what they are doing. We cannot do what we want and get away with it.

Passed over: Ignored. Israel is saying that they were seeking justice, but God never gave it to them. This is a false statement against God. If justice seems to be ignored by God, it is only for a period of time and He has a reason for not giving them justice straightaway. Time will manifest the Sovereignty and the Omniscience of God to all creation.

Verse 28: *“Surely you know? Surely you have heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, The Creator of the end of the earth, neither faints nor is weary, there is no end of investigating His understanding.”*

Note: This verse is similar to Isaiah 40:21

Surely you know: God is mocking them.

End of the earth: Things are coming to a conclusion. Are we ready for this? Nothing is hidden from God. He knows all things and it is simply a matter of time before He puts creation, which was corrupted by sin, back into its rightful order, back to 'good' (Genesis 1:31).

There is no end of investigating His understanding: We will never understand God in and of ourselves. It is beyond human comprehension to understand the fullness of God.

Verse 29: *“He gives to the faint power, and those who do not have strength He will multiply in abundance.”*

Faint: Those who are coming to the end of themselves and are collapsing. God is willing, able and desiring to give them power.

Verse 30: *“Even the young men they faint and become tired, these young men become exhausted, and they will utterly fail.”*

The young men they faint and become tired: Speaking of those who live in the natural. These ones will not be able to keep up with what God is doing – despite the fact that they are seen by society as young, fit and strong.

Faint and become tired (wear out): They will not be able to endure.

Verse 31: *“But those who hope on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall rise up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not wear out, they shall walk and not faint.”*

But: A word of contrast – in contrast to the ones who only live naturally and not supernaturally.

Hope: This is not the word for 'wait' but is the word for hoping – speaking of those who hope in God and in His promises.

Renew their strength: They are going to be transformed by God's power. Hope in God changes our reality. We get a new reality – a Kingdom reality – when we place our hope in Him.

CHAPTER 41

PART 1: Isaiah 41:1-13

This is not an easy chapter to interpret. It is a chapter that speaks about someone – but this person's name is not mentioned. However, what the Scripture does give us are indicators. These indicators lead us to the conclusion that this passage is speaking about Messiah. Isaiah, as we have so frequently seen, had an end-time mindset. Often throughout this book there is an emphasis on the establishment of the Kingdom, and on the One who is going to do the work so that this Kingdom can be established.

Verse 1: *“Be silent unto Me, O islands, make a change, O nations, with your power. Let them approach, then let them speak; they come near together for judgment.”*

Be silent: This is a command.

Islands: When this term is used prophetically it is speaking about far away or remote places. Great leaders and rulers were able to exact and collect taxes from these far away places. These earthly leaders were able to rule over them despite their remoteness. Similarly, God's Sovereignty, His rule and administration will touch these places.

Nations: People groups. 'Nations' speak to familiar places. 'Islands' speak of remote places.

Make a change, O nations: God is telling them (those near and far) to get ready for what He is going to bring about.

Let them approach, then let them speak: God is getting their attention, and He wants them to respond.

Come near together for judgment: It is through judgment that God will bring a great change (ie the establishment of His Kingdom) to all of His creation.

Verse 2: *"Who goes up from the east? Righteousness will call to Him, to His feet. He will give before Him the nations, and kings He will rule. He will give as dust to His sword, driven as stubble before His bow."*

Note: This verse speaks of one who has to be answered to.

Who goes up from the east: Rabbinical commentators say this is speaking of Father Abraham. Most Christian commentators would say this is referring to Cyrus. Although God did use Abraham and Cyrus mightily, none of the context clues point to either of these two men.

Goes up: This could also be translated 'to stir things up'. This would fit within the context of the change that is coming. The Rabbinical commentators see this as a word meaning 'to wake up'. This person is going to stir things up. He is going to wake up the world and cause them to see things very differently. In the day of judgment people are going to wake up to a new reality.

Righteousness: This word is highly significant in helping us to understand the time frame. It indicates to us that we are talking about righteousness being established in this world – which is only going to happen when Messiah returns and establishes His Kingdom.

Righteousness will call to Him, to His feet: God the Father has called God the Son, and He has called Him for the purpose of righteousness. God the Father is going to put all things under the feet of Yeshua (Ephesians 1:22). This means that Yeshua is going to dominate or rule over all the nations (Revelation 2:27).

Rule: To administer or to control them.

Dust to His sword: This is what His sword is able to accomplish - the corpses are going to be like dust. He is going to experience great victory over His enemies. The casualties of this battle are going to be like the dust of the earth.

Stubble: Hay. Very light weight. Easily blown away. Easily consumed. There is nothing lasting or significant about His enemies.

Sword...bow: Weapons of war.

Verse 3: *"He pursued them, and He passed peace; the way on His feet He did not go."*

He pursued them and He passed peace: This is the word for 'peace' and not the word for 'safety'. What this tells us is that the one being spoken of here pursued them and as He passed through their midst the outcome was peace (peace is the outcome/the result of the fulfilment of God's will).

The way on His feet He did not go: This is an odd and awkward expression but what it means is that He did not travel by foot. Prophetically if one moves but not with one's own feet (nor with the hooves of any animals) then we know the movement being spoken of is supernatural (for example: Daniel 8:5). The supernatural aspect of this person being spoken of here should indicate to us that this chapter is neither about Abraham, nor about Cyrus, but is in fact prophetically about Yeshua, the Messiah.

Verse 4: *"He who has acted and done it, calls the generations from the beginning. I am the Lord, the first and the last things. I am Him."*

Acted and done it: This is again speaking of the Sovereignty of God. What He begins He successfully completes. His desires and objectives will be met (Philippians 1:6).

Calls the generations from the beginning: God Himself (Yeshua) has called the generations into being. He has always been at the head; He has always been in control. He (Yeshua) is the Creator of this world (Colossians 1:15-18) and He is the Administrator of it.

The first and the last: The beginning and the end.

Last things: Written in the plural. In the beginning there was only God. He spoke many things into being so, at the end, many things are going to come to their fulfilment or conclusion.

Verse 5: *"The islands they saw, and they were afraid. The ends of the earth they trembled. They drew near and they came."*

Islands: Again, alluding to God's absolute reign or control. His administration encompasses all things, all peoples – even those who are at the remotest corners of the earth.

They were afraid: No one will be able to escape this judgment day. It is going to be a fearful day for those who have not received God's help/God's salvation while they still had the time.

They drew near: They approached. At the end, God is going to assemble all peoples. They are going to have no choice but to draw near to Him (Zechariah 12:3,9).

Verse 6: *"A man with his neighbour they will help, and to his brother he will say, 'Be strong.'"*

A man with his neighbour they will help: This is still set within the context of the nations – the faraway or remote places. Those in the nations are predominantly idol worshippers. Israel at this time was a unique people. They approached the One true God through His Word, through the prophets and through the instructions of God's servants. This is not yet speaking of Israel, but about those in the idolatrous nations. These nations, at the end, will come together in unity to help each other.

To his brother he will say, 'Be strong': The world, for the most part, are not going to repent. They are going to double down in their idolatry, and they are going to encourage one another to stay firm in this type of falsehood.

Verse 7: *“And the workman will be strong, and he will strengthen the goldsmith, and the one who has a hammer hits the anvil saying, ‘For the soldering it is ready’. Then he strengthened it with nails, that it might not collapse.”*

Workman: The artisan. The skilled worker.

Hammer: The purpose of this hammer was to make things smooth

The one who has a hammer hits the anvil: This one works to make something marvellous and finely crafted.

Soldering: The glueing, the joining or the holding of things together. This process makes the idol (in this case) stronger. These craftsmen are building their idols in such a way that the idols are strengthened and do not collapse under pressure (see Revelation 13:14-15).

Verse 8: *“But you, O Israel, are My servant; Jacob, whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham My beloved one.”*

But: There is a change in this verse. Israel is contrasted with the nations.

Jacob: It is so significant that when God is upholding His people (telling us that these are His people) that He chooses to use the name ‘Jacob’ to identify them. Jacob pursued God with all of His ability.

Note: God has a great love for Israel. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did not fall into idolatry, but they believed in the One (and only) God. Romans 11:28 reminds us that Israel is beloved to God for the sake of these fathers (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob).

Verse 9: *“Whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and from earth’s rulers I have called you, and said to you, ‘You are My servant, I have chosen you and I will not cast you away.’”*

Whom: Speaking of Israel, the Jewish people.

I have taken from the ends of the earth: A description of redemption. This is a prophetic promise, and one which will ultimately be fulfilled (Matthew 24:31). In the last days God is going to bring more and more people back to the land of Israel.

Rulers: A word that speaks of a strong ruler or nobleman (those in control of large areas).

Will not cast you: Will not reject you. Although Messiah was rejected for a time the promise was that He became the chief cornerstone (Acts 4:10-12). This word of rejection is the same word being used in conjunction with Israel.

Verse 10: *“Do not fear because with you am I; do not be dismayed because I am your God. I have strengthened you and I have helped you, even I have supported you with My right hand.”*

With you am I: God with us. This is the benefit we have in being in a covenantal relationship with God through Messiah.

My right hand: Many of the commentators say this is referring to the work of Messiah. It is Messiah who strengthens us, helps us and supports us. When the time/fullness of the Gentiles comes to an end, is complete, then God is going to once again turn His attention back to the Jewish people.

This time is going to happen within the context of the final judgment. It is at this time that God is going to bring salvation to Israel. He is going to strengthen, support and help them at this time.

Verse 11: *“Behold, all those who were incensed against you will be ashamed and disgraced; they shall be as nothing. And those who contend against you shall perish.”*

Those who were incensed against you: Referring to the nations who were opposed to/hated Israel. Many nations will go up against Israel in the last days.

Contend against: Those who are in conflict with Israel. In the last days God is going to judge all those who have conflict with Israel.

Verse 12: *“You will seek them, but you will not find them – the men of your contention. Those who war against you shall be as nothing.”*

Them: Speaking about these enemies of Israel - those nations who went up to battle against Israel.

You will not find them: They will not be found because God will destroy them.

Note: Israel is going to be the object of a great contention, a battle, a war in the last days. However, Messiah Himself is going to come and He is going to strengthen, help and support Israel. When He does this, He is going to bring about the defeat of the enemies of Israel - to the extent that they became as nothing.

Verse 13: *“For I am the Lord, your God, the One who strengthens your right hand; the One who says unto you, ‘Do not fear, for I have helped you.’”*

The One who strengthens your right hand: In Isaiah 41:10 we read about Messiah being that righteous right hand of God. Now we read that God is going to strengthen Israel’s right hand. Israel (the remnant of it) is going to be made like Messiah, just as a disciple becomes like the one he follows.

Do not fear, for I have helped you: Although this is written in the past tense it is a future promise. It is written in the past tense as it is a promise of God that is as good as done in His eyes.

CHAPTER 41

PART 2: Isaiah 41:14-29

God is always faithful to His Word. If we want to know what God is about to do in this world the best place to check is prophecy. Prophecy informs us, perfectly, about what God is going to do, so that we can be a part of it – by praying into what is going on, praise God for the good things that He has already done and prepare our hearts for the things He is still going to do.

Verse 14: *“Do not fear, O worm of Jacob, O men of Israel. I have helped you,” declares the Lord who is your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.”*

O worm: This is not a compliment. A worm is an unclean animal. It eats that which is decaying and that which is not appropriate. Even in their corrupted, decaying spiritual state God is telling the Jewish people not to fear because He is going to do something to bring about a change in their status. God does not bring about this change to the people because they deserve it – in fact, they do not. God brings about this change because of who He is – full of grace, mercy and compassion.

Jacob: God is speaking to the Jewish people.

I have helped you: Although this is a future event it is written in the past tense. The past tense is used to show a sure promise - God is going to ensure that this is going to happen.

Declares: Another word of promise. If God says it, God does it.

Verse 15: *“Behold, I will make you into a new, sharp threshing sledge; you will thresh the mountains and grind them up and make the hills like chaff.”*

Behold: A phrase that is used to grab our attention.

Sharp: This instrument is sharp on two sides - like a double-edged sword.

Threshing sledge: An instrument that is used for threshing.

Mountains: Most scholars (Christian and Rabbinical) agree that mountains prophetically represent a nation, an empire, a confederacy or perhaps many countries.

Grind them up: Make them into a powder. This is another way of saying that Israel is going to destroy the nations, she is going to have victory over them.

Hills: Smaller, less significant countries or empires.

Like chaff: Chaff is so fine that when the wind blows it is easily blown away. These regions or empires will not be able to stand against or resist what God is going to do in and through Israel.

Verse 16: *“You will winnow them, the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them; you will rejoice in the Lord, and glory in the Holy One of Israel.”*

Winnow: A term similar to threshing.

Glory in: When Israel sees what God is doing, they are going to be overcome with praising Him. A great joy and gladness will well up within them and this will manifest itself outwardly.

Verse 17: *“The poor and the destitute ones will seek water, but there will be none, and their tongues will dry up with thirst, I the Lord will answer them, I the God of Israel will not abandon them.”*

The poor and the destitute ones will seek water: These are the ones who are spiritually thirsty - they are thirsty for righteousness (Matthew 5:6, John 4:6-14).

Their tongues will dry up: They are on the brink of perishing. Nothing has been found to satisfy them.

Answer: This is the word for ‘answer’ and not the word for ‘hear’. Hearing is a word that does not necessarily lead to a response. An answer, on the other hand, is a response word. God is going to respond to their thirst.

I the God of Israel will not abandon them: This is a promise. Yeshua told us that He can only come again to earth for His second coming once the Jewish people are right with Him [Matthew 23:37-39. When Israel says...’Blessed is He (Yeshua) who comes in the Name of the Lord’]. We can be assured of this: The Kingdom will not come until Israel gets right with the Lord (Romans 11:12).

Verse 18: *“I will open rivers in desolate heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys, I will make the wilderness a lake of water, and the dry land springs of water.”*

Note: This verse speaks about the change that is coming to the land of Israel. The land is a very important barometer regarding the spiritual condition of the people of Israel. When God was displeased with the people the land physically wilted, became dry and desolate. When God was pleased with the people the land bloomed and blossomed and flourished.

Desolate: Lacking vegetation.

Fountains: Springs of water. Water in abundance.

Wilderness: Desert

Note: God will be the only One who will be able to meet the thirst (the needs) of His people.

Verse 19: *“And I will set in the wilderness the cedar and the acacia tree, the myrtle tree and the oil tree; I will place in the desert land the cypress and the pine tree and the box tree, all of them together.”*

Note: These trees are not planted in fertile soil (according to our perspective) but God is going to cause them to grow into forest areas.

Verse 20: *“On account that they will see, and they will know, and they will pay attention and they will become wise all together, that the hand of the Lord has done this, And the Holy One of Israel has created it.”*

Together: God’s faithfulness ensures that the trees all grow ‘together’, and, in the same way, His faithfulness is going to ensure that the (remnant of the) people of Israel are all enlightened ‘together’.

The Holy One of Israel: This phrase has been repeated a few times in this portion. Repetition shows emphasis.

Verse 21: *“‘Draw near your complaint,’ says the Lord. ‘Present your strong arguments against Me,’ says the King of Jacob.”*

Note: In this verse God begins to talk about the problem that has plagued the Jewish people – idolatry. God, although He knows the answer, is asking the people if they found fault with Him or if they have not found Him faithful. He wants to know if the people went after other gods because they thought He had gone against His Word.

Draw near your complaint: The people have a complaint against God (about how He treated the Jewish people) and He wants them to vocalise this complaint to Him.

Strong arguments: God wants them to present their best case to Him.

Verse 24: *“Bring it forth, declare to Us what has happened; what the former things are declare them, that We will pay attention and We will know the end of things, proclaim to Us things to come.”*

Bring it forth, declare to Us: God (who is the true Deisre of the Nations – Haggai 2:7) wants to know what it is about the idols that they find so desirable.

What has happened; what the former things are: God wants to know if these idols have been able to tell the people about things that have happened in the past.

The end of things: The things that are coming. Have these idols been able to declare what is still to come? Have they been able to enlighten the people about anything in the past, present or future? God has been able to tell us about things that happened before the very foundation of this world. He has told us things that are happening now, and He has even revealed to us what will happen in the future. He, unlike these idols, has not left us in the dark about His plans and purposes. We can respond to God because of what He has revealed to us. The people cannot respond to any revelation from the idols that they worship – because there is nothing to respond to.

Proclaim: Cause them to be heard.

Note: In this verse God is challenging the idols that His people have gone after. The people’s idolatrous practices and behaviour have led to a desolation in the land. God is wanting to change this (not because the people have earned or deserve the glorious change that God wants to bring about, but God wants to make this change because of who He is – His character, His righteousness, His faithfulness).

Verse 24: *“Let them declare the things that are coming at the end, that we might know if they are gods; let them do good or let them do evil, that we may gaze upon it and that we can see together.”*

Them: These idols

Let them declare: If these idols are truly gods, worthy to be worshipped, they should be able to prophesy. They should be able to reveal what is going to happen and they should be able to explain what has already happened so that those who worship them might be able to understand.

Let them do good or let them do evil: What God is pointing out is that idols cannot even do anything either good or bad. Idols have no understanding; they have no power. Idols do not have the ability to hear, to see, to smell, to taste, to speak or to walk. They can do nothing. God is challenging them to do something if they truly are gods.

Verse 24: *“Behold, you are nothing. And your deeds are nothing. The abominable one will choose them.”*

You are nothing: God is speaking directly to the idol worshipers and to the idols themselves.

The abominable one: Those who practice lawlessness. Those who choose to do evil (things that are against God’s will) rather than good.

Choose them: He chooses idolatry because he does not want to do the things of God. He wants to create his own god, his own rules and behaviour so that he can justify his abominations.

Verse 25: *“I have raised up (one) from the north and he will come, from the shining of the the sun, he will call in My Name; and he shall come against princes as though mortar, as the potter treads clay.”*

Note: Isaiah is prophesying here that someone is coming from out of the north, and he is going to call on the name of the Lord. The Bible does not tell us who this person is. Some say he is Nebuchadnezzar. A common view held though, in both Rabbinical and Christian circles, is that this is referring to Cyrus.

The shining of the the sun: This is an idiom for the east. Judgment, Biblically, has a connotation of coming into the land of Israel from out of the east. The Lord also enters through the east gate (Ezekiel 44:1-3).

Princes: Those who have authority, leaders.

As though mortar, as the potter treads clay: This one who is coming will not have any problem with these strong leaders. He is going to mold and shape them as he wants. They are not going to be able to stand against him and nor are they going to influence him (just like the clay cannot change the mind of the potter). This one who is coming is going to have absolute authority.

Verse 26: *“Who has declared from the beginning, that we may know? And the former things that we might say, that He is righteous. Surely there is no one who shows, there is no one who declares, there is no one who hears your words.”*

Who has declared from the beginning: Who made this one known? Who declared from the beginning of time that this one was coming? God did (Amos 3:7).

There is no one who shows...who declares...who hears: This is the problem. No one is proclaiming God's Word or causing it to be heard. And if no one proclaims it then no one hears it. God is telling us that there is one who is coming, but no one is speaking about this one. No one is paying attention.

Verse 27: *“The first one to Zion, behold all of this, and for Jerusalem there will be one who proclaims good news.”*

The first one to Zion: God is at work. There is going to be someone who is the first to Zion, who is going to be central to Zion. He is going to have preeminence (ie the King of the Kingdom).

One who proclaims good news: An evangelist.

Good news: Salvation.

Verse 28: *“I looked and there was no man; and from these there was no counselor who, when I asked of them, could answer a word.”*

I looked and there was no man: Someone should have been proclaiming this Word of the Lord, but no one was (see Isaiah 59:16).

None of the idols were revealing what God was up to and none of the men were either. No one was proclaiming the promises of God concerning this one who was to come – the one who was going to proclaim salvation - and not only proclaim it but make it and carry it out. *Who...could answer:* None of them could respond to what God was doing. Why? Because they were not interested in the things of God.

Verse 29: *“Behold all of them are wicked, there is nothing of substance in their deeds, their molten images are wind and confusion.”*

Wicked: Whatever they say or do conflicts with the will of God. The idols and the idol worshippers were all about injustice. It is only when we are submitted to God’s will that we will be concerned about true justice. When we're doing our will, we're going to be workers of iniquity, wickedness and injustice.

Wind and confusion: Nothing good comes from doing our own wills. No revelation will be given to us when we live for ourselves and for our own pleasures. Those who do not have revelation cannot speak truth. They are of no more significance than a blowing wind and in their wake they leave confusion.

Note: God makes it very clear that He's the one who is the architect of change. Prior to the establishment of His Kingdom, using the Jewish people and the land of Israel, He is going to bring a spiritual transformation to this world.

CHAPTER 42

PART 1: Isaiah 42:1-9

There are many things prophesied about Messiah in the book of Isaiah. These prophecies reveal to us what Messiah is going to bring about - how He's going to establish justice, righteousness, holiness and Godliness. The glory of God will be manifested through Him. One of the ways that Isaiah reveals Messiah is by calling Him a servant - the servant of the Lord.

This name, ‘servant of the Lord’, is highly debated. Some say it is a reference to Israel, the Jewish people. Others emphatically state that it is a title that is referring to Messiah. When we carefully study the prophetic text we are going to learn that sometimes this title is indeed speaking of Israel (the Jewish people). God has placed a call upon Israel. They have a unique calling and a special purpose. However, the vast majority of these prophecies refer to ‘the servant of the Lord’ as Messiah – the Redeemer, the Saviour.

We cannot ignore that Scripture reveals a close unity, a connection, between Israel and Messiah. For example: In Exodus we read about how Israel wound up in Egypt and God brought them out of Egypt. Similarly, in the New Covenant, Yeshua’s parents took Him to Egypt and God also brought Him (Messiah) out of Egypt (Hosea 11:1, Matthew 2:13-15). Often prophecy is spoken of as concerning Israel, but it is fulfilled by Messiah. This teaches us a very important theological truth: ultimately it will be Messiah who completes the call of Israel in this age. God, through covenant, loves the Jewish people. He has anointed and sanctified the land of Israel for a purpose. However, it is going to ultimately be Messiah who brings about and completes the purpose and call that God had for Israel. Not only will Israel benefit from this, but so will all the nations – those in the outermost parts of this earth.

Verse 1: *“Behold My Servant, I uphold Him, My chosen One, My soul delights. I have set My Spirit upon Him; justice to the nations He will bring forth.”*

Uphold: A term of support. Some will point out that this word ‘support’ also alludes to an obligation – it reveals a provision (this one is provided for and looked after).

I uphold him: God the Father is saying that He is the One who is going to support, provide for and assist this One – this Servant of His. This Servant, because He is upheld by the Father, is going to be successful. He is going to accomplish the call that is upon Him.

My soul: The very essence of who God is.

Delights: A word of desire, a word of want. God the Father is behind Messiah (His Son). He desires everything that Messiah is going to bring about, as it is all the outcome of His will.

I have set: This is revealing God’s Sovereign choice. God has anointed Messiah and set Him apart for a purpose.

I have set My Spirit upon Him; justice to the nations He will bring forth: There is a relationship between the moving of the Spirit of God and the establishing of justice. The Spirit of God moves to bring about justice. Justice is one of the character traits of God. When the Spirit of God moves, we see the character of God being manifested in many different ways.

Justice to the nations: This is an important truth. The work of Messiah goes beyond simply the Jewish people and the land of Israel. The work of Messiah is going to have an effect in all of God’s creation.

Verse 2: *“He will not shout, nor lift up His voice, He will not cause to be heard outside.”*

He will not shout, nor lift up His voice: God brings about His will by speaking (“Let there be...and there was” – Genesis 1:3). God doesn’t have to scream or yell to get people’s attention. He simply speaks with authority. Elijah heard the still, small voice of God (1 Kings 19:12-13).

Outside: In the public places, in the streets. Messiah will accomplish what He needs to accomplish (justice and righteousness) without having to announce it to the world, without having to wait for their permission. God is going to do what God has willed to do. Messiah’s Word carries power and authority. His Word alone produces an action. He does not need to instruct a third party to produce the result He desires. Messiah has power and strength. His power and strength, however, are not what are necessary for Him to accomplish what His Father has given Him to do. He accomplishes His Father’s will with the authority He has – His Word – not the loudness of His words, but the power that His words contain.

Verse 3: *“A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not extinguish; (by means) of truth He will cause to go forth justice.”*

A bruised reed: Something that is very fragile.

He will not break: He is not coming with a massive display of strength to accomplish and to set things in order. Messiah does not need a massive army to bring about the desired change. Although He has great power, He does not need this power to bring change. His Word is enough.

Flax: Something which is easily consumed by fire.

Smoking flax He will not extinguish: Only a little bit of wind will cause flax to be quickly extinguished because it will burn up very quickly if even a little oxygen reaches the fire. When someone walks past us, we can sometimes feel a little bit of a breeze coming off their bodies. The change that God is going to bring about will not require His physical movement.
Truth...justice: Justice is brought about through the power and the authority of truth.

Verse 4: *“He will not extinguish or bruise until He sets in the earth justice; and for His law the coastlands will hope.”*

Extinguish or bruise: These are the same words found in Isaiah 42:3 for bruise and extinguish but in this verse the translators have translated them differently.

He sets in the earth justice: Justice is repeated and emphasised. Messiah, the Servant of the Lord, is committed to justice – that which is proper and right in the sight of God the Father.

Justice...and...His law: There is an undeniable connection between God's truth, justice and law. This truth is now being revealed within a Torah context - Messiah stands on bringing forth His law, which is necessary if justice is going to be experienced.

Coastlands: The distant places, the islands. If one can control the distant places, have an impact upon them, then it shows one's strength, power and anointing. The Scripture is boldly promising that even those who are in the distant places are going to wait patiently, in hopefulness, for what God is promising through His Servant.

Verse 5: *“For thus said the God, the Lord, the Creator of the heavens, who stretches them forth and beats with force the earth and the things that go forth from it. He gives breath to the people on it, and spirit to those who walk on it.”*

Said: The language construction (past tense) speaks to what has not been but that will be. We can be assured that this will happen.

The Creator of the heavens: When this phrase is used in the Bible it is often phrased as ‘the Creator of the heavens and the earth’. Here, however, it is the heavens which are emphasised. The heavens, in many ways (especially in the New Covenant when the ‘heavens’ are spoken of), relate to the Kingdom of God.

Stretches them forth: God put the heavens into the order that He wanted them to be in. This is something that, from our perspective, would be a really difficult thing to do. If someone can do something that's really difficult, then, logically, He can do something that's not so difficult. It should not be hard for us to accept that if God can put the heavens into order that He can also set in order the things of this world.

Beats: This is also a word that means to put into a right condition.

Things that go forth from it: This could also be a synonym for people or for descendants.

Spirit: This is what sets humans apart from the rest of God's creation. Humans are unique and different.

Note: This verse emphasises two things: God is bringing a change to this world and to the ones who dwell in this world.

Verse 6: *“I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness, I will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations.”*

You: Many of the translations capitalize this word. God the Father is calling, and He has called the Servant of the Lord. The implication is that this ‘You’ is referring to the Son of God – Messiah. This capitalization helps the reader to understand that this is a Messianic prophecy.

Righteousness: Everything that Messiah is about has to do with righteousness. He works out righteousness in His creation. Apart from Messiah no one can be righteous. He is the only source of righteousness.

Covenant...people...light...nations: Prophecy is often written down as Hebrew poetry, and one of the chief characteristics of Hebrew poetry is parallelism. Here we see parallelism. The covenant is parallel to light, the people is parallel to the nations. Frequently in the Scripture ‘light’ is spoken of/used for the purpose of revealing something (illumination). The take-away from this verse is that it is only when we are in a covenantal relationship with God (through Messiah) that we can see (perceive/receive) the revelation, illumination, of God. Without that covenant we are going to be in darkness.

Verse 7: *“To open up the eyes of the blind ones, and to bring forth from the prison the prisoner, and from the prison house the ones who dwell in darkness.”*

Bring forth: This is a word of freedom. It is also a word used within a redemptive context.

Blind ones...prisoner...dwell in darkness: These words are also all parallel. Those who dwell in darkness are prisoners. Those who dwell in darkness do not have any revelation or illumination. A lack of light (revelation from God) leads to bondage (prison). Those who are in bondage do not have the freedom to serve God as they do not have or understand truth so are unable to utilize that which they do not have.

Verse 8: *“I the Lord, that is My name; My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to graven images.”*

Lord: The sacred name of God is used here. This is the name that speaks about the God who was, the God who is and the God who is to come. This is the name of God that makes mention of His uniqueness.

My name; My glory: God’s Name (name is synonymous with character) and His glory are parallel. When we understand the name of God (His character) we are going to understand what is glorious – the character of God is glorious.

Graven images: Statues, idols, carved images.

Note: People are either going to be moved by the character of God and so enter into a covenantal relationship with Him (thereby receiving illumination or understanding), or the opposite is going to be the case – People will reject God, and their eyes and lives will remain in darkness, they will have no hope.

Verse 9: *“The former things, behold, they came, the new things I will declare; before they spring forth, I will cause you to hear of them.”*

The former things, behold, they came: God had declared His plans to the people and these plans had come to fruition - God’s Word had proven faithful.

New things: Through Messiah (His work/ministry) new things were going to burst out and spread forth. God told the prophets that Messiah was coming. He was going to give of Himself in order to establish a New Covenant. It is through this New Covenant that justice is manifested, and righteousness is established.

I will cause you to hear: God reveals what is going to happen before it actually happens. He does not leave His people in the dark about what He is doing or about what He intends to do – Amos 3:7. God tells His people these things so that they can understand what He is up to, so that they can have the privilege of participating with Him.

CHAPTER 42

PART 2: Isaiah 42:10-25

Biblical prophecy has a unique characteristic trait. Often we are given statements of God’s pending judgment, but then a little while later, because of the grace and love He has for His covenant people, this prophecy of judgment is tempered by a word of encouragement – a word that tells us that God is not going to carry out His judgment completely – He will not fully destroy, but He will be merciful to the remnant and He will forgive. His forgiveness is followed by a renewal of His promises, and He gives His people another opportunity to experience His will. As disciples of the Lord, we are committed to His will.

Verse 10: *“Sing unto the Lord a new song, His praise from the ends of the earth, the ones who go down to the sea, and its fullness, you islands and you inhabitants of them!”*

Sing: Worship

New song: Worship in a new way/manner. This newness usually has to do with a new spiritual condition of the people. They have been changed and therefore they are praising God as they were called to do.

His praise from the ends of the earth: This is prophetic about the future. God’s praise, the worship of Him, is going to fill the world, fill all of His creation.

Its fullness: God's creation is going to be full.

Islands: Distant places.

Note: A time of change is coming. The people are going to reflect that change by praising God, singing a new song to Him, and that praise (worship) is going to fill the earth.

Verse 11: *“The wilderness and its cities are going to lift up their praise, the courtyards and the one that will dwell in Kedar. Shout with joy, the inhabitants of Sela, from the top of the hills.”*

Courtyards: Villages

Kedar: this is a word for darkness and gloom. Those who dwell in darkness and gloom, those who dwell in barren and desolate places, are going to experience a change and they will shout with joy, and they will worship.

Shout: No one is being quiet about their faith. They are not having a private time of worship, but their worship is dominating, filling and totally overwhelming all of God's creation.

Verse 12: *"They will place to the Lord glory and declare His praise in the islands."*

Place to the Lord glory: They are acknowledging God and His glory. They are making known how significant He is.

Islands: Even in the remote places people are going to be praising God. Everyone in every place is going to be touched by God's work.

Verse 13: *"The Lord as a Mighty One He will go forth, as a man of war He is going to be stirred up with zeal, He shall shout out, yes, scream aloud; He shall prevail against His enemies."*

Mighty One: A hero.

Stirred up with zeal: He sees what the enemy is doing and that stirs up a zeal in his life. He is upset about the pain, suffering and loss that the enemy is causing for His people.

Scream: A word of strong emotion.

He shall shout out, yes, scream aloud: A war cry which is aimed at His enemies.

Prevail: He will be stronger than His enemies and He will overcome them.

Verse 14: *"I have been quiet for a long time, I have been unresponsive and I have restrained Myself. As a woman who gives birth so I will cry, and I will pant and breathe hard."*

A long time: This means almost forever. This is how many people see God. He seems quiet, distant.

Unresponsive: Like someone who is deaf.

Restrained Myself: It has seemed like God has not responded. God grieves to see His people suffer, but He knows that we suffer because of our own unrighteousness, our own foolish choices, our rebelliousness against Him. Therefore, He waits, He restrains Himself, He does nothing. But this is going to change.

A woman who gives birth: This is a woman who suffers greatly. Emotionally and physically, she is enduring pain and suffering. It is a difficult journey to get through the birthing process, but the difficult process is followed by a sudden change and a great joy.

Pant: This is a word of struggling.

Verse 15: *"I will destroy mountains and hills, and all their grass I will make dry. I will set the rivers as islands, and I will dry up the lakes."*

Destroy mountains and hills: Oftentimes mountains and hills can be seats of governments. A time is coming when God is going to work against them. This is going to be a time of great hardship in the earth.

Set the rivers as islands: Big cities, significant cities, are often built on rivers.

I will dry up the lakes: People in populated areas are going to be scattered into the remote and distant places.

Note: Creation is going to experience a new reality. God makes these physical and difficult changes in the earth to prepare people, spiritually, for the establishment of His Kingdom.

Verse 16: *“I will lead the blind in a way that they did not know, and in pathways that they did not know I will lead them. I will place darkness before them for light, and stubborn places straight. These things I have done for them, and I have not left them.”*

Place darkness before them for light: God is going to place darkness (things that are harsh, painful and difficult) in front of people, but this darkness is going to be used by Him for illumination so that people can understand and turn to His revelation. This is the way that God gets the attention of the people.

Stubborn: This is a word that means hardheaded. Those who are stubborn are not easily convinced or persuaded in their thinking.

Straight: God is going to bring about a change in those who are stubborn.

I have done: Although it is written in the past tense it is a promise that has a future implication.

Have not left: Have not departed from them. God has not and will not leave or abandon His people in the midst of difficult things. In fact, it is because of His faithfulness to this covenant that they are going to experience these difficult things.

Verse 17: *“They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, who trust in carved images, who say to the moulded images, ‘You are our gods’.”*

Greatly ashamed: There are going to be people who move toward God in the difficult times, but there are also those who move away from God at these times. Those who move away from God, those who persist in idolatry, are going to be utterly ashamed.

Verse 18: *“The deaf ones, hear. The blind ones, gaze upon to see.”*

Note: In the last days God is going to move. All will need to look to Him and hear Him, seek Him for revelation.

Verse 19: *“Who is blind if not My Servant? Or the deaf one as My Messenger whom I sent? He who is blind as the perfect One? And blind as the Servant of the Lord?”*

My Servant...My Messenger...the Perfect one...the Servant of the Lord: These are all terms that refer to Messiah – this is not referring to the Jewish people.

For the purpose of bringing about a change, and for a time, Messiah is going to temporarily overlook (be blind to and deaf to) the rebellious, idolatrous and stubborn people within Israel. He is going to overlook their spiritual condition, which demands judgment, death and punishment, and He is going to bring hardship to them for the purpose of bringing about restoration in their lives. He extends His grace to them (His grace in this case is temporarily turning a blind eye and a deaf ear) so that they (the remnant) can respond to Him and be led to salvation.

Verse 20: *“Seeing many things but not responding, opening the ears but they will not hear.”*

God has shown the people many things (His revelation, miracles, etc) but they have not responded to Him. They have heard His message, but they have not listened or responded to His Words.

Verse 21: *“The Lord intensely delights on account of His righteousness; He will magnify the law and make it splendid.”*

Delights: This is a word that shows a strong desire.

Delights on account of His righteousness: God desires to make Israel righteous because they are people with whom He has made a covenant. We did not deserve righteousness, but God made us righteous through Messiah. Israel do not deserve righteousness, but God is going to make them righteous through Messiah.

Law: His revelation, His instruction. Within the law (the Torah) there are not only commandments. There are also numerous promises. The commandments are promises - some have promises of blessing, others (when we disobey them) have promises of judgment. Some commandments speak about life, others about death - it all depends on how we respond to them.

Verse 22: *“He is going to be a people that is plundered and spoiled; all of them are trapped in holes, and they are hidden in prison houses; they are for prey, and no one delivers; for plunder, and no one says, ‘Restore’.”*

He: Israel. God is speaking in this verse of Israel in her current state.

Plundered and spoiled: They are going to take Israel as plunder and spoil.

Trapped in holes: This speaks about judgment, the punishment that's coming to Israel from her enemies.

Hidden in prison houses: Most of the Rabbinical commentators see this as Israel going into exile. The people of the land are going to be missing, hidden, because they have been sent to prison in exile.

Note: God, who is righteousness, is faithful. When someone is uninterested in God or they are rebelling against Him, He brings an enemy to plunder them and take spoil, sending them into exile. His people are going to suffer greatly because of their unfaithfulness. There is no one to help them and no one is even going to think of restoration. This suffering and isolation leads many to repentance.

Verse 23: *“Who among them will hear this and will listen and will hear for the end?”*

Note: God allows all of this suffering because He wants the people to hear, to listen and to pay attention. God wants people to respond to Him. Who is going to do this at the end of this age?

Verse 24: *“Who gave Jacob for plunder, and Israel to the robbers? Is it not the Lord, against whom we have sinned? For they did not desire to walk in His ways, nor were they obedient to His law.”*

Is it not the Lord, against whom we have sinned: There is coming a time when Israel is going to realize that it is God behind all their suffering, and He is behind it because they have sinned against Him.

Verse 25: *“He will pour out upon him the heat of His anger and the power of war; this will burn him all around, but he did not know that You consumed him, they did not pay attention concerning this.”*

Pour out upon him the heat of His anger and the power of war: God is going to bring about a change in Israel – a change that is going to cause the remnant to sing a new song. However, to bring about this change, Israel, Jacob, is going to have to go through a very difficult time – a time known as Jacob’s trouble (Jeremiah 30:7). God asked the question in Isaiah 42:23: Who is going to be paying attention to what God is doing? Who is going to learn from what is happening and who is going to recognise that it is a move of God? God is going to bring this about so that He can heal, restore and save.

He did not know that You consumed him, they did not pay attention concerning this: The problem is that Israel is still in an unrepentant, unresponsive state. This change is going to happen though – as a testimony of the faithfulness of God to His Word.

CHAPTER 43

PART 1: Isaiah 43:1-15

God keeps covenant with Israel because He has said He would. He is faithful to His Word. When we see God’s faithfulness to Israel it is a testimony to us of God’s truthfulness. In the last days the remnant of the nations is going to witness God’s faithfulness to Israel, and this is going to cause them to learn about the holiness of God. People respond to God, by faith, when they see His faithfulness.

This chapter reveals God’s fidelity – His faithfulness. If God is faithful to His Old Covenant people, then we can be encouraged and assured that He will also be faithful to His New Covenant people. This is a chapter that has to do with the last days.

Verse 1: *“Now, thus said the Lord, who creates Jacob, who forms Israel: ‘Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; To Me are you.’”*

Now: This is a word of urgency that speaks about God doing something for the purpose of manifesting His glory, righteousness, holiness and faithfulness to His Word.

Said: This word is written in the past tense. It is speaking about something that God will do but it is written in this way as what God has said is as good as done from His perspective.

Creates...forms: These words are written in the present tense. God is at work right now. Even now He is creating and forming Jacob, Israel (John 5:17). Even now He is working to bring about a new reality a Kingdom reality.

I have redeemed you: Messiah, being God, has always existed – the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8). However, at the time of Isaiah writing this, this work of redemption had not yet been completed. But...in God's eyes, this work (because He had promised) was as good as done.

I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name: This is a very important principle: God knows everything, at all times. However, it is through redemption that we are uniquely known (recognised, in relationship with) by God, and that we are called (predestined) by Him. Those who do not respond to God's invitation (salvation, by faith, in Messiah Yeshua) do not experience being known by Him, being called by Him or being in a relationship with Him.

You: Written in the singular – to one person. There is an individual aspect to redemption. Although God is going to redeem Israel (corporately ie the remnant) it is going to be by one individual at a time. Every person has to make a decision, on their own, to respond, by faith, to the grace of God.

Verse 2: *“For you will pass through waters, with you am I, and through rivers they shall not overcome you. For you will be in the midst of fire, but you shall not be burned, the flame you shall not be burnt by it.”*

You: Again written in the singular.

Pass through waters: This is not talking about passing through the Red Sea but this is a yet future event.

With you: This is emphasising the redemptive (covenantal) relationship we have with God, through faith in Messiah Yeshua.

They shall not overcome you: These rivers will not sweep us away.

Waters...fire: God will not allow any harm to overtake His covenant people. He is going to redeem them and bring them through these difficult things.

Verse 3: *“For I am the Lord your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Saviour; I have given your ransom: Egypt. Cush and Seba in your place.”*

The Holy One of Israel: Frequently, in prophecy, God reveals Himself by using this Name.

Egypt: Egypt was a very vast empire. God brought judgment upon Egypt so that He could redeem Israel (Exodus 1-12).

Cush: Ethiopia. Ethiopia was also a vast empire.

Seba: Another African empire.

Egypt...Cush...Seba: Even though these nations were very important politically, socially and economically in the past, it is revealed to us that Israel was more important to God. Why? Because God had given them a call (to bless all people, including Egypt, Ethiopia and Seba – Genesis 12:3) and a great purpose. They take precedence over these nations because of God's call.

In your place: In exchange for Israel. God is showing preference. He is showing purpose. He is revealing a plan that He has for Israel.

Verse 4: *“Since you are precious in My eyes, you have been honoured and I have loved you; therefore I will give peoples for you, and nations in exchange for your soul.”*

Precious: Having significance.

My eyes: God’s eyes.

Honoured: Israel has been honoured throughout the ages because of the call that God has placed upon her.

Nations in exchange for your soul: When we look at the nations of the world there is a priority. God has a preference for Israel. This is because Israel is the vessel that God has used to carry out His plans and purposes in this world – a purpose to bless the world. The question is: will the nations recognise this priority? Throughout the ages the nations have hated and persecuted Israel (This is very similar to the account of Joseph in Genesis 37-47).

Verse 5: *“Do not fear, with you am I. From the east I will bring your seed, and from the west I will gather you.”*

With you: Textually this is the phrase that is emphasised within this sentence. What is emphasised is that God is with Israel.

From the east I will bring your seed, and from the west I will gather you: Throughout the prophets we can be assured of this promise...God will bring His people back to the land of Israel. From 1948, after about 2000 years of exile, God is doing exactly this – in our day! This regathering of the people to the land of Israel manifests that God is faithful and that He is at work. It reveals to us that the covenants that God has with Israel and with David (regarding the Messiah) are still relevant.

Verse 6: *“I will say to the north, ‘Give’ and to the south, ‘Do not close them in’. I have brought My sons from afar, and My daughters from the ends of the earth.”*

I will say: This speaks of God’s proclamation.

Give: Give up the people. Allow them to go back to the land of Israel.

My sons...My daughters: God is not going to forget any. He is going to show Himself perfectly faithful.

Verse 7: *“Everyone who is called by My Name, and for My honour I have created him; I have formed him, even, I have made him.”*

Everyone: Every individual who responds to the Lord – Jew or Gentile.

Called by My Name: When we receive Yeshua into our lives, He places His name upon us.

Created...formed...made: God has created, formed and made Israel to be an instrument of His honour. God is going to use Israel to bring Him glory/honour. This is going to be a mighty testimony to the nations in the last days.

Verse 8: *“I brought forth a people who are blind but eyes they have, deaf, and ears are to them.”*

I brought forth a people who are blind: God did the work of redemption while we were in darkness, while we were unbelieving (Romans 5:8-9).

While we were still sinners (blind in our unbelief) God moved so that those who were faithless had the opportunity to be made faithful. Similarly, God is going to do this mighty work for Israel. Although they have physical eyes and ears, spiritually they are blind and deaf to the Word of God. This is going to change.

Verse 9: *“All the nations will be gathered together, and the peoples will be assembled. Who among them will declare this and show us former things? Who will bring out their witnesses that they may be justified; or let them hear and say, ‘It is truth?’”*

Who among them will declare this: Who among the nations are going to declare that God has not forsaken His Old Covenant people? Who among the nations is going to speak about God’s truthfulness to His Word – how He is going to move among His people, the house of Israel?

Former things: Referring to the promises of God – the promises He gave to the Patriarchs.

Bring out their witnesses: To give testimony.

Justified: Made righteous.

Verse 10: *“‘You are My witnesses,’ declares the Lord, ‘My servant whom I have chosen, on account that they will know, and they will believe Me and will understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God that was formed, and after Me there will not be.’”*

My witnesses: God wants the remnant to speak of His faithfulness, so that others can know and understand who God is.

You...My servant: Written in the plural, so this verse is now probably referring to Israel as being the servant of the Lord.

There was no God that was formed, and after Me there will not be: This speaks of the uniqueness of God. There are no other gods other than Him. Only through God can we be redeemed. There is no other way or means of redemption.

Verse 11: *“I, I, am the Lord, there is no saviour besides Me.”*

I, I: This is very emphatic.

There is no saviour besides Me: If we are going to experience salvation, and if His covenant promises are going to be a reality, He is the only One who is able to save.

Verse 12: *“I have declared it, and I will save, and I will cause to be heard, for there is none among you any foreign god. ‘You are My witnesses,’ declares the Lord, ‘That I am God.’”*

None among you: None among Israel.

Verse 13: *“Also, from that day, I am He and there is no one who can deliver from out of My hand. I act, and who will reverse it?”*

No one who can deliver from out of My hand: No one will be able to take salvation out of God’s hand.

I act, and who will reverse it: God is going to bring salvation, and no one will be able to take it away, no one will be able to remove it.

Verse 14: *“Thus said the Lord, your Redeemer, The Holy One of Israel: ‘For your sake I will send to Babylon, and bring them all down as fugitives – the Chaldeans, who lament in their ships.’”*

Note: This verse is a statement of encouragement. This was a prophecy given in Isaiah’s day, but was only fulfilled about 300 years later. The purpose is this: when people saw the faithfulness of God to fulfil this prophecy it gave them assurance and confidence to know that God was going to fulfil the rest of the prophecies in His Word that were as yet unfulfilled. This also gives us an assurance that what God has said in regard to the last days will also be faithfully fulfilled. God brought back the people from exile in Babylon in preparation for Messiah’s first coming. In the same way He is bringing the people back to the land of Israel today in preparation for His second coming.

Said: Written in the past tense, as it is a promise we can be assured of.

I will send to Babylon, and bring them all down as fugitives: This is referencing the judgment that God placed on Babylon. God judged Babylon for what they had done to the people and to the land of Israel – taking the Jewish people into exile, causing them to suffer, the destruction of the temple etc.

Bring them all down as fugitives: None of the Babylonians in Babylon are going to escape. This punishment is going to affect all of them.

Chaldeans: Another name for the Babylonians

Lament: This is a word for shouting, lamenting. Within the context this is not a word of rejoicing.

Verse 15: *“I am the Lord, your Holy One; The Creator of Israel is your King.”*

Holy: ‘Holy’ is a word that is related to the purpose of God. God is the One who fulfils His Holy purposes. He is the One who ensures that His will is done.

King: A synonym for ‘Messiah’. This is a reference to King Messiah. There is unity between the Holy One of Israel (God the Father) and His only begotten Son – King Messiah. God is working to make Israel into a Kingdom people (‘Your King’).

Your King: This term gives Israel a Kingdom hope.

CHAPTER 43

PART 2: Isaiah 43:16-28

God is not finished with Israel.

Verse 16: *“Thus said the Lord, the One who sets in the sea a way and in strong waters a path.”*

Said: The past tense tells us that this is a promise. Even though it is a future event, from God’s perspective it is as good as already done.

The One who sets in the sea a way and in strong waters a path: In the past God brought His people out of exile. We can be assured of the fact that in the future He is also going to bring them out of exile (return them to the land). This is one of the important messages of prophecy.

Sea...strong waters: Water was seen as something difficult to cross. God, however, made a path through the Red Sea so that the people could walk through it on dry ground as they made their way out of Egypt (Exodus 14). This was known as the first redemption. In the last days, God is going to again act mightily to bring the people out of the nations and place them back in the land of Israel (this is a prophecy we are seeing fulfilled in our day).

Verse 17: *“The One who brought forth the chariot and horse, the army in power all together, they were made to lie down and not to rise up, they are extinguished, they are quenched like a wick.”*

Brought forth the chariot and horse: Most commentators see this as a reference to the exodus from Egypt (Exodus 15:1).

The army in power all together: Pharaoh came out with his chariots, with his horses, with his vast and powerful army.

Quenched like a wick: God easily snuffed out this powerful army/enemy (as easily as we would blow out a candle). In the past God delivered Israel from a powerful enemy, and He is going to do this for them in the future too.

Verse 18: *“Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old.”*

Do not remember: Pay no attention to.

Former things: The things that took place in the past.

Nor consider the things of old: God did great things for Israel in the past, but they are going to be considered as insignificant in comparison to the more magnificent things He is going to do for them in the future.

Verse 19: *“Behold, I am doing something new, and now you will sprout forth. Shall you not know it? I will place in the desert a way, and in the wasteland rivers.”*

Doing: Making.

Know: This is not only speaking about knowing something intellectually but is talking about knowledge through experience.

Rivers: Water is seen here as a blessing. Water, especially in a desert or in a wasteland, satisfies. Water gives the means for life.

Verse 20: *“The beasts of the field will honour Me, the jackal and the ostrich, for I will place in the wilderness water, and rivers in the wasteland, to give drink to My people, My chosen people.”*

Note: God is going to bring salvation to Israel. He is going to do a new work. Most scholars understand that this new work is speaking about the gospel. When we accept the gospel, we can worship God in a new way.

The beasts of the field will honour Me: The beasts are going to honour God because they are going to recognise that they are benefiting from what God’s going to do for His people.

The jackal and the ostrich: The unclean animals (the Gentiles) are going to recognise and honour God.

Rivers in the wasteland: The desert places are going to become like an oasis.

Verse 21: *“This people I have formed for Myself, and My praise they will speak of.”*

My praise they will speak of: Israel (the remnant of it) are going to praise God. What God does in Israel and for Israel is going to be a blessing for the nations. Those in the nations are going to reap the benefits of God’s faithfulness to Israel. The problem is that Israel is going to be slow to recognise God’s new work – the gospel message.

Verse 22: *“Not Me you have called, Jacob, exhausted, O Israel.”*

Not Me you have called: God has always been faithful to Israel, but they have not acknowledged Him.

Exhausted: This is poetic language. God does not get tired. He who watches over Israel does not slumber or sleep. Israel, by and large, have been reluctant and have refused to accept the gospel – the new work that God has done through Messiah. This is wearisome to God.

Verse 23: *“You have not brought to Me a lamb of the burnt offerings, and you have not honored Me with your sacrifices. I have not burdened you with these sacrifices. I have not exhausted you with these fragrant offerings of frankincense.”*

You have not brought to Me a lamb: Israel rejected the new work that God had done, but they also showed a lack of commitment to the old ways. They stopped bringing their sacrifices and offerings, and they did not honour God. Israel seems unconcerned by the fact that there is no temple. They did not seem concerned about its restoration but were happy with the status quo. God is saying that it reveals to Him (and it also reveals to the nations) that Israel is not really seeking God, that Israel does not appreciate what He has done in bringing them back to the land. None of this is a surprise to God.

Verse 24: *“You have not bought for Me, with silver, sweet cane, or the fat of your sacrifices you have not saturated. But you have burdened Me with your sins, and you have exhausted Me with your iniquities.”*

The fat of your sacrifices you have not saturated: They have not given to God the abundance of the offerings that the Torah demands.

Burdened Me: Israel is not responding to the new way, but neither are they committed to the old way. Instead, they are committed to sin and iniquity. This is not a condition that only describes Israel. This insensitivity to God and the love of sin is the condition of humanity.

Verse 25: *“I, I am He, the One who blots out your transgressions on account of Myself; your sins I will not remember.”*

The One who blots out your transgressions on account of Myself: This is a clear reference to the gospel message. God's forgiveness is because of who He is. God is going to be merciful and is going to bring about salvation for the remnant of Israel - for His namesake, because of His character, because of who He is. In the same way that God is willing to wipe away the transgressions of Israel, He is willing to wipe away the transgressions of all people who respond to Him through Messiah Yeshua.

Your sins I will not remember: The promise of the New Covenant ends off with this phrase in Jeremiah 31:31-34. The fact that God will not remember our sins should be a joy to our souls. The New Covenant, in its original form, is a covenant made with the house of Judah and with the house of Israel. It is a covenant, however, that is extended to the Gentiles and all people can benefit from it.

Verse 26: *“Make mention of Me; let us contend together, state your case that you might be acquitted.”*

Make mention of Me: Remember Me.

Let us contend together: Let God and Israel think about, speak about and pass judgment of Israel’s spiritual condition together.

State your case: Israel needs to give an account to God as to why they consider themselves to be righteous, why they feel they need to be in God’s Kingdom. Good deeds, being nice to people etc...does not qualify us for the Kingdom of God. In and of ourselves we have no basis for being justified and found righteous before God. We can only enter into God’s Kingdom because of who God is and because of what He has done for us. We enter based on God’s merit and not based on our own.

Verse 27: *“Your first father was a sinner, and those who recommend you are transgressors against Me.”*

First father: Adam. Adam cannot present their case before God in hopes to acquit them through human means.

Those who recommend you: No one has a good enough argument before God to acquit humans through human means. Israel considered the priests, the holy men, to be mediators between them and God. What Israel did not realise is that these mediators, sinful men themselves, could not absolve them of their guilt before God.

Verse 28: *“I will profane your holy leaders of the sanctuary; I will set for destruction Jacob, and Israel for blasphemies.”*

Note: This verse states Israel’s current condition. However, it is a verse that does not only represent Israel but represents most of the world’s population. Most people in this world are not thinking about the plans and purposes of God. Most people are selfish and are caught up with themselves. It is only when Israel (humanity) realises her sinfulness that we can expect a change to happen.

Profane: God is going to show them that the leaders that they think are holy are in fact people who are unholy, people who profane.

Holy leaders: Important religious leaders within Israel.

Destruction: Annihilation.

Profane your holy leaders: The religious leaders, the ones who were assumed to be the mediators between God and man, are full of sin and transgression. Hope is not found in them, as God has rejected them. Israel will come to a place when she realises that she needs another mediator – Messiah Yeshua. She is going to realise that this mediator is the One who was pierced for their transgressions (Zechariah 12:10).

When Israel is without hope God is going to save them and deliver them from their physical enemies (all the nations of the world that go up in the last days to battle against Israel). When they see who fights for them (Messiah Yeshua) they are going to turn to Him in faithfulness. This faith is going to deliver them from an even greater enemy – a spiritual enemy (ie sin, transgression, iniquity and death). Israel is going to find spiritual redemption. This spiritual redemption of Israel is going to bring blessing to the world. Those in the world are going to realise that God offers that same forgiveness, mercy, justification and redemption to them. God’s faithfulness to the Jews proves that He is faithful to the Gentiles.

CHAPTER 44

PART 1: Isaiah 44:1-8

Verse 1: *“And now hear, O Jacob, My servant, And Israel whom I have chosen.”*

Now: At this time. It is a word that always comes within the context of urgency and has significant implications.

Hear: This is a command. It is a word that implies the necessity to respond. We need to hear, understand and urgently respond to this revelation.

Jacob...Israel: These two words are parallel to each other. This portion of Scripture is speaking about the Jewish people – the descendants of Jacob.

My servant...whom I have chosen: These two concepts are also parallel to each other. God is revealing that the Jewish people are indeed His servants. They have been chosen, called, by God to be a blessing to the nations (Genesis 12:3). The gifts and call of God are irrevocable (Romans 11:26-29). This means that God will not cast off His people. They might fall into disobedience and rebellion, they might be thrown out of the land and into exile, but we can be assured that God is going to bring back a remnant. God is going to use Israel, especially in the last days. In the last days God is going to demonstrate His faithfulness and He is going to fulfil His covenantal obligations to Israel. In the last days God is going to be pleased with Israel. The Gentile nations, when they see God’s fidelity to the Jewish people, are going to be moved. They are going to have a greater understanding and appreciation for the One True God of Israel (Ezekiel 37:28).

Verse 2: *“Thus said the Lord your Maker and the One who formed you from the womb, who will help you: ‘Fear not, O Jacob, My servant; and you Jerushan, whom I have chosen.’”*

Formed: Fashioned

From the womb: God, in a unique way, formed and fashioned Israel from its very beginning, from its inception. God has a call and purpose for Israel. This call has not been rendered void but is still relevant. Its relevance will be manifested in the last days before the Kingdom of God is established.

Jerushan: This is another name for the Jewish people. It is a word that means ‘upright’ or ‘straight’. God, knowing the future, sees the time when Israel is going to be a straight and upright people before Him.

Jerushan, whom I have chosen: God’s choice of Israel is tied to the Abrahamic covenant.

God has chosen to use the people of Israel to be instruments of blessing to the nations of the world (one of the fulfillments of being a blessing was that the Messiah came from the house of Jacob, the Jewish people).

Verse 3: *“For I will pour out water upon the thirsty, and floods on the dry ground; I will pour out My Spirit upon your seed, and My blessing on your offspring.”*

Pour out water upon the thirsty: Many of the Christian scholars understand this to mean that there is going to be a famine of the Word of God. The world is going to be parched, thirsty, for Biblical revelation.

Floods on the dry ground: This all foreshadows the change that's coming to the world. When Israel is receiving the waters of life (through Scriptural revelation) it is going to bring about a change in the world. A physical change happens in Israel as a foretaste of a spiritual change that is coming (Luke 21:29-32).

Pour out My Spirit upon your seed: Israel is going to have a spiritual experience. Their spiritual awakening is a requirement for the Kingdom of God to be established (Luke 13:34-35).

Your offspring: Your heritage. The next generations.

Verse 4: *“They will sprout among the grass as willows along streams of water.”*

Note: This is symbolic language assuring us that a time is coming when Israel is going to come alive, spring to life, spiritually. This is good news.

Verse 5: *“There will be one who will say, ‘I am to the Lord’, and another will call in the name of Jacob, another one is going to use his hand to write ‘Unto the Lord’ and in the name of Israel he will be called.”*

I am to the Lord: I belong to the Lord.

Call in the name of Jacob: They are going to submit to God’s plans and purposes for Israel. They will desire to be a blessing and a light to the nations.

Note: This verse assures us that God is not finished with Israel.

Verse 6: *“Thus said the Lord, the King of Israel, and His Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: ‘I am the First and I am the Last; besides Me there is no God.’”*

The Lord, the King of Israel: Many scholars say that these are terms referring to God the Father.

King...Redeemer: This is a Messianic prophecy.

His Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: Messiah is the Lord of hosts.

The Lord...and His Redeemer: There is a unity between God the Father and Messiah (God the Son).

I am the First and I am the Last: This is a phrase used in Revelation 1:10-17 to speak specifically about Messiah and not about God the Father.

I am the First and I am the Last; besides Me there is no God: This speaks of the divinity of Messiah. It is a very important passage confirming that Messiah is God.

Verse 7: “*And who is like Me, the One who proclaims and declares it and arranges it unto Me? I have placed an eternal people; coming things which are coming will be declared to them.*”

Who is like Me, the One who proclaims: One of the things that's unique about God (something that only He can do) is that He only has to speak, and things become a reality (Genesis 1).

Placed: Brought into existence

Eternal people: A Kingdom people. Isaiah is speaking here of a remnant of the Jewish people.

Coming things: These are yet future things which are coming. They are going to bring about a massive change in Israel and in the world.

Coming things which are coming will be declared to them: What God has said, what has been prophesied, is going to become a reality. What God says (“let there be light”etc..) will happen (“and there was”). This coming change is no different. It is going to happen.

Verse 8: “*Do not fear, and do not be afraid. Surely since from the past times I have caused this to be heard and declared: You are My witnesses. Is there a God except for me? There is no Rock except One that I have known.*”

From the past times I have caused this to be heard: This is not new revelation. The promises that God made to Israel didn't originate in Isaiah's day. These promises go all the way back to Abraham. Throughout Jewish history God has proclaimed His promises to His people.

You are My witnesses: God (like He has used many ‘grafted-in’ Gentiles over the past 2000 years) is going to use Israel to be His witnesses - proclaimers of the truth, proclaimers of the revelation of God.

Is there a God except for me: God is uniting His uniqueness (that He's the only God) with the fact that He has a unique call upon Israel – a call that only they can fulfil.

No Rock except One: Most scholars, both Christian and Rabbinical, see this Rock as speaking about Messiah – the Rock of Israel. In the desert the people drank water from this Rock (Exodus 17:1-7). Paul tells us this Rock followed the people for 40 years in the desert.

One that I have known: This is the One that God the Father offered up.

Note: This passage speaks of God's faithfulness regarding not just the existence/the eternity of Messiah but also about the purpose/role of Messiah.

CHAPTER 44

PART 2: Isaiah 44:9-20

As we approach the last days, we need to be aware that there is going to be an increase in delusion. In other words, there is going to be greater deceit in the world (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12). More than ever, we need the council of the Holy Spirit, discernment and Biblical wisdom so that we are not deceived. An important principle we need to learn is this: if we set out to fulfil our own desires and purposes, rather than Gods, we are going to be easily deceived. Rebelliousness is an invitation for the enemy to deceive us. A rejection of Biblical truth leads to delusion and destruction.

It is only when we are committed to the will and purposes of God, when our desire is to serve God wholeheartedly, that we will receive the anointing and work of the Holy Spirit in our lives so that we will not be deceived. Idolatry (false teaching) and deceit go hand in hand.

In this next section Isaiah speaks boldly against idolatry. He reveals how foolish, illogical and deceived one has to be in order to practice it. Unfortunately, there are many false teachers who have infiltrated the body of believers today. These teachers do not believe the revelation of God and they twist the Word of God to get people to serve the enemy rather than serve God.

Verse 9: *“The ones who form a graven image, all of them are confused; their desirable things are not beneficial; they themselves are their own witnesses. They do not see, they do not know, and they will be ashamed.”*

Confused: The Hebrew word used here is part of the word used in Genesis 1:2 to describe the condition of the world. In Genesis it is translated as formless or empty – lacking God’s order. Those who practice idolatry (those who believe false teachings) find themselves confused. They lack substance and God’s design.

Their desirable things: The things they revere – their idols and statues.

Not beneficial: They do not help them and nor do they bring about any positive outcomes. If we pursue our own dreams and desires, rather than God’s will, they will not be beneficial for us.

They themselves are their own witnesses: They testify against themselves.

They will be ashamed: When we pursue what we want it leads us to being in a shameful condition before God.

Verse 10: *“Who has created God and moulded a statue which is not beneficial for him?”*

Who has created God: We are the creation of God. We cannot create Him. People who are deceived do not care about truth or reality. They think they can create their own god, a god who will wink at their sin.

Statue: Idol.

Verse 11: *“Behold all of his companions are going to be ashamed, the craftsmen they are mere men. All of them will be gathered together, they will stand; they shall fear, they shall be ashamed together.”*

All of his companions: All of his friends who do the same thing as him – those who also practice idolatry.

Mere men: They are not men of faith. They are from man – which means that they are not divine, there is nothing supernatural about them.

They will stand: Most of the Rabbinical scholars see this as a reference to them standing in judgment. God brings them all together so that He can judge them (Revelation 20:11-13).

They shall fear: When they encounter the real and true God, the God of Scripture, they are going to be afraid. The word used here speaks of excessive fear.

Ashamed: This word is repeated therefore emphasised.

Note: When we pick our will above God's will it is going to lead to the judgment of God, which is a frightful experience and leads to everlasting shame and contempt (Daniel 12:2).

Verse 12: *"The craftsman with the tongs works one in the coals, fashions it with hammers, and works it with the strength of his arms. Even so, he is hungry, and his strength fails; he drinks no water and is faint."*

Note: This verse focuses on the person who makes the idols.

Craftsman: Idol maker who works with iron.

One: Referring to the making of an idol.

His strength fails: He becomes tired.

Hungry...his strength fails...drinks no water...is faint: Those who make idols are insufficient – they wear out. They are dependant upon food and drink, they are dependant upon rest. This is not the case with God. God transcends this world and the things of this world. God is not subject to hunger or thirst. He does not get tired or lack strength. God is complete, perfect, and needs nothing.

Verse 13: *"A craftsman of wood he stretches forth a line and then marks it out with a utensil; he fashions it with a plane, He marks it out with a compass, and makes it like the pattern of a man, according to the splendour of a man, that it may remain in the house."*

Utensil: Like a pen, or something that one can write with or make marks with. God speaks and things come into being. A craftsman (idol maker) cannot do this. To make his gods he needs a set of instructions. He needs to plot and plan before he can even begin to think of cutting, forming and fashioning.

Makes it like the pattern of a man: The idol-maker cannot even come up with an original pattern. He fashions his design on what God has already created. This also is very informative in revealing to us that idolaters worship man – ie: themselves.

The splendour: The best things that a man has.

That it may remain in the house: They invest time, work and finance into creating things to keep in their own homes. They create these things for their own enjoyment. They are concerned about their own pleasure, and are not concerned about others.

Verse 14: *"He hews down cedar trees for himself, and the cypress and the oak; he fastens it for himself with the trees of the forest. He plants a pine, and the rain nourishes it."*

He: The idol maker

Hews down....trees for himself: He cuts down trees from the forest so that he can make idols out of them.

He plants a pine: He has to plant new trees (for the next generation of idol makers) to replace the trees that he has cut down. There is nothing eternal about these idols. Over time, new idols have to be made in order to replace the idols that have grown old, the idols that have worn out.

The rain nourishes it: The rain causes the tree he has planted to grow. These idol makers are dependant upon what God has already created – the forests and the rain.

Note: This speaks of the inadequacy of what the idol makers are doing, of who they are serving. Their worship is rooted in deception.

These idols give them the feelings they want to feel. They never truly submit to their idols, but the idols submit to their makers – the ones who possess them.

Verse 15: *“It shall come about to a man that he is going to burn, for he will take some of it and warm himself; yes, he kindles it and bakes bread; indeed he makes a god and bends down to it; he makes it a carved image, and falls down to it.”*

He will take some of it and warm himself: These idols were made carefully. They were costly, decorated with jewels. They were splendid and proudly displayed in the house. But when this person has a basic need (warmth) he thinks nothing to throw his idol in the fire so that he can warm himself with its wood.

He kindles it and bakes bread: This idol comes second to another necessity in life – food. This is how idol makers behave – they burn up their gods for their own well-being. The god serves him when he wants it to, but he never serves the god. His worship is all geared toward himself. This is another example of how those who worship idols and those who worship the true God differ. We are called to subject ourselves to God – to offer ourselves up as living sacrifices for Him. It is not about us, but it is all about God. This is a foreign concept to those who want their gods to be in submission to them. Idolaters do whatever suits them. If they want to bow down to their gods, they bow down to their gods. If they want to burn their gods, they burn their gods. They do whatever they want to do or whatever feels “right” to them in the moment.

Verse 16: *“Half of it he burns up with fire, half of it he uses to cook his meat; he roasts a roast and is satisfied. He even warms himself. ‘Ah, I am warm,’ he will proclaim, ‘I have seen the fire.’”*

Half of it: Half of the idol.

Ah, I am warm: The difference between the servants of God and idolaters is that we (the servants of God) do everything for Him. In idolatry the idols are ultimately used for us – so that we can be comforted, satisfied and warmed. A god that can be burnt up is no god at all. This one cannot see the logic of this as he is deceived.

I have seen the fire: The source of that fire is the idol.

Verse 17: *“And the rest of it he makes for a god, his carved image. He bows down before it and worships it, prays to it and says, ‘Save me, for you are my god.’”*

The rest of it: Whatever remains. The part that was not burnt in the fire.

Save me, for you are my god: This reasoning and request is totally illogical. The idol couldn't save itself from the fire, so how can the one who worships it expect to be saved by it? The idolater has embraced delusion. He wants a god that he can control. A god who is at his beck and call.

Verse 18: *“They do not know; they do not understand; for their eyes have been covered from seeing and their hearts from being wise.”*

Covered: This is not the word for simply shutting their eyes. It is a word that speaks of the eyes being plastered up (similar to the mixture that is mixed up and used to plaster a brick wall).

Covered from seeing and their hearts from being wise: Their behaviour has placed them in a position whereby they cannot find truth. Their eyes (perception) are blinded by idolatry (their own dreams and desires). A Christianized form of idolatry says this: God is going to give me the desires of my heart. This is a false and misleading teaching. When we submit to God (‘delight ourselves in Him’) He removes the carnal desires of our hearts, and He replaces those desires with His desires so that His desires become our desires. These desires (which first belonged to Him) are the desires that He delights to give us (Psalm 37:4).

Verse 19: *“He will not turn to his heart; nor is there knowledge nor understanding to say: ‘I have burned half of it in the fire, yes, I have also baked bread on its coals, I have roasted meat and eaten it. Shall I make the rest of it an abomination? Shall I bow down before a block of wood?’”*

He will not turn to his heart: This is an idiom meaning that he will not be brought to repentance. He has no knowledge or understanding of his need to repent so it doesn’t even cross his mind – he doesn’t even think about it.

Abomination: Idolatry is an abomination before God, and it leads to the idolaters dishonouring God.

Shall I make the rest of it an abomination? Shall I bow down before a block of wood?: These are the questions he should be thinking about and asking himself, but they are questions that do not even enter his mind.

Verse 20: *“He feeds on ashes; a deceived heart has turned him aside; his soul will not be saved, nor will he say: ‘Is there not falsehood in my right hand?’”*

Turned him aside: Moved him away from that which is holy, good or righteous to that which is unholy, ungodly and untrue.

Nor will he say: He will never acknowledge his idolatry. Isaiah warns us that idolatry moves us to a place where we will be so far away from truth that when truth is manifested to us we cannot see it and nor will we repent and acknowledge that we are living a lie/falsehood.

CHAPTER 44

PART 3: Isaiah 44:21-28

The fact that creation exists reveals to us that there has to be a Creator. Likewise, God has promised to redeem us - so if redemption exists it stands to reason that there has to be a Redeemer. The concept of a Redeemer is very prominent in Judaism, and also very prominent in the Scripture (starting in Genesis and ending in Revelation).

The Hebrew word ‘Mashiach’ and the Greek word ‘Christos’ are synonymous with our English word ‘Messiah’.

This is a word that means 'Anointed One' and is related to the One who has been anointed to be King Messiah – the King who is also the Redeemer. Without His work of redemption His Kingdom cannot be established.

There are two distinct aspects of redemption spoken about in the Bible:

- 1) Redemption involves a payment. This payment makes the outcome of redemption a possibility (1 Corinthians 6:20). This price (the work of redemption) was paid by Yeshua 2000 years ago on the cross.
- 2) Redemption involves an outcome – the establishment of God's Kingdom (the fulfilment of Messiah's work). Although this is a partial reality now for those who believe in Messiah, it will only come into full effect at the second coming of Messiah. It is only then that the Kingdom of God will be established on earth, and it is only then that the promises and blessings of God can be truly accessible and fully enjoyed.

Verse 21: *"Remember these things, O Jacob, and Israel, for My servant are you; I have formed you, A servant to Me are you, O Israel, and you will not be forgotten by Me."*

Remember these things: In the previous section Isaiah spoke about the futility and wickedness of idolatry. God wants the Jewish people to remember the futility, to remember that idolatry brings about that which is evil and that it also brings about God's judgment.

Jacob, and Israel... My servant: God is affirming that He is referring to the Jewish people by using these two terms. He affirms that the Jewish people are His servants.

You will not be forgotten by Me: God will never forget Israel. He will never forget the covenant promises He made with her. One of the promises that God gave to Israel was that He was going to use her to be His instrument of blessing to the nations, that they are going to be an instrument through which God's promises are fulfilled [ie the second coming of Messiah, and therefore the establishment of His Kingdom, is hinged on the Jewish people's response to Messiah (Matthew 23:37-39 is spoken directly to the Jewish people. 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord' are words that reveal a spiritual change that is going to take place in Israel. This spiritual change has to happen prior to the second coming of Messiah. That change is not going to come easily or quickly. That change is going to be brought about through intense suffering, troubles, persecution. Nevertheless, God is going to allow Israel to go through these hardships – Jeremiah 30:7 – to bring them to the place where they beseech God for a Messiah – someone who will save them. It is when Yeshua comes again, after Israel has cried out for Him, that the outcome of redemption will be initiated, and the Kingdom of God will be established)].

Verse 22: *"I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions, and like a cloud, your sins. Return unto Me, for I have redeemed you."*

I have blotted out...your transgressions...your sins: God reminds the people about His work of redemption. This is written in the past tense, although the work of Messiah was yet future in Isaiah's day when this was written.

As a thick cloud: A cloud does not stay a cloud for long. A cloud dissipates. It gets blown away and that exact cloud is never seen again – it disappears. God is reminding the people that, because of the work of redemption, their sins and transgressions will not stand before Him. Their sins will be forgiven.

Return unto Me: God's work of redemption has been done in full – it is complete (John 19:30). However, Israel has not yet returned to God in the completeness that He desires (Romans 11:26-27). This will only happen in the last days.

I have redeemed you: God Himself did the work of redemption. He did this through His only begotten Son (John 3:16).

Note: Although God is speaking primarily to Israel in this verse, He (who is not a respecter of persons) makes this same promise available to all of humanity. All of humanity is invited to receive God's redemption – first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles (Romans 2:9-10).

Verse 23: *“Rejoice O heavens, for the Lord has done it! Shout for joy, you lower parts of the earth. Burst forth, O mountains, shout O forest and every tree in it! For the Lord has redeemed Jacob and glorified Himself in Israel.”*

Rejoice O heavens, for the Lord has done it: Yeshua perfectly fulfilled the Father's will. He was the sinless Lamb of God, able to lay His life down as a perfect sacrifice to atone for the sins of mankind. It is through Him that we can experience redemption! This should cause us to rejoice! The Lord has done this redemption for us.

Shout for joy: Make known your happiness in a very emotion filled, loud and public way.

The Lord has redeemed Jacob: This work of redemption that God has done for Jacob is going to result in a transformation. Jacob experienced this transformation in his own life – even receiving a new name – Israel (Genesis 32:24-28).

Glorified Himself in Israel: In the last days (more than in any time throughout history) God is going to be glorified through Israel. This is an important principle: redemption allows the one who has been redeemed to glorify God. Without acknowledging and receiving the work of Messiah (our great Redeemer) in our lives, by faith, we will not be able to worship or glorify God. Redemption is a prerequisite for Godly worship - worship that God's going to be pleased with.

Verse 24: *“For thus said the Lord, your Redeemer, the One who has formed you in the womb: ‘I am the Lord, who does all, who stretches out the heavens all alone, who spreads abroad the earth by Myself.’”*

Said: Written in the past tense. This signifies a promise. Although this had not happened in Isaiah's day God had promised it so it will be a reality in the future. It is as good as done, because God has promised it.

The Lord, your Redeemer: Any scholar of the Scripture, any Rabbi, teaches that the Redeemer and the Messiah are in fact the same person. This verse, by linking the words 'Lord' and 'Redeemer' together, points very clearly to the divinity of Messiah.

Stretches out the heavens...spreads abroad the earth: Creation is mentioned here to remind us of the establishment of the Kingdom of God (the outcome of redemption). The establishment of God's Kingdom is like a second creation. The creation of this world is a reality that we currently live in. Creation is also a testimony that reminds us that if God can create the first heaven and earth, He can definitely create the New Heaven and the New Earth (Revelation 21) - a new reality, a Kingdom reality. This New Kingdom is only possible through His work of redemption.

By Myself: There is no other source but God alone.

Verse 25: *“The One who makes void the signs of the babblers, and drives sorcerer’s mad, who turns wise men backward, and makes their knowledge foolishness.”*

Note: Whatever God does is good, however God’s enemy always brings opposition against good. Satan’s chief tools that he uses are deception, deceit, falsehood or lying (father of lies). In this verse we see that God is going to defeat and destroy any concept of falsehood. He is going to show that the people mentioned below have no relationship with truth and therefore they are devoid of authority.

Babblers: Those who speak empty things. These people do not necessarily call themselves prophets, but they are people who love to tickle the ears of others with false promises, prosperity etc. Their words are empty of truth.

Sorcerer: Those that do supernatural (spiritual) things, but these supernatural enchantments are all based in evil and are all untrue/false.

Mad: This is not talking about anger but is talking about driving them crazy. God is going to show that what they've said and done is madness, it is folly, it is ridiculous and there is no truth within it.

Turns wise men backward: God is going to show their wisdom to have no significance. He is going to show that their knowledge is folly and foolish.

Verse 26: *“The One who establishes the word of His servant and the counsel of His messengers He will fulfil, who says to Jerusalem, ‘You shall be inhabited’, to the cities of Judah, ‘You shall be built up’, and ‘I will raise up her desolate places.’”*

Note: This verse contrasts with Isaiah 44:25. Those who practice falsehood are going to be shown to be empty. Those who practice and speak truth are affirmed by God.

The word: This is the message that God gave to Israel for the world – the Bible (the oracles and the revelation of God was given to Israel)

Messengers: Referring to the prophets.

Fulfil: Make complete. Make a reality.

Says to Jerusalem, ‘You shall be inhabited’: It is a prophetic truth that the Jewish people are going to resettle Jerusalem (This has been happening in a much larger way since 1968).

Judah: This area is in the southern part of Israel, around Jerusalem.

Raise up: The word used here is a word that relates to resurrection.

Desolate places: Ruins. The places that Israel’s enemies destroyed (which was part of the judgment and discipline of God against Israel because of their sins) are going to be rebuilt.

Verse 27: *“The One who says to the deep, ‘Be dry’, and ‘I will dry up your rivers.’”*

Deep: This is a word that has to do with very deep waters.

Be dry: Become arid. This is referring again to a change that God is going to bring about (Revelation 21:1).

Verse 28: *“The One who says of Cyrus, ‘He is My shepherd, and all of My delight he will fulfil, even saying to Jerusalem: ‘You shall be built,’ and to the temple, ‘Your foundation shall be laid’.”*

He is My shepherd: Cyrus responded to God's instruction. He was the one who gave the proclamation (many years after Isaiah penned this prophecy), and the government sanctioned opportunity, for the exiles to return to Judah after their exile to Babylon.

Fulfil: Complete.

Even saying to Jerusalem: ‘You shall be built’: Cyrus gave an edict for Jerusalem to be rebuilt and resettled by the exiles who returned from Babylon (Ezra 1).

The temple: A reference to God's presence being restored to Jerusalem.

In conclusion: This chapter begins with a promise. God then counsels the people not to fall into idolatry but to rely upon the truth/prophetic revelation of God. This is then followed by the assurance of the faithfulness of God. After having done the work of redemption He will bring about the outcome of redemption – the reestablishment of Jerusalem and of the temple. Ultimately all of this is being done so that the temple can be rebuilt in order that God can be worshiped in Jerusalem, in Judah and in His nation. This all testifies to God's faithfulness (and is foreshadowing the establishment of His Kingdom on earth after Yeshua's second coming).

CHAPTER 45

PART 1: Isaiah 45:1-13

Cyrus was a Persian king who allowed the Jewish people to leave Babylon and go back to Judah to resettle the land and rebuild the temple. Although Cyrus was a Gentile, He obeyed God, and was used mightily to fulfil the purposes of God. This tells us that God is free to use whomever He wants to use.

Verse 1: *“Thus said the Lord to His anointed one, to Cyrus, whom I have taken hold of his right hand – to subdue before him nations and open up the loins of kings, to open before him the double doors, so that the gates will not be shut.”*

Anointed one: Literally: Messiah. The Messiah is one who is anointed by God for a purpose - in this case a Kingdom purpose. This verse is not speaking about THE Messiah of Israel (Messiah Yeshua) but it is speaking about Cyrus – whom God anointed as king. God gave Cyrus a choice to submit to Him and His purposes, and Cyrus was wise enough to do just that.

Taken hold of: In Hebrew this is a play on words. It is also a word that means to give strength to, to strengthen. God strengthened Cyrus so that he could carry out what God wanted him to do (subdue nations, etc).

Open up the loins of kings: The loins of a person refers to waste in the physical, but Biblically it refers to a person's foundation or strength. Cyrus, by 'opening up their loins', was going to render these kings powerless.

Open before him the double doors, so that the gates will not be shut: This is poetic language that teaches us that Cyrus was going to have an impact over his empire and over other nations.

Verse 2: *“Before you I will go, and the crooked places I will straighten, and the bronze doors I will break, and iron bars I will cut.”*

Note: Any obstacle in Cyrus’s way is going to be taken care of by God. God will make straight the crooked ways before Cyrus. The things which are hard to break God is going to break for him.

Verse 3: *“And I will give to you treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, That you may know that I am the Lord, the One who calls you by name, the God of Israel.”*

Treasures of darkness: The treasures of this world. God promised Cyrus that he was going to benefit financially. Cyrus did not seek this prosperity, but because of his obedience to God he was going to find it.

Hidden riches of secret places: God also promised to give Cyrus the treasures in this world that no one knew about (the treasure hidden away – eg gold is hidden underground). God brought about a redistribution of wealth in Cyrus’s day. God did this because of Cyrus’s faithfulness.

The Lord, the One who calls you by name: The prophet Isaiah prophesied this prophecy around the 8th century BC. It was in the 6th century BC that the Babylonian captivity began, and it lasted for 70 years. It was only after this time when Cyrus became king and sent the people of Judah back to the land of Israel. God mentioned and called Cyrus by name at least 200 years before he was born!

Verse 4: *“On account of My servant Jacob and Israel My chosen one I have called to you by name, and I have named you, but you have not known Me.”*

My servant Jacob and Israel My chosen one: Referring to the descendants of Jacob – the Jewish people.

You have not known Me: Cyrus had not known the God of Israel. He was not aware of the purposes or the plans of God but nevertheless God chose him because of God's purpose for the Jewish people.

Verse 5: *“I am the Lord there is no other except Me. There is no other God besides Me. I have girded you, but you have not known Me.”*

Girded you: Surrounded or embraced you (Cyrus). This is speaking about God's Sovereign choice of Cyrus. God made a Sovereign choice that He was going to use the Jewish people for a particular purpose. In the same way He made a Sovereign choice that He was also going to use Cyrus for a specific purpose. Similarly, for those of us who are in a New Covenant relationship with Him, through Messiah Yeshua, we have also been Sovereignly chosen to fulfil His purpose - to be a royal priesthood, a holy nation (1 Peter 2:9). God does not have favourites (Acts 10:34-35), He uses who He wills.

He is able to use those who respond obediently to Him, but He is also able to use those who are disobedient to Him to also fulfil His purposes (eg: Judas Ischariot, Pharoah etc).

I have girded you, but you have not known Me: This simply speaks about God's ability to choose whom He wants to choose. Cyrus did not have a personal revelation of God. He was not seeking God, but God revealed Himself, and His purposes, to Cyrus and Cyrus had a choice to obey or to disobey God.

Verse 6: *“On account that they should know from the rising of the sun until its setting, for there is nothing beside Me, I am the Lord, there is no other.”*

The rising of the sun until its setting: Referring to all of the people from the east to the west.

Nothing: Zero

There is nothing beside Me: This does not mean, as some have incorrectly concluded, that everything is God (pantheism etc). Creation being the Creator is heresy. This just means that God is the only God. There are no other gods. He stands alone.

Verse 7: *“I form light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil. I am the Lord, the One who does all of these.”*

I...create evil: It does not say that God does evil but that He creates it. This is a problematic phrase for many people. We should understand it in this way: God, who does nothing wrong, created this world with the ability to choose. There is right and wrong in this world. God spoke into the darkness and formed light (Genesis 1:2). Without darkness, light would not exist. By ordering light to come forth, God made a distinction between light and darkness. In the same way, in the beginning, the earth was filled with chaos (void and empty). God spoke peace and order into this chaos, thereby also making a distinction between peace and evil/calamity. Darkness and chaos used to exist without their “counterpart” (before the creation of the world), but in our dispensation one cannot exist without the other. In the New Jerusalem this will no longer be the case - darkness (and chaos/evil) will no longer exist (Revelation 22:5).

God creates all things and within His creation is choice – a necessity to choose. All people, saved and unsaved, make decisions every single day. These decisions have very real (and many have eternal) consequences.

Note: For there to be love, worship and obedience there has to be free will and choice (right and wrong). Choice, in relationship to free will, is so important. Even though we are born spiritually dead in our trespasses and sin, God has equipped all men (women) with a conscience through which we can know a degree of right and wrong (even an unbeliever believes that lying and stealing are not right) and through which some might come to know Him (Romans 1:18-20). In this life every single human being encounters some degree of revelation of God. It is through our conscience that we have a degree of understanding of spiritual things before we are born again (Romans 8:9, Romans 2:14-1).

Verse 8: *“The heavens sprinkle up above, and the skies pour out righteousness, and the earth is going to open up and produce the fruitfulness of salvation, and righteousness is going to spring up together, because I the Lord have created it.”*

Note: This is a very poetic description of the change that God is going to bring about in this earth. Currently we live in a very evil world, but this is going to change.

The heavens sprinkle up above, and the skies pour out righteousness: This speaks of God being at work, He is moving and working in this world. God’s activity in the heavens impacts this world.

The fruitfulness of salvation, and righteousness is going to spring up: God’s “rain” produces fruit – this fruit is called salvation. When people are saved righteousness closely follows.

I the Lord have created it: God is the Creator.

Verse 9: *“Woe to the one who contends with his Maker, the potsherd with the shards of the earth. Would the clay say to its maker, ‘Why have you done this?’. Or would your handiwork say, ‘He has no hands?’”*

Note: The next few verses speak about those who contend against God. Unlike Cyrus (who submitted to God), these people make a decision to disobey God.

Woe: A word that means how awful it is going to be for these people if they do not repent.

Contend: To be at odds with. These people are working against God. When we do not submit to God it means that we are rebelling/contending against Him.

Potsherd: A broken piece of ceramic material.

A potsherd with the shards of the earth: It does not accomplish anything (it serves no purpose) to take broken pieces of pottery and try to add them or stick them together with other (different) broken pieces of pottery. This is an idiom to say that to contend with God is futile - it serves no purpose and does not produce anything usable.

Would the clay say to its maker, ‘Why have you done this?’: The clay is silent. It cannot give orders or ask to be made in a certain way. It is the potter who makes the decision and who forms the clay according to his will, his purpose, his desire. This question implies a negative answer.

Handiwork: Something that has been created – the product of work that has been done.

He has no hands: Does our work criticize us? No, it cannot criticise us because it does not have the ability to do so.

Note: These are all examples of how ridiculous it is for human beings to question, argue with and contend against God.

Verse 10: *“Woe to the one who says to his father, ‘Why have you begat me?’ or to his mother, ‘Why have you gone through labour?’”*

Woe: How awful it is going to be.

His father...his mother: Instead of using inanimate objects (clay, handiwork), God is now making it more personal.

Why have you begat me?... Why have you gone through labour?: A child angry with his parents for daring to give him life without first asking his permission. This person is acting in a way that is dishonourable to his parents.

Verse 11: *“Thus said the Lord, the Holy One of Israel and his Maker: ‘Will they say and ask concerning the coming things, concerning My sons? And concerning the work of My hands should you command Me?’”*

Note: The first part of this verse is written in the singular, and the second part of this verse is written in the plural. Many see this change in tense as a foreshadowing of the change to come.

Maker: God created creation. He created Israel. He created Cyrus. He created us. Nothing or no one should argue with God or question Him about what He is up to.

Say concerning the coming things: Do we have a right to challenge and to correct God about His plans of what is yet to come? God is perfect. His plans are perfect. He does not need correction.

My sons: The people of God.

Concerning the work of My hands should you command Me: Clay or pottery cannot give advice to the potter. In the same way, neither should we command or question God or His order of things. He is in control and knows what He is doing.

Verse 12: *“I have made the earth, and man upon it I have created. I have created. My hands have stretched forth the heavens, and all their host I have commanded.”*

I have made the earth, and man upon it I have created: God is assuring us that He is the Creator, and we can trust Him to be in control as He knows, better than us, what He is doing. This world (which God has created) has order to it, it has purpose attached to it.

Their host: The heavenly host (the angelic beings etc)

All their host I have commanded: We are in NO position to argue with God.

Verse 13: *“I have raised him up in righteousness, and all his ways I have straightened, He shall build My city and My exiles he will send forth, not for price nor bribe,” said the Lord of hosts.”*

Note: Most scholars believe that this verse is again speaking specifically about Cyrus.

I have raised him up: The foundation has been laid, in the verses preceding this one, that God is the Creator. He is the One who has perfect plans, and He is the One who should not be questioned or commanded. God now lays out His plan regarding Cyrus. No human being has the right to go against or thwart this plan (just like no human being has the right to question God’s plans and purposes for Israel etc). Going against God’s plans is rebellion.

Raised him up: This is similar to the word for waking someone up from their sleep. When we are asleep, we do not know what is going on around us, but when we wake up we see things differently. This is the concept being spoken of here. God moved in the life of Cyrus while he was (spiritually) fast asleep – he was oblivious to what was going on. But then God woke him up in righteousness.

Not for price nor reward: God did not pay (or bribe) Cyrus for what Cyrus did for Him, but (as we read earlier) God did bless Cyrus for his obedience. Blessing, reward, payment etc are not what motivated Cyrus to obey. Cyrus wanted to submit to God.

The Lord of hosts: This is the name of God that reminds us that God has authority, He is powerful and Sovereign. God is able to bring about the fulfillment of what He has promised.

CHAPTER 45

PART 2: Isaiah 45:14-25

God created this world perfectly. Everything He created He pronounced “good” (ie. according to His will). However, through humanity, sin entered this perfect world and has caused chaos and corruption in it. Through Messiah’s work of redemption there is going to be a restoration – God’s Kingdom is going to come, and God’s will will indeed be fulfilled.

Verse 14: *“Thus said the Lord: ‘The labour of Egypt, the merchandise of Cush, And of the Sabeans, people of stature. They will pass unto you, unto you they shall be; they shall be behind you, and they shall walk in chains. Unto you they will bow down, unto you they will pray, saying, ‘Surely with you is God, there is no other god.’”*

Cush: Ethiopia

Egypt...Cush...Sabeans: Three strong and mighty people groups from the continent of Africa.

Stature: A word of mearement. These people had a reputation. They had significance.

No other god: Referring to the false gods or idols. There is going to be a realization that it is the God of Israel who is the One and only true God. God is going to move, and He is going to bring a change to these individuals of stature, these weighty individuals of power and wealth. In the end they are going to follow after Israel, acknowledging that God is with her. Because of their commitment to the world, rather than the Kingdom, they are going to be enslaved.

Verse 15: *“Indeed, You are God, who has hidden Himself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.”*

God, who has hidden Himself: God is only found through His Word, and through creation – when people ponder and seek Him through it. In the natural, God is hidden.

Saviour: This word implies that if God does not make salvation, then there will be no salvation. He is THE Saviour – the only One who can save. Salvation is, therefore, dependant on God.

Verse 16: *“They shall be ashamed and also disgraced, all of them; together they walked in disgrace, they shall go in confusion together, the workers of idols.”*

They: Referring to the nations.

Disgrace: Shame

Idols: In modern Hebrew this is a word that speaks of a door hinge. The unique thing about a door hinge is that it allows a door to open or close. Without the hinge the door would not open and would just simply remain part of a wall. However, because of the hinge, the door can open, and a person can pass from one place to another. Idols, like a door hinge, bring about a different reality in people’s lives. People who do not want God’s reality, God’s will, create their own gods and thereby open up doors in their lives that should remain shut.

Verse 17: *“Israel has been saved in the Lord with an eternal salvation; they will not be ashamed, they will not be disgraced forever and ever.”*

Israel has been saved in the Lord: Israel's salvation is a certainty.

In the Lord: This is a phrase that speaks about a covenantal relationship.

Verse 18: *“For thus said the Lord, the Creator of the heavens. He is God. He has formed the earth; He has done it. He has established it; it was not created in vain. He formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord, there is no other.”*

Vain: This is the same word used for ‘confusion’. God did not create this earth for nothing. He did not create it for confusion. He has a purpose for it. In the end this earth is going to manifest the intent and purposes of God as He establishes His Kingdom on it. God's Kingdom is going to bring about the fulfillment of His purposes.

He formed it to be inhabited: This is God’s purpose for this earth – for people to dwell in it.

No other (gods): Idols. False gods. These do not have any ability and therefore cannot bring about any change whatsoever.

Verse 19: *“Not in secret have I spoken. In a place of the land of darkness, I have not said to the seed of Jacob, ‘Seek Me in vain’. I am the Lord, the One who speak righteousness. I declare the upright things.”*

Seek Me: God wants us to seek Him so that we can know His truth, so that we can understand His plans and purposes and can participate with Him in what He is doing.

Vain: The same word for ‘confusion’. God is not the author of confusion.

Verse 20: *“Be gathered and come and present together, refugees of the nations. They do not know, these ones who carry their idols of wood and pray to a god that will not save.”*

Be gathered and come and present together: God is demanding them to take action.

Refugees of the nations: God is speaking here to the seed of Jacob scattered throughout the nations of the world. This verse foreshadows a great redemption and regathering of Israel that is going to happen. In the last days, God is going to call the seed of Jacob (the Jewish people) out of the nations, and He will return them to the land of Israel. This is going to be a greater miracle than the redemption and exodus from Egypt (Jeremiah 16:14-15). Although this is a verse that relates primarily to the Jewish people, it has implications for the nations (are the nations going to support this or work against it? Are the nations going to rebel at what takes place, or will they submit to God’s plan? Etc).

They: Referring to the nations. God makes a distinction between the refugees of the nations (ie the Jewish people) and those who worship idols (ie those who do not worship God – they want their own will rather than God’s will).

Carry their idols: They carry around their own spiritual baggage.

Pray to a god that will not save: They want a god that they can control and command, a god who will do whatever they say. They effectively want a god who is an ‘errand boy’ for them – at their beck and call.

Verse 21: *“Declare and present, even take counsel altogether. Who has caused this to be heard from before that it has been declared? Surely it is I, the Lord, and there is no other god except Me, a righteous God and Saviour. There is none other besides Me.”*

Declare and present, even take counsel altogether: God is speaking to all of humanity here. He wants all of humanity to respond to, to answer, after taking counsel together, the questions He puts forth here.

Before: Long ago. Ancient times.

It: God’s final plan of redemption. This is one of the most significant prophetic events in the last days and it is an event we see in motion even now (this regathering of the Jewish people to Israel – Matthew 24:31).

Righteous God...Saviour: Righteousness and salvation go together. God's saving power is given to us so that we can behave righteously. It is not righteous conduct that saves us, but righteousness follows salvation (salvation does not follow righteousness).

Verse 22: *“Turn unto Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth. For I am God and there is no other.”*

Be saved, all the ends of the earth: Salvation is not exclusive. It is available for anyone who responds to it. God’s call for salvation is very inclusive and it is a call that has gone to the ends of the earth. God does not desire for even one person to be lost, but He desires all to come to repentance.

I am God and there is no other: Repetition emphasises.

Verse 23: *“In Myself I have sworn; it has gone forth from My mouth righteousness and the Word will not return. That to Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall take an oath.”*

Gone forth from My mouth righteousness: If we do not want to live righteously then we are not a candidate for salvation. Accepting salvation (the gospel) involves turning away from sin so that we can embrace that which is right.

Every knee shall bow: Philippians 2:9-11

Verse 24: *“Surely in the Lord to me He has said righteousness and power unto Him he will come. They will be ashamed, all those who are angry with Him.”*

Righteousness: This is written in the plural. It speaks about an abundant or complete righteousness...a righteousness that is overflowing.

Unto Him he will come: Those who want this righteousness and power will come unto Him.

Angry: They are angry because they do not want righteousness, they do not want the will of God, they do not want what God has promised – ie His Kingdom to come. As we move closer to God moving to bring about His righteous change most of the world are going to be angry and rebel against what He is doing. When they are receiving the punishment of their rebellion and sin (the trumpet and bowl judgments spoken of in Revelation), they will not confess their sin, nor will they repent. They will know that it is God pouring out His judgment, but they will refuse to repent as they are eternally rebellious.

Verse 25: *“In the Lord they will be made righteous and they shall praise, all the descendants of Israel.”*

In the Lord: This is a phrase that expresses a covenantal relationship.

Made righteous: Be justified. This is an eternal condition.

Note: Human beings are going to experience one of only two states eternally. Either we are going to be rebellious and experience shame (Isaiah 45:24) or we are going to repent and be made righteousness (eternally justified) and therefore experience eternal life (Isaiah 45:25, Daniel 12:2).

Praise: Those who are eternally justified are going to praise God in spirit and in truth. Their words and righteous deeds will be a testimony to others of the truth that our God is the only true God and that there is no other.

CHAPTER 46

Biblical truth is for all humanity. God called Israel uniquely, but that calling was for the benefit of all nations. God first gave His truth to Israel, but He did not want it to remain there. God intended Israel to be a light to the nations. He wanted them to be a source of illumination, revealing and teaching the truth of God to the nations so that all people would have the opportunity to respond to God and to His instructions.

Idolatry was common in the nations. God, therefore, punished the nations. Israel fell into idolatry, behaving in a similar way to the nations. God, who is not a respecter of people, punished Israel (through exile). God judges according to His time and His purposes. This is what Isaiah is revealing, and he wants Israel to understand the implications of this.

Verse 1: *“Bel has bowed down and Nebo has collapsed; their idols were on the beasts and on the cattle. Your carts were heavily loaded down with a burden that brought about exhaustion.”*

Bel...Nebo: These are two Babylonian idols. The context here is that this is a prophecy prophesying about the Babylonian empire coming to an end. The end of the Babylonian empire came about when the Medes and Persians rose up and brought judgment against the Babylonians by conquering them. Cyrus was a leader in this Medo Persian empire.

Bowed down...collapsed: These idols were not able to stand up against the judgment of God.

Beasts...cattle: Domesticated animals. What many believe is that these idols were of a specific type of animal. They did not look like gods and nor did it look like they had power, but they were symbols of creation. This kind of idolry gave a status to creation. These people bowed down to the creation rather than to the Creator.

Your carts: Referring to the Babylonian carts.

Exhaustion: They were tired/fatigued. When the joy of the Lord is our strength (when we walk with God) we mount up like we have the wings of eagles – we can run and not grow weary, walk and not faint (Isaiah 40:31). However, those who engage in idolatry become weaker and weaker.

Verse 2: *“They collapsed, they bowed down all together; they were not able to flee, for the burden and their souls into captivity went.”*

Bow down all together: This speaks of their humiliation. They were not victorious. They could not overcome the judgment that God brought upon them.

All together: In a total manner.

Burden: A word that relates to judgment.

Their souls: The souls (the very essence of who they are) of the Babylonians.

Verse 3: *“Listen to Me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, who have been upheld by Me from birth, who have been carried from the womb.”*

Note: Most scholars see the first two verses of this chapter as relating primarily to the Babylonian empire and its demise – their defeat, humiliation and going into exile. In this verse there is a change. The prophet warns the Jewish people to pay attention to what happened to Babylon. God is not a respecter of person. He sent Judah into exile because of their idolatry, and now Judah are going to see that the same type of punishment or consequence is also going to be inflicted upon Babylon for her idolatry.

The remnant of the house of Israel: Although the tribe of Judah was the dominant tribe taken into the Babylonian exile there were also some people from Israel (from the northern tribes) who were also exiled in Babylon.

Upheld by Me...carried: God helped or supported them in the midst of their burden (their judgment).

From birth...from the womb: God has watched over the nation of Israel from its very beginnings.

Verse 4: *“Unto the old I am He. And unto grey hair I have suffered. I have carried you, I have assisted you, I have supported you, I will cause you to escape.”*

Unto the old I am He: God does not change. People are young and then they get very old, but throughout that time God does not change. He stays the same.

Grey hair: Old age.

Suffered: God has carried or borne His people. We can be assured that from the womb until the time that we die God is a faithful God.

I have carried you, I have assisted you, I have supported you, I will cause you to escape: This is God’s promise and He doesn’t change. There is a history, that can be seen, that, even if the children of Israel go into exile, even though they may lose a battle, God sooner or later restores them, brings them back and renews His relationship with them.

Verse 5: *“For to whom is likened to Me, and is equal and can be compared to Me and we will be alike?”*

Note: The Israelites had a history of falling into idolatry. God wants to know which idol is similar to Him, which one would even be comparable to Him. In this verse God is challenging the people to think about who or what they are actually worshipping.

Verse 6: *“They have spread out gold from their pockets, and weigh silver in the balance; they have paid a jeweler, and he makes it a god; they have bowed down and they have worshipped.”*

Note: God is scolding them for the way that they behave. The offerings that they made to God tended to be stingy and cheap, but they were lavish in their spending on themselves and on their idols.

Verse 7: *“They carried it upon their shoulder, they carried it and they set it, in its place he stood; from its place it shall not move. Surely he will cry out to him, but he will not answer him from his trouble.”*

It: Their idol.

In its place he stood: The point is that this idol did not move from his place.

He will cry out to him: An individual will cry out to the idol – wanting its help.

He will not answer him from his trouble: This idol cannot do anything. The idol cannot respond to those who cry out to it for help. Those who worship idols have no hope.

Verse 8: *“Remember this, show yourself strong; Recall to mind, O you transgressors.”*

Remember this: God is still talking to the house of Jacob and Israel.

Show yourself strong: Many Bible translate this phrase to say ‘Be a man’ but it is a phrase that many chief commentators say means to show themselves strong, to deal with things with power, to do things as they should be done. It therefore doesn’t mean to be a man but to be the type of individual that God has created humanity to be. We need to come to our senses, do what is right (ie the will of God).

Transgressors: This term for a transgressor is the modern Hebrew for someone who is a criminal (a rebellious person). This person knows the law, but he transgresses it or rebels against it.

Recall to mind, O you transgressors: God is consistent. We can be assured that God is going to respond to disobedience. He hates disobedience and He will not tolerate it for long. There are consequences for disobedience/rebellion.

Verse 9: *“Remember the former things of old. For I am God and there is no other; I am God and there is none like Me.”*

Remember: According to the sages of Israel, when this word appears in the Bible it always has to do with covenant. We need to remember the covenant that God gave, the covenant He made with the people (us). Through the New Covenant, God’s covenant is offered to all humanity. We need to remember that God is a covenant keeping God.

The former things of old: Those things that happened long ago.

None: Zero. Nothing. There is nothing that can be compared to or that is similar to God.

Verse 10: “*Declaring from the beginning the end, the things from long ago have they not been done? Proclaim that My counsel shall stand, all My desire I will do.*”

Declaring from the beginning the end: This is something unique and it shows the uniqueness of God. God has given us counsel and insight (revelation). He has not left us to guess about what is happening around us. God has told us what is going to happen at the end of this age - judgment. Many individuals teach that this world is going to get better and that believers are going to have a major impact in this world – bringing God’s will into many different segments of society. This is an unbiblical teaching. It cannot be backed up Biblically so is therefore a false teaching. God has told us that He is going to pour His wrath out on this world, and He is going to destroy it. This is what we can expect. This is the news that God has declared from the beginning.

The things from long ago have they not been done: God has been accurate in the past and He will continue to be accurate into the future.

Proclaim: This is a command.

My counsel shall stand: God’s counsel will be established.

All My desire I will do: God is going to ultimately bring about the fulfillment of His will. He is going to do this through His wrath – destroying everything that has not experienced redemption.

Verse 11: “*Call from the east a bird of prey, and from a distant land a man. His counsel surely I have spoken; surely I will bring it, I have counseled it.*”

Note: Most scholars (Christian and Jewish) see this verse as referring to the time of Cyrus.

A bird of prey: A hawk or an eagle. A majestic, powerful bird of prey. Parallelism informs us that this bird of prey is really a man.

His counsel surely I have spoken: The counsel that Cyrus received was the Lord’s counsel. It is counsel that had to do with the edict allowing the Jewish people to return to Israel, back to Jerusalem, and to rebuild the temple.

I will bring it, I have counseled it: God has said it so He will do it.

Verse 12: “*Listen to Me, you stubborn-hearted, those who are far from righteousness:*”

Listen: Hear, pay attention and respond properly.

Stubborn-hearted: This is a word that could speak of a knight – a noble individual – however, in this context, it is speaking about someone who is strong and mighty in their heart (in their thoughts). This means that they are stubborn. They are pursuing their own wills, thinking their own thoughts.

Far from righteousness: When we are stubborn, committed to what we want, we do not pay attention to God’s truth. We do not study it and we do not apply it to our lives. We do not share it with others. When we are focused on our own wills we are going to be very far away from righteousness. The Kingdom of God is related to righteousness (Matthew 6:33). As Kingdom people we are commanded to seek righteousness.

Verse 13: *“My righteousness I have brought near. It is not far away. My salvation is not going to delay. I will put in Zion salvation for Israel, My splendour.”*

My righteousness I have brought near: This is what God is promising.

My salvation is not going to delay: God’s salvation will not be late. It will come on time, as scheduled.

I will put in Zion salvation for Israel: God keeps on letting us know that He is going to cause a change to happen in Israel. Salvation seems so distant for Israel, but a change is coming whereby God will bring this salvation close for them.

CHAPTER 47

A very important doctrine in the Scripture is the Sovereignty of God. This does not mean that everything that happens in this world or in our lives is the will of God. Sin is always a violation of God’s will. God does not do evil and nor does He encourage us to do evil. God does not need evil to be done for His will to be fulfilled. However, although God does not cause evil, He is free to use it for His glory and to fulfil His will. This is what we see in regard to Babylon. God used Babylon as His instrument to inflict punishment on Judah, but then (once that punishment had been completed) God, because Babylon was evil, inflicted judgment on Babylon. God did not cause or incite Nebuchadnezzar to destroy Jerusalem and the temple. Nebuchadnezzar’s motivation to take Judah into exile was not because he was in submission to God, but he did what he did because of the evil in his heart. God, being free to even use evil, used Nebuchadnezzar as an instrument to fulfil His will. However, because of their wickedness God ultimately punished Babylon.

Verse 1: *“Go down and sit upon the dust and in ashes, O virgin daughter of Babylon. Sit upon the ground, there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans. For you shall no more be called tender and delicate.”*

Go down and sit: This is a command that God is giving to Babylon. These words are an example of the defeat and shame of the Babylonian empire.

Dust and in ashes: For those who show faith, sitting in the dust and ashes is a sign of repentance. Here, however, it is a sign of humiliation.

Virgin daughter of Babylon: This is how Babylon portrays herself - as clean, as pure, as good. We should not be deceived by this (when the final Babylonian empire emerges – Revelation 18).

There is no throne: Their rule will come to an end. The Medes and Persians conquered the Babylonians and moved their empire to another capital.

Tender and delicate: Babylon will no longer be seen as soft, delightful, precious.

Verse 2: *“Take a millstone and grind flour, remove your veil, take off your skirt, uncover your thigh, you will pass through the rivers.”*

Take a millstone and grind flour: This is speaking about labour. Babylon was going to have to work, rather than benefitting from the enslavement of others who had served them.

Veil: Some translators translate this word to mean ‘hair’.

Remove...take off...uncover: What the Babylonians did to the Jewish people (exposed their bodies and humiliated them) when they took them into exile is what is going to happen to the Babylonians when they are taken into exile. The measure that they used will be measured against them (Matthew 7:2)

Pass through the rivers: The Babylonians were going to be taken away to far off places – cross many rivers on their way to captivity.

Verse 3: *“Your nakedness shall be exposed, and your shame will be seen; I will take vengeance, and I will not arbitrate with a man.”*

Shame: Disgrace.

I will not arbitrate with a man: No plans will be made for Babylon. No matter who prays for Babylon, or who intercedes for her, God will not receive or listen to these prayers or requests on her behalf.

Verse 4: *“Our Redeemer is the Lord of hosts, His name: the Holy One of Israel.”*

Note: As God brings an end to the Babylonian empire there is going to be a change. Babylon's judgment brings about a redemptive change. God again renews His covenantal relationship with Israel.

Holy One of Israel: This term clues us into the fact that God is going to sanctify Israel and she will eventually begin to do the will of the Lord, she is going to fulfil His purposes.

Verse 5: *“Sit in silence, enter into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans; for you will not continue to be called the Lady of kingdoms.”*

Note: God continues pronouncing Babylon's judgment.

The Lady of kingdoms: Babylon had ruled over many kingdoms, many nations. She was seen as the leading lady of all of these nations. This, however, is all coming to an end. She will no longer be thought of in this way.

Verse 6: *“I was angry with My people, I have profaned My inheritance, and given them into your hand. You showed them no compassion; on the elderly your yoke was very heavy.”*

Note: God explains why the Babylonian captivity took place - why Nebuchadnezzar took control of Jerusalem and destroyed the city and the temple.

I have profaned My inheritance: This is what God did – something that was not according to His will from the beginning. God's will was not that Israel would be disobedient to Him. God's will was that Israel would be obedient, that they would stay away from idolatry and sin. But they did not act according to God's will.

My people...My inheritance: Parallelism demands that we recognise that God's inheritance is His people.

Your hand: The hand of the Babylonians.

Verse 7: *“And you said, ‘Forever I will be a lady,’ so that you did not set these things upon your heart, nor remember the latter end of them.”*

You said: This is what Babylon thought.

Forever I will be a lady: This was a term of honour, a term of prominence and prestige. This is how she thought of herself.

Did not set these things upon your heart: She did not pay attention.

Nor remember the latter end of them: They did not ever think about the consequences of their actions (that they were attacking the city of the God of Israel and were doing something against God’s covenant people).

Verse 8: *“Now hear this you, who have treated yourself in a luxurious manner, who dwells securely, who say in your heart, ‘I am and there is no one else besides me. I will not sit as a widow, nor shall I know the bereavement of children.’”*

Luxurious manner: The word used here is a word that speaks of precious and gentle. It comes from the Hebrew concept of adornment. She has adorned herself. She has treated herself well.

Dwells securely: She thinks that she is living in safety.

I am and there is no one else besides me: She is only consumed with herself, and she gives no thought to others. She is absent of the revelation of God.

I will not sit as a widow, nor shall I know the bereavement of children: She thinks that death will not touch her – that she will not suffer the consequences of her sin (Romans 6:23). She does not believe in the judgment of God and so she rejects it.

Verse 9: *“These two things will come upon you in a moment, in one day, the loss of children and widowhood. They shall come upon you in their fullness because of the multitude of your sorceries, for the great abundance of your enchantments.”*

The multitude of your sorceries, for the great abundance of your enchantments: Babylon behaved in the way that they did (aggressive war against Judah, destroying the temple etc) because these sorceries and enchantments were foundational to their empire. They were not under the authority of the God of Israel, but they were satanically influenced and inspired.

Multitude...great abundance: They were involved in idolatry, witchcraft and sorcery in an exceedingly great and abundant way.

Verse 10: *“And you trusted in your evil, you have said, ‘No one sees me’; your wisdom and your knowledge have warped you; and you have said in your heart, ‘I am and there is no one else besides me.’”*

Trusted in your evil: The Babylonian empire believed that in evilness (doing things contrary to the will of God) they were going to find success.

No one sees me: This is a statement of defiance against an all-knowing God. They do not believe in God, and they certainly do not believe in a God who is all powerful and who knows all things.

Warped: This is a word that literally alludes to someone who engages in mischief – someone who engages in activities which are not acceptable or appropriate. It is a word that is related to rebellion. They thought their knowledge and wisdom caused them to have a healthy perspective on things, instead it was a rebellious perspective and not healthy at all.

I am and there is no one else besides me: From their perspective it was all about themselves. They thought only of themselves and had no thought of any responsibility towards others. They did not submit to God.

Verse 11: *“Evil will come upon you that you did not know. It will rise up and fall upon you like destruction. You will not have atonement. This holocaust shall come upon you quickly, which you shall not know.”*

Know: Something that they have never experienced before.

Destruction: A word of great loss or catastrophe. Intense suffering. There is going to be nothing that they can do to alleviate, avoid or not experience this judgment.

This holocaust shall come upon you quickly, which you shall not know: This is going to be far bigger and far worse than they could ever imagine. It is going to happen to them because they dared to go up to Jerusalem for war.

Verse 12: *“Stand in the midst of your enchantments and in the abundance of your sorcery, this in which you have toiled from your youth. Perhaps you will be able to profit, perhaps you will prevail.”*

Toiled: Worked extremely hard on.

From your youth: Babylon was not doing something out of character. They were operating in the same way they had since their youth. From Babylon’s origin they were about sorcery, enchantment, witchcraft etc. It was through these things that they built their empire.

Perhaps you will be able to profit, perhaps you will prevail: God is kind of mocking them, saying that perhaps they will be able to be successful.

Verse 13: *“You have been wearied in the multitude of your counsels. They shall stand but they will not save you - the astrologers, the stargazers and the monthly prognosticators - from these things that shall come upon you.”*

Wearied: Worn out. Idolatry wears people out. In contrast, faith (walking in obedience to the will of God) empowers and rejuvenates people (Isaiah 40:31).

The multitude of your counsels: They are always looking for advice from other people. People’s opinions and counsels differ. It is wearisome to constantly have to think about the way forward when there is such a conflict of opinions. They do not receive any clear messages on what to do as they watch their empire become weak and frail. There is disunity in opinion.

The astrologers, the stargazers and the monthly prognosticators: These are going to be a source of confusion to those who are trying to make decisions.

Verse 14: *“Behold they shall be as stubble, and fire will burn them. They will not be saved from the hand of the flame; and the coal will not warm them, nor are they going to be able to sit before an ember.”*

Note: This verse tells us that there is no future for this empire. God is going to destroy it. No good will come out of this judgment – not even an ember of good by which they could have warmed themselves. No comfort will be left to them. This is a contrast to the discipline/judgment that God metes out to His people. A remnant (a tiny ember) always survives. Restoration always takes place after judgment. This is not so for the enemies of God post judgment.

Verse 15: *“Thus they shall be to you, all those who you toiled with, merchants from your youth; each man shall be led astray to his quarter. There is no Saviour to them.”*

Note: This verse strongly condemns Babylon for being engaged in sorcery, witchcraft and enchantments.

Merchants from your youth: There is a difference of opinion about this phrase.

1. Some scholars say this is referring to the sorcerers and wizards etc who did everything for a payment. The Babylonians were only too willing to pay them to get what they thought was help and ‘good’ counsel. Babylon had a history of this type of activity.
2. Another way to understand it is that Babylon was like a merchant – others paid Babylon for her wares, and this is how she became wealthy and powerful. All that they built up, however, God brought down.

Each man shall be led astray to his quarter: Individuals are going to be individually separated and are going to have to give individual account to God of how they lived their lives. Sorcery and enchantment lead them to a specific place where judgment is going to fall.

Led astray: To travel in a wrong and dangerous direction.

There is no Saviour to them: Those who have chosen the occult, sorcery etc will have no help or deliverance. There is no salvation for them but only judgment. This judgment is a very lonely judgment – each individual experiencing it on their own for eternity. It is a place of darkness. It is a place where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (gnashing of teeth is an idiom for great pain).

CHAPTER 48

There is one God, but He has revealed Himself as God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Three persons, One God. God is perfect. What He has said in the past needs no amending. What He has told us, in the past, about the future is going to happen. Those who are wise rely on God’s Word and they apply it to their lives, thereby manifesting righteousness (righteous living). Unfortunately, this has not yet happened, on a National scale, with the house of Israel. God has been displeased with His people. God is faithful, however, and so is going to do a new thing. New things relate to Kingdom things.

This chapter does a marvelous ‘job’ of telling us Israel's history as well as her future.

Verse 1: *“Hear this, O house of Jacob, the ones who are called by the name ‘Israel’, and from the waters of Judah they went forth; those who swear by the name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth nor in righteousness.”*

Hear this: When this word stands by itself it speaks about something of great importance.

Jacob: In Hebrew this is a word that means: one who will follow after or take hold of, one who will pursue (Genesis 25:26 – Jacob was called Jacob because he was holding on to Esau’s heel – even from birth jostling for the desired position of firstborn).

Jacob...Israel: One of the primary characteristics of Hebrew poetry is parallelism. This is another example of it. Israel is a Kingdom word. It is a word that relates to prevailing, overcoming, taking hold of victory (Genesis 32:26-28). Jacob pursued the things of God and because of this he experienced victory. Throughout history, the Jewish people (Jacob’s seed) has struggled with God, but God is going to allow them to ultimately overcome. It is at this time that the Kingdom will be established.

Waters: Related to blessing.

Judah: This is a word for praising God. The ‘waters of Judah’ refer to the blessings that come from praising God.

Swear: They take an oath saying that God is dependable, that they trust fully in Him.

Swear...make mention: These are good things to do, but there is a problem. Although they are proclaiming the right things in reality they are not connected to it, their lives are not reflecting the right that they are proclaiming.

Not in truth nor in righteousness: There is a link between truth and righteousness. If we want to live righteously, we have to live according to the (whole) truth of the Word of God. Israel was not doing this.

Verse 2: *“For from the holy city they are called, and concerning the God of Israel they rely. The Lord of hosts is His name.”*

Note: They speak a good game, saying they rely on the Lord etc... but this truth is not evident in their lives.

The Lord of hosts: This is a name that speaks about the mightiness of God. He is Sovereign and has the authority to back up and bring about what He has said.

Verse 3: *“I have declared the former things from the beginning, they went forth from My mouth and I caused them to be heard. Suddenly I did (them) and they came to pass.”*

The former things: The things which have already happened.

Note: All of this is revealing to us that God is trustworthy. What He has said He will do. We can rely on Him. He is always right.

Verse 4: *“From the beginning I have known that you were obstinate, and your neck was an iron tendon, and your forehead bronze.”*

Obstinate: Hard or difficult. Stubborn.

Your neck was an iron tendon: Stiff-necked. They do not bow, they do not submit, they are not humble, but they walk in pride. None of this surprised God.

Forehead bronze: Hard-headed. They keep going, no matter what.

Verse 5: *“I have told you from a long time ago, before it came to pass I caused you to hear it, lest you should say, ‘My idol has done them, and my carved image and my moulded image have commanded them.’”*

I have told you: God is all-knowing. He declared things before they were.

My idol has done them: People who practice idolatry do not pay attention to God. They credit their idols with things they should be crediting God with.

Verse 6: *“You have heard and you have seen all of it and you surely would declare it. I have caused you to hear new things from this time, even hidden things, and you did not know them.”*

Seen: Had a vision of. They have visualized it.

Hear new things: They credit the former things that had been done to their idols, so now God is going to declare new, different, things to them so they will see that it is in fact God who is the One who brings the things about. The word ‘new’ relates to those things that have implications to the Kingdom of God.

Hidden things: This is not the Hebrew word for ‘hidden’. It is a word for keeping or for guarding. If something is kept or guarded it means that they are valuable things, important things. God wants to reveal new things to the people. He has not been hiding these things, but He has been keeping watch over them, guarding them.

You did not know them: Because these things have been guarded by God the (old covenant) people did not know about them.

Verse 7: *“They are created now and not from the beginning; and before this day you have not heard them, lest you should say, ‘Behold, I knew them.’”*

They are created now: God did not create these new things in the past but had created them ‘recently’ – literally: ‘just a day ago’.

Behold, I knew them: If God had told them these plans earlier, they would have stubbornly taken credit for them, or would say that they had received the revelation from their idols. God is showing that there is a gap, a separation, between Him and His people. He is not pleased with this.

Verse 8: *“Also you did not hear, also you did not know, also from the past your ear was not open. For I knew that they were treacherous and a transgressor from the womb.”*

Also from the past your ear was not open: Their ears were not open in the past and their ears are not open today. They are not yet pursuing the things of God like Jacob went after them.

Treacherous: This is a word for committing treason. It is a strong word for expressing infidelity to a covenantal relationship. God did not choose Israel because they were the best, or the most faithful, or the most reliable. They were not those things. God chose them because of His choice.

Transgressor: This is the word that means ‘criminal’ in Modern Hebrew.

Verse 9: *“On account of My name I will lengthen My anger, and My praise is going to be restrained from you, so that I do not cut you off.”*

Lengthen My anger: God is going to delay His anger. When God delays His anger it means that He is giving people time, an opportunity to repent and to find salvation through Messiah.

My praise is going to be restrained from you: God is not going to destroy them, but He will also not have praise for them.

I do not cut you off: God is not going to cut off the Jewish people entirely. God is going to work with a remnant of the Jewish people (just as He has with the faithful remnant of the nations).

Verse 10: *“Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver. I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.”*

You: Referring to the remnant

Tested you in the furnace of affliction: God is going to use affliction to bring about a redemptive change in the people.

Verse 11: *“On account of Me, on account of Me, I will do it. For how will he profane My glory and to another I will not give it.”*

On account of Me...I will do it: God, Himself, is going to do something new (‘new’ relates to the Kingdom).

Note: God is saying that His glory is not going to be profaned. This means that God has manifested His choice. He is not going to choose another to carry out the plans He set aside for Israel to carry out (Romans 11:29). Israel has broken covenant with God. God however is going to redeem this covenant and redemption is going to reunite the people to the covenant and, in doing so, also to God.

Verse 12: *“Listen to Me, O Jacob, and Israel the one who has been called by Me. For I am He, I am the First, even I am the Last.”*

I am the First, even I am the Last: This is how Yeshua identified Himself in Revelation 1:11. It is an expression that means that God is everything. There is nothing or no one more important than God. If we do not make Him the priority of every aspect of our lives, if we do not bring everything under His authority, then we are foolish, stubborn and obstinate.

Verse 13: *“But My hand founded the earth, and My right hand measured the heavens. I call unto them and they stand all together.”*

Founded: Established

Measured: Stretched out. God laid out the heavens and then, like as with a measuring tape, He measured them out according to the pattern and dimensions He desired them to be.

Them: God’s creation. Every aspect of God's creation obeys Him, except one – humanity.

They stand all together: Creation stands to attention, it is responsive, when the Lord calls to it. This is what humanity should also do.

Verse 14: *“Assemble yourselves, all of you, and hear. Whom among them will speak these things, for the Lord loves Him. He will do His delight against Babylon, and His arm against the Chaldeans.”*

Hear: We need to listen

He will do His delight against Babylon: Most scholars agree that this is speaking about God (the Father).

Do His delight: Punish them.

Arm: This is also the word that means “seed” ie offspring – God’s Son (This is the One that this verse is alluding to when it says the Lord loves Him – see Matthew 3:17). This same word is used during Passover to refer to the Passover lamb.

His arm against the Chaldeans: Yeshua (the Son) is going to punish the Chaldeans/Babylonians – the Father and the Son have the same purpose.

Verse 15: *“I have spoken, even I have called Him, and I will bring Him and His way will succeed.”*

Him: It will become clearer that this is referring to the Redeemer, the Messiah. Messiah is the One who is going to bring about these new things - things that they didn't know from the beginning, but God is revealing them at this time.

Verse 16: *“Come near to Me and listen to this. Not at the beginning did the people know this. In secret I have spoken. And now I, the Lord God and His Spirit have sent Me.”*

The Lord God and His Spirit have sent Me: The triune God. God the Father and God the Holy Spirit sent God the Son to us as our Redeemer and Messiah. It is He, the Messiah, who is going to bring about the new things in this world.

Verse 17: *“Thus said the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy one of Israel. I, the Lord your God, who am I? I am your Teacher for that which is going to benefit you, your Guide in the way that you should go.”*

Redeemer: A Redeemer brings redemption. Judaism boldly proclaims, based upon Scripture, that the Redeemer is Messiah - the One who's going to do new things, Kingdom things. The use of this word in the text sets this passage within a Messianic context.

Your Guide in the way that you should go: God is going to work and move in such a way so that He can reveal to us the things that we need in order to experience redemption.

Verse 18: *“If only you would have listened to My commandments; as a river would have been your peace and your righteousness as the waves of the sea.”*

Listened to My commandments: If Israel had listened to and responded to the truth of God they would not have gone through the furnace of affliction. Disobedience caused them to go through the fire.

As a river...as the waves of the sea: We cannot stop the river from flowing, nor can we stop the waves. This is a principle that God has put into practice in the natural world, but this same principle holds true spiritually. What God has set in place cannot be stopped or halted.

Verse 19: *“And it shall come about as the sand shall be your seed, and your offspring shall be from your bodies as grains, and it will not be cut off and it will not be destroyed. His name is before Me.*

As the sand...as grains: God promises wonderful things to come about in the end, through the redemption by Messiah.

His name is before Me: God is going to bring about the outcome of redemption. God is going to be successful in bringing about redemption, therefore so too the people.

Verse 20: *“Come out from Babylon, flee from the Chaldeans. With the voice of shouts of joy declare it, cause to be heard all of this to go forth from the ends of the earth. And they shall say: ‘The Lord has redeemed His servant Jacob!’”*

Note: This verse can help us in our understanding of the book of Revelation. It is a verse that is both parallel and equal to what is revealed in Revelation.

Come out from Babylon: After seventy years of captivity, God wanted the people to leave Babylon and go back to Judah. In the same way, in Revelation, God calls for His people to flee from Babylon – to not live in the consequences of idolatry, to not dwell in a place where there is no truth or righteousness (Revelation 18:2-8).

Verse 21: *“And they are not going to be thirsty, and in the arid land He led them. Water from a rock He gave to them, and He split the rock and gushed forth waters.”*

Water: Biblically water is seen as a blessing.

Rock: 1 Corinthians 10:4. Another textual clue alluding to Messiah, our Redeemer.

Split the rock: The rock – Messiah – was struck. He was crucified. It was this striking that caused the blessings of God to be able to flow, to gush forth to His New Covenant people. These blessings are an outcome of redemption.

Verse 22: *“‘There is no peace’, said the Lord, for the wicked ones.”*

Wicked: The ones who reject the redemption of God - ie the ones who reject Messiah Yeshua as the only means for salvation. For these people there will be no peace (peace is an outcome of the fulfilment of God’s will. These people do not fulfil God’s will so they will never experience peace).

CHAPTER 49

PART 1: Isaiah 49:1-13

Within Isaiah's prophecy there is a great debate – who is the servant of the Lord? There are only two possible answers for this question:

1. Sometimes Isaiah is speaking about Messiah.
2. But sometimes he is clearly referencing the Jewish people - those whom God is going to use, from the descendants of Jacob, to bring about the conclusion of this world and establish His Kingdom.

What we can glean from this is that there is a unique and intimate relationship between Israel and Messiah. For example: Hosea 11:1 speaks of God calling Israel out of Egypt (the exodus), however, in the New Testament (Matthew 2:15), this verse is also tied to Messiah. In one sense the context is the Jewish people, but in the New Testament it is clearly a reference to Messiah – whose parents took him to Egypt to save Him from King Herod who was hunting Him. In the New covenant and in the Old covenant the servant of the Lord relates to both Israel and the Messiah. We need to bear this in mind throughout this next chapter.

Verse 1: *“Hear, O islands, me; pay attention and listen all nations from afar. For the Lord from the womb has called me, from the intestines of my mother He has made mention of my name.”*

Me: Within the context of this chapter, we are going to find out who this ‘me’ is that we are called to hear, that we are called to pay attention to.

Hear: Many Bibles translate this word as ‘listen’ but it is a word that means more than to just listen. It is a word that demands a response.

Islands: Those who are far away, those whom the world has forgotten. God has not forgotten them. He knows them, loves them and wants to redeem them.

Intestines: Another word that relates to womb.

Verse 2: *“He has set my mouth as a sharp sword; in the shadow of His hands He has hidden me, He has set me as a polished arrow. In His quiver He has hidden me.”*

He: God

Polished: Straight, accurate.

He has hidden me: Who the ‘me’ is is still a mystery to us in this verse. These verses are creating an anticipation within the reader for the revelation of God. Who is God speaking about? Who do we need to listen to and hear? Who has God set apart?

Verse 3: *“For He said unto me: ‘My servant are you, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.’”*

He said unto me: Whoever this one is, God spoke to Him.

My servant are you, O Israel: This makes it pretty clear that, up to this point, God is speaking about Israel. Paul points out in Romans 3:1-2 that the Jewish people were the ones who were given the very oracles (Word – specifically the prophetic message, His revelation) of God.

As such, we are supposed to pay attention to or hear the Word that 'Israel' penned down (under the direction of the Holy Spirit – 2 Timothy 3:16). God used Israel as His servants by giving them His revelation so that they could share it with the world.

In whom I will be glorified: God has a plan, and part of that plan is to be glorified through Israel. Israel is indeed going to be a servant of the Lord, bringing glory unto Him.

Verse 4: *"I have said: 'In vain I have labored, in emptiness and in vanity all my power has been brought to an end. Indeed, My judgment is with the Lord, and my activity is with my God.'"*

Vanity: Futility

In vain I have labored: God has done some mighty things through Israel, but when they look at things from their own perspective they do not see the change that God has brought about through them.

Vain... emptiness...vanity: Nothing that God has done through Israel is empty or futile (from His perspective). It may seem like it is, from our human perspective, but this is going to be shown to not be the case, that is not the reality.

Judgment: This is not the word for 'reward' but is the literal word for judgment. The thinking behind the judgment of the saints is that we are judged for reward, but the word 'reward' is implied and, to portray this verse accurately and honestly, the word 'reward' should not be used here.

Activity: Work or action

My activity is with my God: This one is doing that which is going to bring about God's purpose - God's judgment. Judgment is related to the authority of God - God's authority to work something out to the conclusion that He desires. Israel is going to play a part in this.

Verse 5: *"And now said the Lord who formed me from the womb to be His servant, to restore Jacob unto Him, and Israel to Him to be gathered up. I have been glorified in the eyes of the Lord, and my God was my strength."*

Formed me from the womb: Israel (Isaiah 49:1).

To restore Jacob unto Him: We now have a 'problem'. Isaiah 49:3 clearly identified the 'servant of the Lord' as Israel...

To restore Jacob unto Him, and Israel to Him to be gathered up: This is the task and purpose of the servant of the Lord, but this is clearly a task that Israel itself cannot fulfil. Israel cannot restore Israel to itself. In the introduction we spoke of Israel and the Messiah being tied together. Here we see another classic example of this. This, now, is a clear reference to Messiah as the servant of the Lord. This leads us to conclude that in the last days the servant is going to be both Messiah and (the remnant of) Israel. The two are going to function together. It is going to be Messiah's work that causes the remnant of Israel to, at the end, behave faithfully to do God's will.

I have been glorified in the eyes of the Lord, and my God was my strength: It is not clear if this is speaking about Israel or about the Messiah. It seems now to be clearly a Messianic prophecy - having to do with Messiah's work to Israel, but we saw earlier that it is clearly Israel. We do not need to see conflict in this. God, in His Sovereignty, has chosen Israel to be His servant, but God has also chosen Messiah to be His Servant.

This is the key: In the end, Messiah and Israel will have a mutual task – to behave in a way that relates to the Kingdom of God and to bring glory to God.

Verse 6: *“And He said, ‘Is it too light that you should be unto Me a servant – to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel: I have set you as a light unto the nations, and to be My salvation unto the ends of the earth.’”*

Too light: Too easy, too insignificant.

To raise up...to restore: This is the purpose/work for this servant – to raise up and to establish the tribes of Israel. This One (this Servant) is ministering to, blessing, restoring and having an effect on Israel. It is not speaking of Israel affecting Israel but must be seen as Messiah affecting Israel. To simply raise up and restore Israel is not enough. God promised Abraham (Genesis 12:3) that his descendants would be a blessing to all the families of the world (the Gentiles). Therefore, the Jewish people must be raised up, restored and also fulfil God’s promise of being the blessing that God promised Abraham they would be. God’s promises and Kingdom do not only include the remnant of Israel, but it includes the remnant of the Gentiles as well.

I have set you as a light: We see a doubling up. It is going to be Messiah that does the work and impacts both Israel and the nations, but it is the restoration of Israel (Israel doing what God has called them to do, Israel doing their work) that is going to be a light (a testimony) to the nations.

Verse 7: *“Thus said the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, His Holy One: to be despised by man, and to be abhorred by the nations, a Servant to rulers. Kings will see and will rise up, rulers they will bow down on account of the Lord who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel; and He has chosen you.”*

Lord...Redeemer of Israel...Holy One: Very clearly a reference to Messiah.

Holy: Set apart for a purpose.

To be despised by man...: This is part of Messiah’s purpose.

Abhorred by the nations: The nations were initially not going to respond to Messiah, but were going to reject Him.

A Servant to rulers: At the end Messiah is going to impact the rulers of this world.

Bow down: A term of worship.

He has chosen you: God the Father’s plan was to use Israel to be a blessing to the nations (Genesis 12:3). God’s plans and purposes do not change (Romans 11:29 – God’s gift and calling are irrevocable, which means that He does not recall or take back His gifts or calling). Messiah has chosen to agree with God the Father, and He will work out God’s purpose – God’s plan to bless the nations by using Israel. Israel’s rejection of Messiah caused the message of the gospel to be boldly proclaimed among the nations. Paul puts it this way in Romans 11:12...their fall was riches for the world. But Paul doesn’t stop there. Paul says if their failure led to riches how much more their fullness or their restoration? God used their failure to bless the world, but in the end God is going to use their restoration to bless the world in an even greater way than their rejection. Israel’s acceptance of the gospel message is going to bring about the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Kings and rulers are going to worship God when they see the faithfulness of God to restore (the remnant of) Israel.

Verse 8: *“Thus said the Lord: ‘In an acceptable time I have answered you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you; I have preserved you and I have given you as a covenant among the people, to establish the land and for an inheritance of the desolate inheritance.’”*

An acceptable time: In the time that God desires, in the time of His will.

Preserved: Kept.

Inherit the desolate inheritance: God is going to cause the people to rise up and receive what the enemy and the world have destroyed. This implies that there is going to be a restoration. What the enemy wanted for evil God is going to turn for good (Genesis 50:20) – God, through Messiah, is going to turn the desolate land into a delightful inheritance. This will only happen after Israel has experienced redemption.

Verse 9: *“Saying to those who are prisoners to come forth, the ones who are in darkness to be revealed upon the ways. They shall feed in all my plateaus, and their pastures on all the desolate heights.”*

The ones who are in darkness to be revealed upon the ways: They were in darkness so could not be seen, but now they are standing in a very public place - they are being revealed upon the highways.

Plateau: A flat, empty place. God is going to use those places that the world ignores or does not think of as important.

Verse 10: *“They will not be hungry anymore; they will not be thirsty. They will not be struck by heat or by the sun, for He who has mercy on them will lead them, even by the springs of water He will guide them.”*

He who has mercy: A change does not come about because of us or because of our good deeds. The change happens due to God – due to His faithfulness and mercy.

Verse 11: *“And I will make all My mountains for a road, and My pathways they will be exalted.”*

Note: God is faithful to His people. As we walk in faithfulness before Him, He makes a road for our feet and lifts up our pathways (Philippians 3:14 – the upward call of God). This is what we should be expecting.

Verse 12: *“Behold, these from a distance they will come. Behold, these from the north and from the west, these from the land of Sinim.”*

Sinim: In Modern Hebrew this is the word for China. It refers to a distant people.

Verse 13: *“Shout O heavens, rejoice O earth, break forth O mountains and shout, for the Lord has comforted His people, and will have mercy on His afflicted.”*

Shout O heavens: These changes are going to cause there to be a joyful response from the people.

Heavens...earth: When these two words are placed together in a text they should remind us of creation. There are numerous places in the Bible where God speaks about creation in regard to the Kingdom of God (which is going to be His new or second creation).

Comforted: This is a very important word – especially within a New Testament context. When Yeshua started His earthly ministry, He based Himself in a place called Capernaum (in Hebrew this is the word Kfar Nahum – which means ‘village of comfort’ – Matthew 4:13-17). God is just and holy and, as such, He judges. He does not, however, delight in judgment or wrath. Messiah, through His work, has brought comfort to His Father. Those who receive the work of Messiah no longer need to face judgment or the wrath of God. Instead of having to bring judgment or wrath God is able to extend grace, mercy and love.

Comforted...will have mercy: Comfort and mercy are parallel – they work together to bring about the fulfilment of the purposes of God. The comfort of the Lord is tied to the redemptive work of God through Messiah.

CHAPTER 49

PART 2: Isaiah 49:14-26

If we are wise, we do not make decisions based on how we see things, but we make decisions based upon the revelation of Scripture.

Verse 14: *“Zion will say, ‘God has forsaken me, and my Lord has forgotten me.’”*

Zion: Jerusalem in her redemptive/new/changed state. The name of Jerusalem in her Kingdom condition. This is something that has not yet happened in human history.

God: The sacred name of God is used here.

Forsaken: Abandoned. When we hear that God is going to do wonderful things, but we do not see it yet, we may think God has abandoned or forgotten to include us in the changes that He is bringing about. [For example: as believers we are called a royal priesthood, a holy nation (1 Peter 2:9). We might not see or feel this as a reality right now, but from God’s perspective this is our reality. This is the same principle in play here.]

Lord: Adonai. The Master.

Forgotten: The people feel that the Lord has abandoned them, that He has left. This is not the case.

Verse 15: *“A woman her child she will forget? She will have mercy upon the son of her womb. Even though these they might forget, but I will not forget you.”*

They might forget: Some women (thankfully it is unusual, but it does happen) want nothing to do with their children and so they abandon or ignore them. They do not demonstrate faithfulness or mercy.

I will not forget you: God NEVER forgets or abandons His children.

Verse 16: *“Behold upon My palms I have engraved you, your walls are always before Me.”*

Walls: A place of watching – watching for the enemy, but also watching in prayer. Our prayers are always before the Lord (Revelation 8:4).

Verse 17: *“Your sons speedily they will leave destruction and ruin, they are going to go forth from you.”*

Your sons: The children of Israel from a new generation. Isaiah was not speaking this for the people in his time.

Speedily: Quickly, in a fast manner.

Ruin: Calamity – something that brings about rubble.

They are going to go forth from you: Even though they are their children they are going to experience something different. The land is going to be in ruins, but the children are going to go away from ruins – they are going to experience restoration.

Verse 18: *“Lift up your eyes all about, see all of them, they are assembled and they will come to you. ‘As I live,’ declares the Lord, ‘all of them are going to be as an ornament. They are going to dress themselves and they are going to bind them as a bride does.’”*

They will come to you: There is going to be reconciliation, there is going to be a reunification of God's people. God is going to reunite the different generations together in His Kingdom.

As I live: God is making a pledge, a promise.

Bind them: Bind these ornaments or decorations.

As a bride: Yemenite brides are a perfect example of what binding ornaments to their garments looks like. God's Kingdom people are going to be like a bride who is prepared for her celebration of marriage – her banquet which is prepared for her in heaven (Revelation 19:7-9).

Verse 19: *“For your destruction and for your desolation, the land of your destruction will be too small for all the people who are going to inhabit it; those who swallowed you up will be far away.”*

The land of your destruction: When the people left the land of Israel it was destroyed and became desolate.

Too small for all the people who are going to inhabit it: The land of Israel is going to be too small for all the people who are going to want to go back to it when God restores them to the land. The land of Israel is going to have to be expanded, not cut up into pieces and parcelled out. Israel has not yet lived in the fullness of the boundaries that God promised to Abraham (Genesis 15:18).

Those who swallowed you up: The nations of the world who held the people of Israel while in her exiled state.

Be far away: The people who took Israel into exile are not going to be part of the Kingdom. They are going to be far away.

Verse 20: *“The children you will have will say into your ears, after the children of your bereavement, ‘Too small shall be the place. Present for me a place that I will dwell.’”*

Will say into your ears: They will talk about what was and about all that is going to be restored.

The children of your bereavement: These children are the ones who have died, the ones who are lost to their mother and father.

Too small shall be the place: A home often reflects the size of a family. If parents have several children, they usually have larger homes. If all those children die, then their home will have a lot of vacant space. What this is saying is that when restoration to the land of Israel occurs more people will come into Israel than originally left Israel. The land will be too small for the returning Jewish people.

Present for me a place that I will dwell: They will be looking for space. So many people will return to Israel that space will be at a premium.

Verse 21: *“And you shall say in your heart, ‘Who gave birth to all these people for me, since I was bereaved, I was barren, I was an exile and a wanderer? Who raised them up? Behold I thought I remained by myself. Where did these come from?’”*

Who gave birth to all these people for me: Those people who felt lost and as if they had no family will suddenly feel like they are surrounded by family. This is part of what God is promising to the Jewish people. There is going to be a great congregation of Jewish people who return to the land of Israel, but the greatest restoration and return from exile is going to be done by Yeshua Himself at His second coming.

Verse 22: *“Thus said the Lord God, ‘Behold I will lift up to the nations My hand, to the peoples I will raise up My standard. Your sons they will be brought in arms, and your daughters they shall be carried upon the shoulders.’”*

Lift up to the nations My hand: This is a manifestation of the gospel – Matthew 24:14 (what Messiah suffered – the wounds in His hands – was going to be made manifest to the nations).

Standard: Pole – In this context it is referring to the cross. The peoples (nations) are going to understand that the cross, what Messiah is going to do, is the fulfillment of Matthew 24:14.

Brought in arms...carried upon the shoulders: Referring to God bringing about a victorious return of the exiles – redemption.

Verse 23: *“Kings shall be your tutors, and queens are going to be your nurses; their faces are going to be to the ground as they bow down to you, the dirt of your feet they will lick, and they will know that I am the Lord. Those who wait for Me will no longer be ashamed.”*

Kings shall be your tutors: The Kings of Israel were supposed to write out a scroll for themselves. Kings were supposed to be wise.

Nurses: They are going to nourish the returned exiles like a wet nurse nourishes an infant in her care.

Bow down to you: They are going to realise what God’s plan is, His marvelous, covenant promises for establishing His Kingdom.

Those who wait for Me will no longer be ashamed: No longer will anyone scoff at them, because Messiah has returned and restored as He promised He would, so they are no longer waiting for Him.

Verse 24: *“Will from a mighty one the prey be taken? If the captive from a righteous one, will they escape?”*

Note: The answer to both these questions is ‘no’ – from a human perspective. God, however, answers these questions differently.

Will from a mighty one the prey be taken: If a mighty lion has killed a little lamb and is about to eat it no human would be able to take it away from him. God is able to take the prey (His people) from those who are mightier than them (the Babylonians etc).

Mighty one: The tyrant

Taken: Removed

Verse 25: *“But thus said the Lord: ‘Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible be delivered. Your opponent who contends with you I will contend with, and your sons I will save.’”*

Opponent: The tyrants. Their enemies.

I will contend: God is faithful, and He is the One who is going to fight for His people. A work of reconciliation is going to be done between God and Israel. This reconciliation is going to be a testimony to all the nations.

Verse 26: *“I will feed your oppressors with their own flesh, and as sweet wine will be their blood that they will drink. All flesh shall know that I am the Lord your Saviour and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.”*

I will feed your oppressors with their own flesh: God's judgment, prophetically, puts things into God's order. If we are people who want God's order, then we need to be people who delight in God's righteous judgment (Revelation 18:20). God's judgment brings creation (including humanity) into the will of God.

All flesh: Jews and Gentiles

Redeemer: Messiah - Yeshua

Mighty One: Literally: Knight. A knight was someone who had status and honour. He was a gallant man, one who behaved in a proper and a dignified way. A knight was someone who stood for justice, putting things in order.

CHAPTER 50

To make the right decisions or choices we must rely upon God's truth - His Word. Our decisions have eternal consequences – either for joy or for sorrow.

In this chapter (which many see as a Messianic chapter) God uses a symbol. He speaks about His covenantal relationship with the children of Israel as a marriage. This is not a literal marriage but is spoken of symbolically. In this chapter we also need to deal with the subject of divorce. In Biblical Hebrew the word for divorce is made up of two words. The first word is the word for a book or a document. The second word has to do with the concept of cutting off, cutting apart or disavowing. It is literally a document of annulment.

According to the Torah, if a man divorces a woman and she marries another it is then forbidden for that woman to be reunited in a marriage covenant again with her original husband (Deuteronomy 24:1-4).

In Jeremiah 3:8-25 we are told that God gave Israel a divorce decree, but shortly thereafter God is imploring Israel to return to Him and He will receive her. This would not be allowed according to Deuteronomy. God, however, is using this concept of marriage and divorce between Him and Israel symbolically. In Isaiah 50 God is speaking about the divorce decree, but He is asking Israel where their one is – they never literally got one.

Verse 1: *“Thus said the Lord, ‘Where is the divorce decree of your mother with which she was sent away? Where is the contract with My creditor which I sold you to him? Behold your iniquities caused you to be sold, it was for your transgression that your mother was sent away.’”*

Where is the divorce decree: This divorce decree would not be found, as Isaiah is implying that there was none.

Your mother: This is referring to the children of Israel who were in the previous generation. Prophetically the exile has already happened (from God’s perspective) and God is speaking to those in the exile who are of the younger generation – it is time for them to leave Babylon and go back to Judah. This younger (future) generation needs to renew their covenantal relationship with God.

I sold you to him: Biblical slavery (being a bond servant) is very different to the concept of slavery that we know today. People in Israel were sold as slaves to pay off a debt that they could not pay. They had to then be indentured servants for a maximum period of six years. In the seventh year they could go free (Exodus 21:1-11). A *contract with the creditor* was put into place, with the terms of agreement stipulated, before the service of the bond slave began. Did God have an agreement with Babylon? Had He sold His people to them? Absolutely not! No such document was in place.

Your iniquities...your transgression: This was their problem. This is what caused them to be separated from God – not a document or a contract.

Sold...sent away: Although the children of Israel went into exile and there seemed to be a breach in their relationship with God, God never totally forsook His people (Ezekiel 11:16-20). There was always an expectation that God and the children of Israel would be reconciled and brought back to the land of Israel.

Verse 2: *“Why, when I came, was there no man? I have called but there was no answer. Do you think My hands are too short to redeem? Or have I no power to deliver? Indeed, with My rebuke I dry up the sea, I have set rivers and made them to become a desert; their fish stink because there is no water, and die of thirst.”*

Note: This verse speaks of God and His work of redemption. In many ways, what God said to the people in exile is the same message He has for the Jewish people in the last days.

Why: God uses this word to introduce a question. He wants the people to think about something. To think of an answer.

When I came: Although this was written before the birth of Yeshua, many scholars see this as referring to His first coming and to the work that He did.

Why...was there no man: People did not respond to or receive Yeshua in the way that they should have. Yeshua’s work of redemption and salvation was, not totally but for the most part, ignored by the Jewish people.

Too short to redeem...no power to deliver: God wants to know if they did not respond because they thought He was inadequate.

Deliver: To rescue, to save.

With My rebuke (punishment) I dry up the sea: The people need to reconsider and think about what God has done and what He can actually do. The people need to remember that God has great power, and His power can bring about great change. God can dry up rivers, but He also has the power to restore.

Verse 3: *“I will clothe the heavens with darkness, I will place sackcloth as their covering.”*

Clothe the heavens with darkness: Many commentators see this as referring to the time when Yeshua was crucified on the cross (Matthew 27:45 – the sixth hour was noon time, the ninth hour was 15h00). This darkness was, like sackcloth, for the purpose of saying that repentance was being done.

Sackcloth: An image of the call to repentance.

Verse 4: *“My Lord God has given to me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. Morning by morning it was stirred of my ear to hear as the learned.”*

The tongue of the learned: This is speaking of a tongue that has been trained. It is a tongue that has learned to speak, with knowledge, at the right time.

In season: A word that speaks of an appropriate time.

A word...to him who is weary: This is a word that is going to cause those who are weary to be stirred up, to feel renewed.

Morning by morning: Every morning.

It was stirred: This means that this was something he was committed to. This one is prepared to speak encouragement to those who are weary or worn out. The context is that the sins and transgressions of the people have weighed them down, burdened them, wearied them. This One who is coming knows how to speak. He knows how to bring them a word of encouragement. He knows how to refresh the weary and renew their strength – and He does it at the right time. Yeshua is trained. He is the One who is appropriate to lead this return, this redemption.

Verse 5: *“My Lord God opened for me an ear; And I was not rebellious and nor did I turn away.”*

Opened for me an ear: Many people see this as a Messianic chapter, in which case the implication is that He (Yeshua) had heard and had understood the call which was upon His life. He knew that He had to be the perfect Lamb of God while He was on earth so that He could be the perfect sacrifice to redeem and save mankind from their sin.

I was not rebellious: Yeshua accepted that He was going to suffer and die. He did not rebel against this calling. Yeshua heard what He was supposed to do, and He was committed to doing it.

Nor did I turn away: Yeshua (the suffering Servant) did not turn away from God’s call.

Verse 6: *“My back I have set to the ones who strike Me, and My cheeks to those who pulled out My beard; I will not hide from their disgracing of Me and from their spitting.”*

Strike: This could be a reference to the flogging that Yeshua received (John 19:1, Luke 22:63).

Pulled out My beard: There is no New Testament reference for someone pulling out the beard of Messiah, but this was a common practice to shame someone. It was a form of torture.

Disgracing of Me and from their spitting: Those who beat up Yeshua wanted to shame Him. Yeshua did not run away or hide from being shamed (Mark 15:19).

Verse 7: *“My Lord God helped Me, therefore I will not be shamed; therefore I have set My face like a flint, and I know that I will not be ashamed.”*

My Lord God helped Me: Many scholars see this as a term referring to the resurrection. Yeshua was publically humiliated at the cross. He was stripped naked, crucified and hung in a public place. At the resurrection there was a change - that shame was changed into something glorious.

Set My face like a flint (stone): Yeshua was determined that He was not going to turn away from what He had to go through.

I know that I will not be ashamed: Yeshua, even though He is fully God, did not lord His status over humanity, but He humbled Himself and allowed Himself to die a horrible death on the cross (Philippians 2:5-11). Because of what Yeshua did, God (the Father) gave Him the name above all names. At His name every tongue shall confess, and every knee shall bow. Yeshua will never again suffer shame and humiliation, but all humanity will bow to Him.

Verse 8: *“For close is My Justifier; who will contend with Me? Let us stand together. Who is My adversary? Let him come near Me.”*

Justifier: The One who shows what is righteous.

Close is My Justifier: This is referring to the work that God the Father did in raising Yeshua from the dead (Acts 2:24, Romans 10:9). The resurrection justified Yeshua. The resurrection was a statement that revealed to us that God the Father approved everything that Yeshua did in those 3.5 years of ministry. Resurrection was God’s stamp of approval on Yeshua.

Who will contend with Me: Who would want to bring a charge against Yeshua?

Let him come near Me: If someone has a charge against Yeshua, Yeshua is inviting them to present these charges publically.

Note: Yeshua is not afraid of any charges of unrighteousness levelled against Him. His conscience is clear. His willingness to face any charges brought against Him assure us that He is a righteous Saviour. Everything that Yeshua did was fully justified.

Verse 9: *“Behold the Lord God He will help Me. For who is the one who will condemn me? Indeed, all of them are like a garment that is worn out; the moth will eat them up.”*

Who is the one who will condemn me: God the Father found no fault in Yeshua (Him raising Yeshua from the dead is proof that He found the work of the cross complete and the Lamb on that cross perfect), so no human being will be able to find fault with Him either.

All of them are like a garment that is worn out; the moth will eat them up: Referring to what is going to happen to those who find fault with Yeshua and who bring a case against Him.

Verse 10: *“Who among you fears the Lord? Who listens to the voice of His Servant? Who walks in darkness and has no strong light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and rely upon his God.”*

Who among you fears the Lord: Every human being has to make a choice – are we going to be those who find fault with Messiah, or are we going to be those who fear Him?

Listens to the voice of His Servant: Obedience is the proof that shows a fear of the Lord. If we fear Him, we will obey Him.

Note: In Deuteronomy 18:15-22 Moses told the people that God was going to raise up someone like him and they were to listen to this One that God was going to raise up. Moses is seen as the first redeemer. He brought the people out of bondage, out of the land of Egypt, and he took them to the Promised land. That was the call upon Moses’ life. Messiah, in a similar way to Moses, brings us out of our bondage to sin and He leads us into the Promised Kingdom.

His Servant: Messiah Yeshua

Who walks in darkness and has no light: This is still talking about the one who fears the Lord ie the one who listens to Yeshua. This one walks by faith. He cannot see what is going on around him, but he relies on and trusts God for safe passage through this dark world.

Listens...trusts...relies: One of the chief characteristics of Hebrew poetry is parallelism. What we find here is that those who listen to and obey God are demonstrating their trust and reliance on Him. Those who do this are making a good choice.

Verse 11: *“Behold, all you who kindle a light, who hold on to the sparks, who walk in the light of your fire and in the sparks you have kindled – this you shall have from My hand: in sorrow you shall lie down.”*

Note: This verse is in contrast to Isaiah 50:10. These people are making a foolish choice. They are not happy to live by faith and walk in the darkness – relying on God. These people make their own plans, they make their own fires and attempt to walk in the little light that they themselves have kindled with their own hands. This choice is going to lead to shame and eternal condemnation.

The vast majority of people do not listen to Yeshua, and they make the wrong decision. We need to be those who listen to Him and obey Him, those who rely on Him – especially in this dark age that we find ourselves in.

Kindle a light: They do not accept the revelation (light/truth) of God, but they ascribe to their own revelation and ‘illumination’.

Lie down: A term that has to do with death.

CHAPTER 51

PART 1: Isaiah 51:1-8

In this chapter God begins to address His people in a very specific manner – and He does so by giving them commandments. Many believers are not interested in the commandments as they think that they belong exclusively to the Old Testament. Yeshua, however, gave numerous commandments to His disciples, as did Paul, Peter etc to the New Testament churches. This is a very important principle: the commandments position us in God's will. If we are not in God's will and doing His will then we cannot expect to be the recipients of His blessings.

Verse 1: *“Listen to Me, pursuers of righteousness, you who seek the Lord; Look unto the rock from which you were hewn, and to the puncturing of the cistern that was dug up.”*

Listen to Me: This is the first commandment that we come across in this chapter. And, if we are pursuing righteousness (or seeking the Lord), this is a commandment that we should heed.

Pursuers of righteousness: What are we chasing after in our lives? Are we pursuing righteousness? In the Scripture there is an inherent relationship between God's will and righteousness. When we walk in truth, we will be doing righteousness. When we submit to the anointing of the Holy Spirit we walk in the spirit of righteousness.

Pursuers of righteousness, you who seek the Lord: One of the main characteristics of Hebrew poetry (and frequently prophecy is written poetically) is parallelism. These two phrases (pursuers of righteousness and seekers of the Lord) are parallel to one another. This means that if we are seeking God, we will be pursuing righteousness.

Look unto the rock: This is the second commandment in this passage. This phrase is speaking about understanding our foundation as people of God.

Puncturing: The entrance or the hole.

Cistern: The place where water was kept. Water, so frequently in the Scripture, is a reference to God's blessing.

Look unto the rock from which you were hewn, and to the puncturing of the cistern that was dug up: God wants us to understand our history - the foundation of God's work with His people (this is borne out within the context).

Verse 2: *“Look to Abraham your father, and to Sarah who gave birth to you; for one I called him, I blessed him and multiplied him.”*

Abraham your father: Abraham was indeed the foundation of the people of God - the people that God is going to use to accomplish His will.

One I called him: Abraham was just one man. He was the one who believed in God and his faith brought him into a covenantal relationship with God. Being in relationship with God gave Abraham a call. As he pursued that call, he walked towards God's blessing - becoming a recipient of the promises of God. The Jewish nation began with only this one faith filled man and his wife.

Note: Like Abraham we are called to seek God and to pursue righteousness. We need to understand the foundation from which we have come (Ephesians 2:20). We need to walk in that same faith that Abraham displayed.

Verse 3: *“For the Lord has comforted Zion, He has comforted all of her ruins, and He will place the desert as Eden, and the desert plains like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness will be found in it, thanksgiving and the voice of singing.”*

The Lord has comforted Zion: The Jewish people lived in a time of uncertainty during Isaiah's lifetime. The northern kingdom (Israel) had already been taken captive by the Assyrians and those in Judah were also on the brink of exile. God, however, promises that He is going to restore them and comfort them.

Zion: A Kingdom word. It is a word of promise and a word of a future hope.

Comforted: When Yeshua began His earthly ministry, He left Nazareth and relocated to Kfar Nahum (Capernaum – village of comfort). The word used here for 'comfort' is a word that speaks of God being comforted. When God brings about a restoration (he moves in the lives of His people) He is going to be comforted. In Judah's current condition they were headed toward exile (not toward a Kingdom reality), but God is encouraging them to have faith through this time. God has promised them a restoration and they could get through the exile if they had hope and if they could cling to the promises of God.

Ruins: The cities and the countryside were destroyed and desolate, but God was going to restore even these.

Place the desert as Eden: The desert is going to become a place of fruitfulness – a place that resembles the garden of Eden.

It: Referring to Zion (in God's Kingdom).

Singing: Praise.

Verse 4: *“Listen unto me My people, My nation give ear unto Me: for the Torah will go forth from Me, and My justice for a light unto the peoples so that I can make them relax.”*

My people: In Isaiah 51:1 we read that God's people are those who know that the way to seek God is by pursuing righteousness.

Give ear: In Hebrew three primary words for listening are used in this passage. Each word alludes to a slightly different aspect as far as listening or hearing is concerned. To 'listen' (in Isaiah 51:1) means to hear and to respond, to the word spoken, by faith. The second word used regarding listening is used in this verse. This is a word that means to pay attention – to gather understanding of the revelation that is being spoken. The third word used here regarding listening (giving ear) is a word that alludes to listening and responding to God for the purpose of being close to Him (near enough to Him that He can speak the word directly into our ear). This last word for hearing is a word of intimacy or closeness.

The Torah will go forth from Me: Micah 4:2. This is a very significant phrase as it begins to make us aware that this chapter is Messianic and that it is a chapter geared toward the end times – the second coming of Messiah and the establishment of His Kingdom.

Justice: The law and God's justice are parallel. In this context this is not speaking of God's judgment in terms of punishment, but it is speaking about Him rendering a verdict - upholding that which is right, true and proper. The law is the instrument that gives us the perspective to know what is right and what is wrong so that justice can be mediated out.

Relax: We are only going to be at peace (experience comfort or tranquility) as an outcome of the law being upheld and fulfilled. Messiah fulfilled the law (Matthew 5:17-20). As we follow Him, walking in obedience and being led by His Spirit, we are going to demonstrate (in the same way that He did) an adherence to God's instructions/commands.

Verse 5: *"Near will go forth My righteousness, and My salvation and My arm will judge the peoples, unto Me the islands will hope, and unto My arm they will wait."*

Arm: In Hebrew the word used here, written in the masculine) is the word for a seed (a male offspring – a Son). It is also a word that can speak of the upper portion of the arm. The upper portion of the arm was the desired portion to sacrifice. This is the same term used for the Passover lamb that is sacrificed. It is very likely that this verse is alluding to the sacrificial Son of God who does the work of redemption. He is the One who brings forth salvation to the peoples.

Islands: The distant, remote places.

Hope...wait: These words show that there is a Messianic expectation. The people are waiting for the Son to come.

Verse 6: *"Lift up to the heavens your eyes and look to the earth below. For the heavens will dissolve like smoke, the earth as a garment is going to wear out, and its inhabitants like thus will die. But My salvation will be forever, and My righteousness will not be abolished."*

Lift up to the heavens your eyes: When Messiah comes to fulfil what this passage is speaking about, He will come from the heavens.

Look to the earth below: Yeshua is coming back to earth.

Dissolve: Melt away, evaporate.

Dissolve...wear out...die: A change is coming to this world and to its inhabitants. If we belong to this world then we are going to die (physically and spiritually).

My salvation will be forever...My righteousness will not be abolished: God's righteousness is going to be established.

Verse 7: *"Listen unto Me those who know righteousness, you people in whose heart is My law. Do not fear the contempt of humanity, nor their blasphemy do not be dismayed."*

Listen: Another command. Here it is written in the plural.

Those who know righteousness...in whose heart is My law: Those who know righteousness are those who have the law of God in their hearts (Jeremiah 31:33).

Do not fear the contempt of humanity: As has already been stated: this is a last day's prophecy. In the last days, people are going to hear God and are going to respond to Him.

They are going to have a Messianic expectation and are going to understand that Messiah is coming to judge this world, and, in so doing, He is going to bring comfort. Most of humanity will have contempt for the people who place their faith in Messiah. They will say our faith is disgraceful and they will be strongly against it. We do not need to fear or be worried or concerned about this.

Do not be dismayed: We should not give up in the face of opposition. We have been warned that we are going to experience it, but, like Abraham, we need to have a faith that will endure or persevere through opposition.

Verse 8; *“For as a garment a moth will eat them, as wool is devoured by a moth. But My righteousness forever shall be and My salvation generation unto generation.”*

Moth: Two different words for moth are used here. Given enough time a moth will eat through one’s garments.

But: A word of contrast.

Note: In this chapter we are encouraged to have a Messianic expectation. Those who are ready for Messiah’s return will be those who are Torah minded – having the Word and laws of God in our hearts. We are going to be people who understand that God needs to bring a righteous change to this world, and He will do so through His righteous judgment. We are going to be those who live according to the instructions, the counsel, and the demands of God because we understand that they are the right things to live by. We are going to be led by the truth of God - in spite of the shame, disgrace and contempt that the world has for us.

CHAPTER 51

PART 2: Isaiah 51:9-23

Generally, the more we do something the better we become at it. This is also true for the study of prophecy. The more we study prophecy the better we are going to become in discerning God's message (His prophetic truth) to His people. Most prophecy in the Scripture is poetic. Therefore, to understand it we must apply the laws of Hebrew poetry to it so that we can rightly understand what is being said (eg parallelism). Another important aspect of Biblical prophecy is repetition. Repetition is for emphasis.

We have already established that ‘The Servant of the Lord’ is a term that can be applied to both Messiah and to Israel – the people of God (see the introduction at the beginning of Isaiah 42). Sometimes it is used to refer to Messiah. Sometimes it refers to Israel. However, sometimes it can be referring to both at the same time.

In a similar way, we see that ‘The arm of the Lord’ (written in the masculine, but at times can also be written in the feminine) can refer to the suffering and sacrificial Messiah (we have discussed this in previous chapters), but, as we are going to see, it is a term that has a dual application and can also be applied to the Jewish people (the offspring of the Lord). When the text is referring to the arm of the Lord as meaning the Jewish people it is a phrase which is written only in the feminine. Failure to realise this can lead to confusion.

Verse 9: *“Awake, awake, clothe yourself with strength, O arm of the Lord! Awake as in the days of old, eternal generations. Surely you are the one that hews out Rahab, and bruised the serpent?”*

Awake: This term implies or foreshadows a change – a change from a state of unawareness to being in a state of awareness/understanding. God is going to move to bring about a change in Israel’s spiritual condition.

Strength: Power.

Arm of the Lord: Written in the feminine and referring to Israel – God’s covenant people.

Awake as in the days of old: Israel had fallen into faithlessness, into idolatry. For this, they had gone into exile (a place of ‘sleep’ – unawareness). Their exile is not eternal. God is going to (awaken) renew and restore His purposes, plan and will with His covenant people.

Eternal generations: A Kingdom change is coming that is going to be permanent.

Rahab: This is not speaking about the woman called Rahab in the book of Joshua (Joshua 2). Most scholars, Christian and Jewish, see this as a term referring to Egypt. What this speaks about is how Israel was hewed out (brought out, taken out) of Egypt (figuratively: the world).

Bruised: Wounded

Serpent: A reference to satan.

Verse 10: *“Surely you are the one that dried up the sea, the abundant deep waters; you place the depths of the sea for a way for the redeemed to pass over.”*

You: Again, this is written in the feminine but is referring to God. When a text is grammatically constructed in this way (God being referred to in the feminine) it gives the passage a context of redemption. God is doing this work to bless Israel. It is work being done for the sake of Israel.

Dried up the sea: Israel did not dry up the sea. God did it for the sake of Israel. This passage shows us God moving for the purpose of Israel, bringing about the fulfillment of His covenantal promises to His people.

Note: All of this is being done by God for the sake of His covenant people.

Verse 11: *“The redeemed ones of the Lord shall return, they shall come to Zion with a shout of joy, with eternal gladness on their heads, joy and gladness they will obtain, sorrow and groaning will flee away.”*

Redeemed: This is a word that has to do with a payment that has been made for their redemption. They have been purchased for God (and by God) and therefore they rightfully belong to Him.

Shall return: This foreshadows the ultimate repentance that God is going to bring about among the remnant of Israel.

Flee: Retreat

Verse 12: *“I am He, the One who comforts you. Who are you that you should be afraid of the death of man, and of the son of man who will be made like grass?”*

I: There has been a change, and this is again written in the masculine. This is clearly speaking about God.

Who are you: This phrase is written in the feminine, and is speaking of Israel.

Who are you that you should be afraid of the death of man: We do not need to be afraid of death. When we are part of the Kingdom, we know that resurrection comes after death. Death is not an obstacle for the people of God. Although it brings an end to our natural existence it gives birth to our eternal.

The son of man who will be made like grass: We also do not need to be afraid of other human beings who are ‘here today and gone tomorrow’.

Made like grass: Grass does not last for a long time. In the same way, neither do our physical bodies last for a long time. We should never look to the temporal, but our lives should emphasize the eternal.

Verse 13: *“And you forgot the Lord your Maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth; You have feared continually every day because of the wrath of the oppressor when he has prepared to destroy. Where is the anger of the oppressor?”*

You forgot the Lord your Maker: This was Israel’s problem. They did not make their decisions with God in mind, but they forgot about Him.

Heavens... earth: Again, alluding to creation. God is the only One who can create a functional world. If God was able to create the natural world, we can be assured that He will be able to create a new (second) creation – His Kingdom.

You have feared continually: Instead of fearing God, the children of Israel had their priorities wrong. They feared the one who could oppress them in this world. They did not take into consideration that this oppression (discomfort, sadness, tribulation, etc) was only temporary. There is nothing eternal about the work of satan. He is limited. His work is going to be cast into eternal punishment.

Destroy: satan’s work leads to destruction.

Where is the anger of the oppressor: satan’s anger, his threats and activity are going to be in no way connected to us eternally. He is going to have no connection to the Kingdom things, so we ought not give any priority to him and to what he is up to. We need to be committed to the things of God.

Verse 14: *“Quickly the one who is in exile will be opened up, he will not die in the pit and nor will he lack his bread.”*

Quickly: Fast. Once God moves to bring about change things are going to happen quickly (note: this prophecy also has end-time implications).

Exile: It is a word that means moved from here to there. God allowed Israel’s enemy to place her in exile. Through exile God disciplined/punished His people.

Opened up: Released. The people have been in bondage, they have been oppressed, but this is going to change.

Will not die in the pit...nor will he lack: When this change happens, death will not visit them and nor will there be any shortage. They are going to have life and they are going to experience abundance.

Verse 15: *“I the Lord your God relax the sea and cause the waves to roar – the Lord of hosts is His name.”*

Relax the sea: God can calm the storms (Matthew 8:23-27).

Cause the waves to roar: But He can also stir up the sea and cause the waves to make a very loud noise.

The Lord of hosts is His name: In this passage God is manifesting Himself. He is the one who can do all things – He can quiet the sea, but He can also make the roar. Redeeming people and bringing them out of exile is not difficult for the Lord (who has all the armies at His beck and call) to do.

Verse 16: *“I have placed My words in your mouth and in the shadow of My hand I have concealed you, to stretch forth the heavens and to establish the earth and to say to Zion, ‘My people are you.’”*

Note: For there to be a change we need to be people that receive the Word of God.

I have placed My words in your mouth: This is an idiom that means they have received His words and are willing to speak them (Speaking God’s Word is an act of faith). It is important to note that it is God’s words that we are called to speak. It is not what we declare or what we want, but we speak according to what God has revealed to us. We need to speak truth.

In the shadow of My hand I have concealed you: This is a promise. God promises to protect His people.

Stretch forth the heavens and to establish the earth: An image of creation. God is going to establish His Kingdom - that second creation. Be careful of people who only seek to emphasise God and His activity (protection, blessing etc) in this world. Prophetically God does promise us wonderful things, but the fulfillment and the experience of them is ultimately in His Kingdom.

Zion: A Kingdom word.

Verse 17: *“Wake yourselves up, wake yourselves up, rise up, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk from the hand of the Lord the cup of His wrath, the dregs of the cup of poison, sipping to its very end.”*

Wake yourselves up: The word used here is different to the word for waking up found in Isaiah 51:9. In Isaiah 51:9 God was doing a work to bring about an awareness. It was God who was waking people up – making them aware. The word used here implies that God has done the work so that we, through faith, can now do our part (a similar example to this could be Messiah doing the work of redemption. It is something already done. God’s work is complete. We become aware of it. The onus then falls on us to accept, by faith, His work and to walk in it).

You...have drunk...the cup of His wrath: God disciplined His people. Exile happened due to sin and disobedience (Isaiah 59:2).

Exile was not God's perfect will and plan from the beginning (ie He did not desire us to be in rebellion to Him so that He could use exile as a tool for punishment – similarly we do not desire our kids to be disobedient to us so that we can smack them. We would prefer them to be obedient so that we wouldn't have to use the rod to bring about a change in their hearts). God used exile to prepare the people for redemption.

The dregs: Drinking the cup right to the very bottom.

Cup of poison: God sometimes gives us a bitter cup to drink down. Why? Because of our stubbornness, lack of repentance and not taking God's truth and applying it to our lives.

Sipping to its very end: There is coming a day when there will be an end to rebellion and exile.

Verse 18: *"She does not have a manager from all of her sons that she has borne; there is no one to hold her by the hand from all of her sons that she raised up."*

She does not have a manager: None of the children that she has brought up want to manage or administer the truth of God among their people.

Hold her: Strengthen her or give her stability. No one, belonging to Israel, will give stability to her.

Verse 19: *"Behold I will cause to happen to you two things: Who is going to bemoan you? Desolation and destruction, famine and sword. By whom will I comfort you?"*

Who is going to bemoan you: Who among the nations will be grieved about the suffering that Israel has experienced? No one in the nations is going to be grieved by this. None will do anything to bring about change for Israel or attempt to lessen her suffering.

Desolation: This is a word for something being taken away or removed (something has been stolen).

Destruction: A change in the condition of something.

By whom will I comfort you?: The answer is: No one (Isaiah 63:5). The Son of God is the only One who will bring comfort to them (Before this happens, Israel is going to go through another very difficult time).

Verse 20: *"Your sons will faint, they will lay down at the heads of all the streets, like an antelope in a net; they are full of the fury of the Lord, the rebuke of your God."*

Heads of all the streets: At the intersections.

Lay down at the heads of all the streets: Many see this as an expression of death. There will be a great loss of life before Israel's final redemption.

Full of the fury of the Lord: They are going to experience the fullness of the anger or the wrath of the Lord. The scholars all agree that this is referring to the time of Jacob's trouble (Jeremiah 30:7). 'Jacob's trouble' is a time of tribulation that will come upon Jacob (Israel) in the last half of Daniel's final week (ie the last 3½ years of the seven-year period spoken about in Daniel 9:27). This is going to be a time of destruction, hardship, famine and the sword. The people of Israel are going to be humiliated. This is all being brought about by the rebuke of God. God allows it.

Verse 21: *“Therefore hear please this, O afflicted one, the drunken one but not with wine.”*

Hear please this, O afflicted one: God is speaking to His people in their state of turmoil and affliction.

Drunken one: They are not functioning correctly. Sin has placed them in this state of intoxication. The punishment that they endured, because of their sin, caused them to be moved away from the place that they should have been in.

Verse 22: *“Thus said your Master, the Lord and your God who contends for His people. Behold I have taken from your hand the cup of reeling, the dregs of the cup of My wrath I will not cause you to drink of it anymore.”*

Master: Adonai. This name speaks of God being our Master – the One who is our authority.

Lord: The sacred Name of God is used here. This name refers to the transcendent God.

God: Elohim – this is the name of God that speaks of Him being Supreme.

Contends: Pleads. God is going to plead and contend for a different outcome for His covenant people. This is another poetic expression of the change that is coming to Israel in the last days.

The cup of reeling: The cup of poison

Verse 23: *“I will set her into the hands of the one that brought her fear and trembling, which said to your soul, ‘Lie down and we will walk over you’ – the one who sets you as ground and placed your back upon the street so that they could pass over.”*

Her: Israel.

Soul: They very essence of who they are

Note: God is going to speak to and deal with those who terrorized and humiliated Israel – those who put her down on the street and walked over her as if she was the ground beneath their feet. God is going to deal with the terrorizers through the wonderful change that His work is going to bring about – the establishment of His Kingdom, His new creation.

CHAPTER 52

PART 1: Isaiah 52:1-6

As believers in Messiah, as those who have received the gospel message, we should be fully assured that we are going to be recipients of what God has promised. God is faithful. A great example of His faithfulness is how He will deal with Israel in the last days. God has not broken His covenant with Israel. He has not replaced Israel. Prophecy does not support these views. Instead, prophecy reveals to us that there is going to be a wonderful restoration. This restoration of the remnant of Israel will come about right at the end of Daniel’s seventieth week (Daniel 9:27), when Messiah returns to the Mount of Olives for His second coming (Zechariah 14:3-4). It is at this time that the remnant of Israel will experience deliverance and victory. They are going to call upon the One who has been pierced and they are going to be saved (Zechariah 12:10; Romans 11:26-27).

Verse 1: *“Awake, Awake! Put on your strength O Zion: Put on your garments of splendour O Jerusalem, the holy city. No longer will enter into you again the uncircumcised and the unclean.”*

Awake: This is going to become a reality for the descendants of Jacob in the last days.

‘Waking up’ implies a transition, a change, a transformation.

Put on your strength: One of the first things we do in the morning when we wake up is to clothe ourselves.

Your strength: This strength is a prophetic promise from God. He is going to strengthen Israel in the last days.

Zion: A Kingdom word. It is a word that speaks about Jerusalem in a new state - in a redemptive state. Seeing this word in a text should cause us to think that there are going to be Kingdom ramifications. We should expect to see the outcome of God’s redemptive work through Messiah.

Strength...garments of splendour: Parallelism. God's power is going to make a glorious transformation for His people.

Zion...Jerusalem: Also, parallelism.

No longer: There is a change.

Uncircumcised: Circumcision has to do with the removal of flesh, and the death of that flesh that has been removed. Nothing fleshly or carnal will enter into Jerusalem when she is in her new, redemptive state. Things which are of the flesh have been rejected and forbidden by God. Those who are going to go into Jerusalem (those who have accepted Messiah – Galatians 3:16) are not going to be rejected by God. They are all going to be received by Him.

Unclean: Impure

Verse 2: *“Shake off the dust, rise up, sit down O Jerusalem; loosen the cords from your neck, O captive daughter of Zion.”*

Shake off...rise up, sit down: Transition and transformation commanded here.

Dust: Dust or soil have to do with the earth. Poetically it represents traces of the world. God is commanding His covenant people to remove or separate themselves from the things that relate to this world. The things of this world do not belong in the Kingdom.

Rise up: A good study of this word will reveal that it is a word which is frequently used for someone who is called into service – we are called to stand up to serve, to stand up to fulfil God’s expectations. Israel (like the believers in Messiah are also called to do) is going to shake off the things of this world so that they can faithfully serve God. If we have any traces of the world on us, we will not be faithful servants of God.

Sit down: It seems odd to be told to rise up and then told to sit down. The rising up is related to serving. Most of the Biblical commentators point out that the sitting down is related to sitting on the throne (Ephesians 2:6 – raised up to be seated with Messiah). Finally, in the (millennial) Kingdom, Israel is going to take her position as a leader who is going to carry out God’s purposes - the rulership that God called her to display over the nations (Deuteronomy 15:6).

Note: When Messiah returns to earth, He will be bringing all those who were raptured (the church) back to earth with Him (Revelation 19:14).

The church, who will all have received their resurrected bodies, will have a supervisory function in the millennial Kingdom (Revelation 20:4) – judging and assisting Israel in her leadership role over the nations (which Israel have long rebelled against). The remnant of Israel, who were saved at Messiah’s second coming (Zechariah 13:8), will not have resurrected bodies (they did not go through the rapture) but they will still have bodies of flesh – they will all still be subject to death (Zechariah 8:4, Isaiah 65:20).

Loosen the cords from your neck: For Israel to begin to lead, she has to come out of bondage. ‘Cords’ speak of the enslavement, the bondage, that the nations had put Israel in. In the last days this enslavement is going to come to an end. Those who were in exile are going to experience redemption.

Verse 3: *“For thus said the Lord, ‘For nothing you have sold yourselves, and not for silver you will be redeemed.’”*

Said: Written in the past tense, therefore hinting to a promise. What God has said, will be.
For nothing you have sold yourselves: Israel went into bondage because of sin (they became bond slaves) and they received no financial compensation for the work that they were required to do.

Not for silver you will be redeemed: Redemption only comes about through the precious blood of Messiah – not through money.

Verse 4: *“For thus said the Lord God, ‘To Egypt My people went down at the first to live there. Assyria, with no cause, oppressed them.’”*

First: Beginning.

To Egypt My people went down at the first to live there: The sons of Jacob were not forced to go to Egypt – they decided to go and live there (Genesis 46:1-7). They had however sold Joseph into slavery in Egypt, and, according to the principle found in Matthew 7:2, they found themselves enslaved there.

With no cause: Assyria had no reason to go against Israel. They did so purely from evil purposes – for the sheer enjoyment they derived from tormenting others.

Verse 5: *“‘But now who is to Me here?’ declares the Lord. ‘For My people were taken for nothing, the one who ruled over them caused them to wail,’ declares the Lord, ‘And always, all day long, My name is blasphemed.’”*

But now: An important, transitional phrase.

Now: At the time of Isaiah.

Who is to Me here: Who there belongs to the Lord. In the midst of the situation they found themselves in, who was going to be faithful to God?

Wail: They suffered greatly under this oppressive ruler.

All day long, My name is blasphemed: God will only tolerate this for so long. There is coming a point where God is going to put a stop to this behaviour. A change needs to be anticipated.

Verse 6: *“Therefore, My people will know My name; therefore on that day I am He, the One who is speaking. Behold Me.”*

Therefore: This is, in a sense, cause and effect. God’s name is being blasphemed, so He now tells us what is going to happen because of this.

My people will know My name: There will be people who do not blaspheme the name of the Lord.

On that day: A phrase that refers to Judgment Day – the final Judgment Day. For those who are in a relationship with Messiah (those who believed by faith under the Old Covenant, and those who have a New Covenant relationship with Messiah) this day is going to be a wonderful day. It is on this day that the saints will be vindicated (Revelation 6:9-11). It is also on this day that witnessing God’s wrath against the enemies of Israel will bring the remnant of Israel (those who are still alive on this earth) to faith in Messiah Yeshua. Heaven rejoices when God brings His righteous judgment (Revelation 18:20). So should we. God's righteous judgment brings forth a marvelous outcome - the Kingdom of God.

The One who is speaking: God is making this promise. This should capture our attention. God’s promises will always be fulfilled.

CHAPTER 52

PART 2: Isaiah 52:7-15

As Christians we understand that there is a great benefit in recognising who Messiah is. The Bible, to help us to recognise Him, is full of prophecy that points to His first coming. When we read about what Yeshua said and did, we can be assured that He was and is the Promised One. Judaism holds a very different view. Judaism says that Messiah can only be proclaimed (we can only have faith in Him) after He has completed all that Messiah is supposed to do. This is the reason why, for the most part, they misidentified Him at His first coming, as it is only at His second coming that He will do the things that, according to Jewish law, Messiah is expected to do. Judaism, by and large, ignores what was prophesied and fulfilled by Messiah at His first coming. Some of the prophecies they attribute to the Jewish people rather than seeing them as Messianic (eg seeing Israel as the suffering servant rather than seeing this prophecy as something applying to Messiah).

Verse 7: *“How pleasant upon the mountains are the feet of an evangelist, to cause to be heard peace, an evangelist of good news, to cause to be heard salvation; say to Zion, ‘Your God has reigned!’”*

Pleasant: Beautiful. God’s plan of salvation brings us great joy, blessing and pleasure.

Mountains: Mountains have to do with authority and government. Messiah is going to bring His own government – one which will have no end. He is going to be over all earthly authority.

The feet of an evangelist: These feet belong to the One who proclaims the good news of salvation. This verse accurately pinpoints the implications of Messiah's first work – that of proclaiming salvation (salvation is what Messiah’s first coming was all about).

Evangelist: The one who proclaims the good news about redemption. This good news brings about a change.

Cause to be heard: The word used here is a word that demands a response. It is not enough to only hear; we have to respond to what has been revealed.

Peace: When we respond to God's plan of salvation, we experience peace – peace being the fulfilment of God's will. The evangelist causes the will of God to be heard.

Good news: The word 'gospel' means 'good news'.

Good: Good is also a word that has to do with the will of God. Everything that is done according to God's will is pronounced 'good'. Everything not done according to God's will is called evil. It is only God's will that gives us peace. We need to understand the relationship between the gospel and being in the will of God.

To cause to be heard peace, an evangelist of good news, to cause to be heard salvation: It is when we respond to the good news of salvation (Yeshua) that we are going to be in the will of God and we will experience the peace of God.

Salvation: Salvation is more than just the forgiveness of sin. Yeshua came into the world to not only forgive us for our sins, but He came to save us from them. This means that through Messiah we obtain victory over our sins. Our sin does not defeat us, but Messiah gives us the ability to overcome the things of this world.

Zion: A word that speaks about the excellency of God and it is a word that is Kingdom related. Those in Zion are those who have a Kingdom hope, call and invitation.

Your God has reigned: Written in the past tense. It speaks of something yet future as though it has already been accomplished. The use of this tense gives us assurance. It gives us confidence that we can base our lives on this and make our decisions according to it. In God's mind it is as good as done.

Verse 8: *"Your watchmen shall lift up their voice; together they will shout for joy; all the eyes will see; when returns the Lord to Zion."*

Watchmen: The word used here is a word that has a degree of waiting with anticipation attached to it. It is a word that alludes to an assurance that what he is watching for is going to happen. These watchmen are waiting for the outcome of redemption. As believers we know that God has done the work of redemption through the blood of the Lamb. This work (in both the Old and New Testament) was done at Passover – the 14th day of the month of Aviv (this month was later called Nisan) - Exodus 12, Luke 22.

Eyes: The organ of sight. Eyes have to do with the ability to see something.

Returns the Lord to Zion: It is Yeshua who is going to return to Zion. The name for the Lord spoken of here is the sacred name of God. This is yet another Scripturally clear indication that Messiah Yeshua is God.

Verse 9: *"Burst forth and shout for joy together, O ruins of Jerusalem! For the Lord has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem."*

Ruins of Jerusalem: Jerusalem is only in ruins (destroyed) when the people are in exile. The people 'burst forth with shouts of joy' because their exile is brought to an end. Redemption (the Kingdom) begins where exile ends. Redemption positions God's people to worship Him.

Comforted: Kfar Nahum – Capernaum – the village of comfort, is where Yeshua relocated immediately prior to beginning His earthly ministry. This village was erected in the 2nd century BC in anticipation that the time of Messiah was at hand (Isaiah 8:22 - 9:1). Zebulun and Naphtali were given two allotments of land, in northern Israel, as their inheritance.

Capernaum was the village that tied these two lands together. It was in Capernaum that the light of Messiah first began to shine. God comforts Himself and His people when His purposes for His people are restored.

He has redeemed Jerusalem: Yeshua left Galilee to do His work of redemption in Jerusalem. Jerusalem is synonymous with the Kingdom. This is why King David moved the capital city from Hebron to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 5). Moving into Jerusalem is seen as a kind of Messianic transition. We are going to see this in its fullness when Messiah returns to Jerusalem in the last days.

Verse 10: *“The LORD has uncovered His holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; And all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.”*

Uncovered: Revealed.

Arm: This is a very rich word which can be used in a variety of ways.

1. It comes from a root word which means ‘a seed’ or an ‘offspring’. It is a word which can be written in the masculine (speaking of a son) or feminine (speaking of a daughter).
2. It is also a word that can simply mean ‘arm’ but referring to the upper portion of the arm (ie the part of the arm which is above the elbow). This portion of the arm (in an animal) is the portion which is used for sacrifice. It is the desired portion of the arm.
3. As quoted from Google: ‘One of the most striking symbols of Passover is the roasted lamb shankbone (called zeroah), which commemorates the paschal (lamb) sacrifice made the night the ancient Hebrews fled Egypt. Some say it symbolizes the outstretched arm of God (the Hebrew word zeroah can mean “arm”).

This bone, used as a symbol at Passover, is a reminder of Messiah - the Messianic hope (redemption) - which the descendants of God (His sons and daughters) have access to.

Holy arm: According to our meanings above we could read this as:

1. Holy Son
2. Holy Sacrifice (The Passover Lamb)
3. Holy (Messiah) – the One who does the work of redemption.

All the nations: Messiah’s purpose goes beyond just the children of Israel. His plan has always included the whole world having available to them the potential for blessing (Genesis 12:3). Abram was a Gentile when God chose, called and blessed him. Abraham, because of faith in the Word and promises of God, had his identity changed by God – becoming known as the father of the Jewish nation. Abraham (having been both a Gentile and a Jew) is the model of God’s desire to bless both Jews and Gentiles. God’s purpose of redemption through Messiah Yeshua is to bring blessing (redemption) for all the families of the earth. This invitation is broad and is available to every single person who lives on this planet.

The salvation: The instrument of God’s salvation is His arm – His Son, His holy Sacrifice, the One who was slain on Passover.

Verse 11: *“Depart! Depart! Go forth from there, that which is unclean do not touch; Go out from the midst of her, purify yourselves, You who carry the vessels of the LORD.”*

Depart: Turn aside. This hints to repentance.

Go forth from there: Make a change. The direction they are going in is the wrong direction, so they need to turn aside and walk a different path – the right way. God is demanding a change in the direction of their lives.

Unclean: God never blesses anything that is unclean. God’s desire is to bless. Therefore, He needs us to step away from that which is unclean so that He can do what He wants to do – redeem and bless.

You who carry the vessels of the LORD: Referring to the leaders of Israel - the priests and Levites. The priests were supposed to be an example to the people of how they were to live – clean and holy (set apart) before God.

Verse 12: *“For you shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight; for the LORD goes before you, but will gather you up the God of Israel .”*

You shall not go out with haste: When the Israelites left Egypt for their first redemption they did so in haste – they left quickly (Exodus 12:11). This time, although redemption came quickly initially, it is now going to come over a period of time. This is not talking about the work of redemption – what Messiah did on the cross – this is talking about the outcome of redemption – ie the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

Nor go by flight: This time they are not going to be fleeing from their enemies. When Israel experiences that final redemption, they are not going to fear their enemies as God is going to destroy their enemies.

Gather you up: This word is not referring to a ‘rear guard’ as some Bibles translate it (it is true that God will be before them and behind them, but this word does not appear in the text). It is a word that means to be gathered up.

Verse 13: *“Behold, My Servant He will be wise; He shall be exalted and lifted up and be very high.”*

My Servant: A Messianic prophecy. This is written in the masculine and is referring to Messiah.

Wise: Messiah is going to behave wisely, and the result is that He will be seen as very high (exalted...lifted up...very high) – the Servant who is above everything and above everyone (ie God).

Verse 14: *“Just as many were astonished at You, thus the appearance of a Man was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.”*

Many: Referring to the nations.

You: Referring to Messiah and not referring to Israel (although Israel has, like Messiah, also suffered at the hands of the nations. Israel, like Messiah, has been persecuted).

Thus: In the same way.

The Man: Referring to Messiah.

Marred: Obscured. This verse is speaking of the suffering that Messiah went through. Pontius Pilate had Him flogged so severely (Mark 15:15) that this verse alludes to the fact that when they had finished flogging Him, He was unrecognisable. This is how great Messiah’s suffering was.

Verse 15: *“Thus He will sprinkle many nations. Concerning Him the kings will close their mouths; for what had not been told them they shall see, And those who had not heard they shall consider.”*

Sprinkle: This is a word used in the Books of the Law (Torah). Sprinkling happened for the purpose of purification (Numbers 8:7). Messiah suffered, and the reality of what He did is available for all mankind. His blood purifies us. It changes our status from “common” to “set apart – prepared for service”.

Him: Messiah

The kings will close their mouths: Messiah is the King of kings. His Authority is over all other authorities. Messiah, through redemption, offers mankind the only answer worth listening to. All other authorities will be silent, because Messiah is going to rule.

For what had not been told them they shall see, and what they had not heard they shall consider: Paul quotes this, in Romans 15:21, to speak of his desire to go and preach the gospel on new ground, in new places.

Not been told them...had not heard: This is referring to the Gentiles. The Gentiles did not have a Bible. They were not the recipients of the law of God. They had not been told about God. Israel was supposed to share it with them, but this had not happened to a great extent.

They shall see...they shall consider: When the Gentiles were given the message (through Paul and those like Paul) they perceived (saw) it and many readily accepted it. The Gentiles paid great attention to the gospel message, and they were able to respond to it with clarity. This is God's wonderful plan - to take His message of salvation to the ends of the earth so that the Gentiles could also respond to it.

CHAPTER 53

PART 1: Isaiah 53:1-6

This is one of the most debated chapters in the Bible. We are very aware, by now, that Isaiah speaks of a Suffering Servant. Sometimes this suffering servant is indeed the children of Israel (the Jewish people). However, the vast majority of the time this Suffering Servant is referring to Israel's Messiah – not to the Jewish people.

In this chapter we need to ask the question: Who is Isaiah referring to when he speaks of the suffering servant in Isaiah 53? Israel or Messiah?

Followers of Judaism (especially Orthodox Judaism) say that Isaiah 53 is not about the Messiah but is about the plight of the Jewish people throughout numerous centuries. Rashi, a famous Jewish theologian who lived around 1000 years ago, stated emphatically (when speaking publically) that this chapter is referring to the Jewish people. However, in closed community, while discussing the Talmud privately, Rashi agreed that the Talmud was right, and that Isaiah 53 was indeed Messianic as the Talmud claimed it was. Rashi's commentary on religious doctrine is not binding or Scriptural.

The Talmud, however (written down around 400-500AD), is seen by Orthodox Judaism as the authoritative word of God (handed down in oral form over the centuries before it was written down) and they consider it binding.

When the Talmud discusses who Messiah is, what He will do and how to recognise Him, the Talmud offers up Isaiah 53 as prophetic and Scriptural evidence that help us to understand Messiah. The Talmud does not assert that Isaiah 53 is speaking about the Jewish people.

Verse 1: *“Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?”*

Report: The root of this word is derived from the word for hearing (ie who has believed what they have heard? – Romans 10:16-18).

To whom has the arm (Son, Sacrifice, Messianic hope – Passover Lamb) of the LORD been revealed: Who has believed in the the descendant of God Himself (ie the Son of God)? see Hebrews 11:6, Romans 10:8-10.

Verse 2: *“For He has gone up as a tender plant before Him, as a root that came up in a dry land. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.”*

Gone up: This is a word that explains Messiah’s manifestation. He was seen. The report has gone out about Him.

Tender plant: This is a healthy plant, a plant that is designed to take nourishment from the ground that it has been placed in.

Before Him: Before the Lord.

Dry land: The problem is that this young plant is not placed in a good place. It is in dry ground and not in fertile ground. Isaiah is telling us that the One who has been revealed to us came into the hostile environment of this world. The world was not responsive or receptive to Him and they caused Him to suffer (John 15:18-19).

No form: Nothing about Messiah’s outward appearance stood out to anyone as remarkable or unforgettable. His appearance didn’t make a great impression on others. It was not unique.

Comeliness: Beauty. He was not notably glorious in His appearance. Others did not look at Him and immediately perceive that He was someone extraordinary or special. He looked just like an everyday, ordinary man. Messiah was extraordinary – but this had nothing to do with His looks.

Verse 3: *“He was despised and rejected by men, a Man of pains who has known sickness. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not consider Him.”*

Despised...rejected: He was held in contempt by others. People rejected Yeshua when they looked upon Him. His ways were not the ways of the world. He did not fit in. He did not make Himself at home here on earth. He did not truly belong here (Matthew 8:20).

Pains: This is not the word for sorrow. It is a word that speaks of physical pain - not emotional pain.

Sickness: Sickness (like death) is a consequence of sin. This does not mean that someone is sick because he has sinned. Messiah never sinned, but, as this verse tells us, He experienced the consequences of sin – He was acquainted with sickness (not necessarily in His own physical body, but He had sickness around Him. He understood the consequences of sickness and the pain associated with it).

And we hid...our faces from Him: This is another phrase of rejection. Many people did not want to be around Him.

Did not consider: Gave no thought to Him.

Verse 4: *“Indeed our sicknesses He bore, and our pains He suffered; yet we considered Him stricken, crushed by God, and afflicted.”*

Our: Isaiah is speaking primarily to the children of Israel. It would not make sense to interpret this to mean that Israel is bearing Israel’s own sickness or pain. Someone else bore this for them.

Our sicknesses He bore: Sin and sickness are connected to each other Scripturally. Yeshua never sinned, but He understood and bore the consequences of our sin.

We: Israel

Stricken: Afflicted or struck. In the Talmud it is said that this is a word that is related to leprosy. A story is told within Judaism (which is not Biblical) about what they have termed the “leper scholar” or “leper Messiah”.

This story states that the Messiah will associate with the rejected and the outcasts (those who are not well received by society). According to this make-believe story, all the lepers would go to the place where they would bathe. They would remove all their bandages, wash and restrap fresh bandages on themselves. But another “leper” would come to their place, but he would be different. He would have bandages covering his body but when it came time for him to wash, he would remove a small part of the bandage, wash the area and recover it. He never fully exposed his skin and they never realised that he, unlike them, did not have leprosy. He was among them and suffered their outcast state, despite that fact that he was perfectly clean. He was struck, but not because of his own sickness. Although he did not have leprosy, he associated with them, assisted them and encouraged them. The Jewish people see this as a kind of parable for the role and character of Messiah.

Crushed by God, and afflicted: Yeshua, although He was innocent of sin, was struck and afflicted on the cross. He wasn’t doing this for Himself, but He did it for our sins. This is why He is known as the Suffering Servant. He served humanity by suffering on their behalf. He was innocent – not sick and sinful – but He suffered on behalf of others.

Verse 5: *“But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was crushed for our afflictions; the punishment for our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed.”*

Wounded: This is a word that literally means to be profaned. Innocent of sin, He became sin for us. God laid upon Him the sins of all the world (Isaiah 53:6) and He suffered the punishment for all that sin.

He was wounded for our transgressions: It would not make sense to be speaking about Israel being the suffering servant here. Israel cannot be wounded for Israel’s own sins. The nature of this prophecy demands that something (a lamb) or Someone (the Lamb) paid the price for Israel’s (and the world’s) sins. This can only be speaking about Messiah. There is no other possible explanation for this passage.

Our afflictions: Our behavior.

The punishment for our peace (Israel’s peace) was upon Him: This is another very important statement that refutes the claim that Isaiah 53 is regarding Israel. This passage does not state that the “punishment of our peace was upon ourselves”.

It therefore, cannot be speaking about Israel, but has to be speaking about the Messiah and about what He did for Israel and for all of humanity.

Bruises: This is a word usually associated with bruises. Messiah was flogged and severely beaten. His wounds turned into bruises - these bruises looking like stripes on His body. It should have been us receiving these bruises, but Messiah took them on His body so that we would not have to take them on ours. He suffered for us.

Verse 6: *“All of us like sheep have gone astray; every man his own way we have all turned, and the LORD has afflicted Him with the iniquity of us all.”*

All of us like sheep have gone astray: We, Israel and the world, have all sinned. We have turned aside from the right path and are deserving of punishment.

Every man his own way we have all turned: We are all guilty before God.

Afflicted: The word used here is a word that means to hit someone in order to cause them pain, to hurt them.

Note: In the Old Testament the only way to be forgiven and not suffer for one’s sins was through the sacrifice of an innocent, clean and spotless lamb. Before an animal was offered up for sacrifice it had to be thoroughly inspected to make sure that it had no blemishes or imperfections. In the New Covenant the only way to be forgiven and not suffer for our sins is through the spotless and sinless Lamb of God – Messiah Yeshua. If Messiah had sinned, He could not have done the work that He did - He could not have taken the punishment upon Himself and still have had a positive effect on others. Suffering for our own sins is just – we deserve the suffering and punishment. It is only when one is innocent then that suffering can be imputed to or benefit someone else (they willingly take the punishment on your behalf, even though they didn’t do the crime). Messiah suffered on behalf of us. He did not suffer on behalf of Himself.

CHAPTER 53

PART 2: Isaiah 53:7-12

In this section of Isaiah 53 we learn more about the purpose of why Messiah suffered and died (ie the mission of Messiah). We have already established that the Suffering Servant, spoken of in Isaiah 53, cannot be referring to Israel or the Jewish people.

Verse 7: *“He was oppressed and He was afflicted, but He did not open up His mouth; as a ewe to the slaughter is led, And as a ewe before her shearers she is silent, So He opened not His mouth.”*

Oppressed: This word first appears in Exodus 1:11, speaking of the great suffering that the slave masters in Egypt inflicted upon the descendants of Jacob.

Afflicted: Forced to go through great pain.

Silent: Messiah did not justify Himself. He could have called for legions of angels to rescue Him, but He was silent. What the text is emphasizing is that He was surrendered. He was willing to be slaughtered, afflicted and oppressed. He was willing to be led to His death so that He could fulfil His Father’s purposes. God the Father sent God the Son into this world for the purpose of suffering.

Verse 8: *“He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? He was cut off from the land of the living for the transgressions of My people. He was struck for them.”*

Taken: This word means curfew. It is also related to the word for a stopping or for arresting.
From prison and from judgment: After Yeshua was arrested, He was taken for judgment at the hand of Pontius Pilate (Luke 23).

Who will declare His generation: Yeshua’s generation did not understand the significance of what was going on right in their midst. No one was discussing truth or concerned with justice. Yeshua’s generation took no interest in His trial, judgment and crucifixion. Most of them remained silent.

Cut off: Died

For the transgressions of My people: This is a very important phrase that again lets us know, absolutely, that this suffering Servant is not a reference to Israel but is in fact Messiah. Isaiah was a Jewish prophet. His people were Jewish. This One was stricken or cut off because of the sins of the Jewish people (and extended to include the sins of the whole world). Israel could not be stricken or cut off for her own sins.

He was struck for them: This word ‘them’ is written in the plural and it is a word that goes beyond just ‘my people’ (ie the children of Israel). John 3:16.

Verse 9: *“And they set with the wicked His tomb— but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, there was no deceit in His mouth.”*

Wicked: Other human beings. He was placed in an area where other people were buried (a graveyard).

With the rich at His death: Joseph of Arimathea was a very wealthy man (Matthew 27:57-60). The tomb that he had purchased for himself would have been with the tombs of other influential and affluent people.

He had done no violence: He had done nothing wrong. Yeshua was innocent of any wrongdoing. He was punished and suffered exclusively for the wrongdoing of mankind.

There was no deceit in His mouth: He only spoke that which was true. Yeshua never lied or twisted the truth (unlike us human beings...invariably we will say something false or not altogether true – Isaiah 6:5).

Verse 10: *“Yet the LORD desired to crush Him; and He made Him sick. When You make His soul a guilt offering for sin, the Seed will see His offspring, He shall lengthen days, and the delight of the LORD was in His hand.”*

The LORD desired to crush Him: God the Father knew what the glorious outcome of redemption would be. It was the will of God to crush His only begotten Son because He knew that it was for the salvation of mankind. When God’s will is fulfilled it is pleasing to Him.

Sick: An expression that relates to the consequences of sin. Yeshua had to deal with the consequences of our sin. Our sins were placed on Him. He took our sickness (our sin, our filth etc) upon Himself (1 Peter 2:20-24).

Soul: The very essence of a person.

Guilt offering: This was an offering that was offered for a person who was guilty of committing unintentional offenses (Leviticus 5:14-19). Their punishment was condemnation. However, offering up this offering cleared them of their guilt.

The Seed will see His offspring: Because Messiah became the guilt offering for our sins, He is going to witness the fruit of His actions.

He shall lengthen days: This hints at eternal life. Death is no longer our limitation. We can have eternal life beyond the grave.

The delight of the LORD was in His hand: He was successful. Everything that Yeshua did was pleasing to His Father. Yeshua perfectly fulfilled the Father's will. People who were lost and hopeless could now experience true life and hope.

Verse 11: *"He shall see the labour of His soul and be satisfied. With His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, and their iniquities He bore."*

He shall see... and be satisfied: Yeshua will witness what the cross brought about, and it will satisfy Him.

The labour of His soul: The suffering that He went through. We need to understand that Yeshua did not only suffer physically – He also suffered spiritually (Matthew 27:46). When the sin of the world was placed on Yeshua there was a momentary separation that happened between Him and God the Father – they had, up to that time, shared an eternal relationship.

Be satisfied: This has a huge theological implication, and that is this: the cross is sufficient. NOTHING needs to be done to maintain our salvation.

With His knowledge: Knowing what Messiah did. Having knowledge of Him.

Justify: Make righteous. Yeshua was pleased and satisfied by His work on the cross as it brought about the justification of many.

Bore: Suffered.

Note: Yeshua suffered for our sins. When He saw the outcome of His suffering He was satisfied. Through the knowledge of Him (the righteous Servant – Messiah Yeshua) many have been and will be justified.

Verse 12: *"Therefore I will divide His portion to Him with many, and with the mighty He shall divide the spoil, Because He poured out His soul unto death. With the transgressors He was numbered, and the sin of many He bore, and made intercession for the transgressors."*

I will divide His portion... with many: Colossians 1:12, Ephesians 1:18-23. Many are going to benefit from the work that Messiah did.

Mighty: This word can also be translated as a huge number (numerous).

Spoil: The booty/spoils of war.

Poured out: This is a word for being made naked. This is not speaking about the fact that Yeshua was stripped when He was crucified. It is speaking of an emptying out. Messiah emptied Himself out. He gave everything – His all – right to His very death.

With the transgressors He was numbered: He was crucified with sinners – between two thieves. Yeshua was also condemned by the Sanhedrin as a sinner. Even though He was not a sinner He was incorrectly counted as one.

The sin: Yeshua paid the price for all sin.

Made intercession for the transgressors: We are guilty. We have transgressed God's law, but Yeshua is interceding for us. Romans 8:34

Note: Isaiah, in an amazingly accurate way, pinpoints in this chapter many things about the Messiah so that the people could recognize Him. The people however were not interested in redemption. They were not concerned about their sinful condition. May this never be said of us. Romans 10:8-13.

CHAPTER 54 PART 1: Isaiah 54:1-8

God is not finished with Israel - neither the people nor the land of Israel. One of the purposes for God's faithfulness to Israel is for a testimony. Those within the nations, who have entered into the New Covenant through faith in Messiah Yeshua, will witness God's faithfulness in keeping His (Old) Covenant with Israel and they will be assured that if God is faithful to keep His Old Covenant, He will be faithful to keep His New one. In the past 75 years (after a 2000-year exile) the Jewish people have been returning to the land that God promised to them thousands of years ago. This return has been prophesied throughout the prophets and we are seeing the fulfilment of these prophesies in our day. The fact that there is a nation of Israel today is miraculous in itself and says much about God's faithfulness. There is no question about it: Israel – the land and the people – play a very important role in the last days. It is going to be the epicenter (ground zero) for what God will do in establishing His Kingdom (first the Millennial Kingdom and then the New Jerusalem).

In this passage God reveals Himself as Redeemer. Redemption is a foundational theological principle. Redemption involves God doing His work to bring those who have a covenantal relationship with Him to faith and to establish them as His Kingdom people.

Verse 1: *"Shout O barren one, you who have not borne! Burst forth and shout, and rejoice aloud, you who have not laboured! For many are the children of the desolate one, more than the children of she who is married," said the LORD."*

Shout: This is a shout of joy and gladness, an exclaiming of joyful praise to the Living God.

Barren: Infertile. She cannot conceive or give birth to children. Biblically, giving birth to children is seen as a blessing – a fulfilment of the call that God has given to women (Genesis 1:28).

One: The feminine gender is used grammatically here. Israel is often spoken of in the Scripture as a woman.

Shout...Burst forth: Parallelism. This is speaking of rejoicing.

Rejoice aloud: This rejoicing and praising is done in a very public manner.

Have not laboured: She has not had to go through the labour of birthing a child.

Note: There seems to be a conflict here. If giving birth to children, the fruit of the womb, is a blessing why is this one commanded to praise God (rejoice and shout with joy) when she is barren? The answer to this is that God is going to do something supernatural in her life. He is going to bring about a miraculous change in her status (a change that the world cannot understand or even imagine).

Many: This is a word that speaks of an overwhelming majority.

Said: Although this is a future reality it is written in the past tense, because from God's perspective He sees it as good as done. We can be assured that all God has said will be accomplished.

Verse 2: *"Broaden the place of your tent, and your curtains of your dwelling places stretch out; do not restrain; lengthen your cords, and strengthen your pegs."*

Note: The Jewish people have suffered devastation over the centuries (holocaust, pogroms etc), but the land of Israel itself has also been devastated throughout the centuries. The hatred against the people and the land of Israel is, first and foremost, a hatred against God – His plans and His purposes, against what He sees as precious and important. In Isaiah 54:1 we read about God restoring the people. In this verse we read about God restoring the land. The desolate people become fruitful, and, at the same time, the desolate land becomes fertile and fruitful too.

Broaden...stretch out: There is a need for expansion. The world wants to shrink Israel – always wanting Israel to give up some of its land in exchange for "peace". This giving up of Israel's land is not God's will. Giving up land places Israel at a disadvantage. God does not want Israel's borders to shrink – He wants them to expand (Genesis 15:17-20 – Israel has not yet lived within the fullness of these boundaries that God promised to Abraham). Israel will not do anything to merit this inheritance (they have not earned the right to the land), but God is going to graciously give it to them, based on His promises that He gave to their fathers.

Do not restrain: Do not hold back.

Lengthen: Make longer.

Cords: Guy ropes.

Pegs: Tent pegs. The ropes and the pegs stabilise and secure the tent. They help to pull the tent taut so that water doesn't pool on the canvas but rolls off the canvas, keeping the tent dry on the inside.

Broaden...stretch out...Lengthen...strengthen: Everything has to be stronger, larger, bigger and more expansive. Why? Because in Isaiah 54:1 God promises that the desolate woman will experience a great expansion in population.

Verse 3: *"To the right and to the left you will spread out, and your seed shall inherit the nations, and the desolate cities they will dwell in."*

Note: This verse is tied to Genesis 28:14-15

Spread out: Burst forth

Your seed: Jacob's seed – the Jewish people.

Inherit the nations: This means that the borders of Israel are going to spread. This is going to happen in the Millennial Kingdom. Israel is going to be the ruling nation for these 1000 years (Isaiah 2:2).

The desolate cities they will dwell in: In Israel today there is a group of people who are especially hated by the world and by the liberals. These people are called the "settlers". These settlers live in the heart of Judea and Samaria (what the world refers to as the 'West Bank' - areas which are predominantly Palestinian). Although it is dangerous for them, the settlers live in these areas to build up the places that were desolate.

Verse 4: *“Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed; Neither be disgraced, for you will not be made ashamed; the shame of your youth you will forget, the disgrace of your widowhood you will not remember.”*

Do not fear: Israel has the potential to be fearful as, in the last days, in their current spiritual condition, they are far from God. This is going to change. In the last days their eyes are going to be opened.

The shame of your youth: Their failures, their faithlessness, all their disobedience is going to be forgotten.

Widowhood: Their old age.

Note: Their history, from their youth to their old age, is not going to be remembered anymore.

Verse 5: *“For your husband is your Maker, the LORD of hosts is His name; and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; the God over all the earth He shall be called.”*

Note: This verse emphasises that God is the One who does the work. He is the One who takes away shame and disgrace. God is the only One who can redeem us – which He does through His Son, Messiah Yeshua.

Called: This means that He will be recognized as God Almighty - the God who rules over all creation, the God who is Sovereign and who has all authority.

Verse 6: *“For as a woman is abandoned and is sad in spirit the LORD has called you, like a youthful wife when you were refused,” says your God.”*

The LORD has called you: The Lord is bringing about a change. Her current state will not be her latter state. God is calling her (Israel) to Himself again.

Refused: Rejected. Loathed.

Verse 7: *“For a mere moment I have left you, but with great mercy I will gather you.”*

A mere moment: A little while.

But: A word that shows a contrast.

With great mercy I will gather you: This gathering up is so significant. It is a promise from God. God is going to call again the one who has been rejected and downcast (ie Israel). With great mercy He is going gather up His people (Matthew 24:30-31. These verses are referring to the children of Israel and are not referring to the church. Within the context, Yeshua is NOT speaking about the rapture - which would have already taken place at this point - but about His Second Coming – Zechariah 12:10-12).

Verse 8: *“With a flame of fury My face I hid for a moment from you; but with eternal grace I have been merciful to you,’ said your Redeemer, the LORD.”*

Fury: Wrath. Anger. God was angry with His people and for a period of time He hid His face (His Presence) from them.

With eternal grace I have been merciful to you: This is written in the past tense but has future implications. This is God's promise to Israel, and we can be assured that God's promises come to pass.

Your Redeemer: This concept of redemption features again! God is going to redeem Israel. He is going to bring Israel back into a thriving and glorious covenantal relationship with Himself. He is not going to do this because Israel has done something to deserve this – they have not – but He does it because of His mercy. The fact that God is going to fulfil all of His promises in the last days to Israel should fill us with exceedingly, abundant joy. If God keeps His Old Covenant promises it should give us assurance that He will be faithful to His New Covenant promises.

CHAPTER 54

PART 2: Isaiah 54:9-17

Verse 9: *“For this is like the waters of Noah to Me; I have sworn that not again will the floodwaters pass over the earth, thus I have sworn That I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you.”*

This is like the waters of Noah to Me: God is reminding us of His judgment in the days of Noah. God judged all of those who had not responded to His revelation. By faith, Noah and his wife, their three sons, together with their three wives, responded to God's revelation and they entered the ark. God did not use the flood waters solely to destroy. He also used them to purify and cleanse the earth. Biblically we learn that God's judgment puts things on this earth into God's order and is ultimately going to lead to the establishment of His Kingdom on earth.

I have sworn: This is an oath, a promise.

Not again will the floodwaters pass over the earth: Genesis 9:11-17. This does not mean that God will not destroy the earth again. It means that He will never do it with water again. 2 Peter 3:5-7 tells us that God's next judgment is going to come through fire. Fire is another method that God uses to cleanse and purify. God wants this world to be pure – pure according to His will and standards.

I would not be angry with you: This is another promise that God has made. God is promising that His wrath will not be upon Israel. From a Kingdom perspective we can understand this to mean that God is going to bring about a Kingdom reality. There will be a remnant of Israel who will be a part of this Kingdom, and this remnant will never again experience the wrath or the rebuke of God. A time is coming when Israel, in a unique way, is going to be transformed into a Kingdom people. No longer will they need God's wrath and judgment to fall on them (Romans 11:25-27). God's Kingdom will not come to earth until this transformation among the remnant of Israel has taken place (Matthew 23:37-39). This transformation is part of the work that is left for God to still do.

Verse 10: *“For the mountains will be removed, and the hills will collapse, but My grace from you shall not be removed, a covenant of My peace will not collapse,” said the One who is merciful unto you, the LORD.*”

Mountains will be removed, and the hills will collapse: This is not something that we usually think about as occurring in the natural. At the end of this age, God is going to move according to His prophetic Word and He's going to bring about changes in this world - changes that we could never have thought or imagined.

But: A word of contrast. These mountains will move, and these hills will collapse but, in contrast to all of this instability, God's grace is going to stand for them like a firm foundation.

My grace: In fulfillment of His covenantal obligations, God is going to extend grace to the Jewish people. God does not take away His grace from us (New Covenant believers), and in the same way He extends grace and promises to not remove His grace from a remnant of the house of Jacob (the Jewish people).

My peace will not collapse: God's peace, the fulfilment of His will, is going to endure. It is not going to give out or fade away.

The LORD: The sacred or transcendent name of God is used here – the God who was, is and who will be. What God has said will be. Nothing can prevent this from not being the reality. God is going to be merciful, and nothing is going to interfere with His mercy being extended to us.

Verse 11: *“O you afflicted one, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, Behold, I am setting down your stones of splendour, I have founded you with sapphires.”*

Afflicted one: Speaking of Israel.

Tossed with tempest: Israel has been tossed about throughout the centuries as if she has been in a storm. Storms always bring about some form of change.

Comforted: A word that is used uniquely in the book of Isaiah to refer to the work of Messiah.

Setting down your stones of splendour: Israel is going to be made ready, made glorious, for her husband.

Setting down: Laying down stones is something that is done to give beauty. This is for decorative purposes (similar to a woman who uses makeup to accent herself). God is promising that Israel is going to be made beautiful in His eyes. Israel is going to be prepared for that Kingdom condition.

Splendour: Could also be translated as 'engraving'.

Sapphires: All of these stones (sapphires are blue stones) being laid and set are for beautification (Spiritually this would be speaking of the glorification of the house of Israel).

Verse 12: *“I will set rubies in your window frame, your gates of fine crystal, and all your borders stones of desire.”*

Window frame: A window can be seen as a kind of picture frame. God is promising to put these red coloured stones into their decoration/beautification.

Stones of desire: Precious stones. Gems. Israel is going to be transformed. She is going to be made outwardly/physically glorious - as a requirement for the Kingdom to be established.

Verse 13: *“All your children shall be taught by the LORD, and great shall be the peace of your children.”*

Note: This verse deals with the inward change that the people of Israel are going to experience.

Your children shall be taught by the LORD: The benefit of knowing the Lord or being trained by Him (having His perspective on things), is that the children will experience abundant peace – they will walk in the will of God. Walking in the will of God causes our lives to be full of the blessing and provision of the Lord.

Verse 14: *“In righteousness you will be established; you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; and terror shall not come near unto you.”*

Righteousness ... established; You shall be far from oppression: Those who are established (have a foundation) in righteousness are far from oppression, they are far from being defeated by the attacks of the enemy. There is safety and security in God's will. The most dangerous place for a person to be is outside of God's will. When we are obedient to the Word of God, the will of God for our lives will be revealed to us.

Terror: Fear. Disaster. Destruction.

Terror shall not come near unto you: When we are surrendered to God and are committed to His will then terror will be far from us.

Verse 15: *“Behold he will dwell before you, but not because of Me. Whoever assembles against you shall fall for your sake.”*

He: This is speaking of our enemy. When a person is committed to God, and is walking in faith, that person is often under attack from the enemy (the enemy wants to dwell in our presence so that he can afflict us, toss us about or cause us problems). However, there is no need for the one who does the will of God to fear destruction, disaster or hardship.

Not because of Me: This enemy is not from God. God didn't send him to afflict us.

Fall: God will bring about his defeat and our victory. We have received victory through Messiah in order that we can obey God. Victory is also related to worshipping God. Being forgiven and cleansed of our sins stirs within us a desire to worship God. When we worship God, our enemies are defeated.

Verse 16: *“Behold, I have created the blacksmith who blows the coals in the fire, who brings forth a vessel for his work; and I have created the destroyer to destroy.”*

Blacksmith: A craftsman.

Blows the coals in the fire: The blacksmith works with fire and coals to produce or build something that can help him with his work. This tool is profitable for him. It contributes to his work. This works does something for edification.

Destroyer...destroy: These are two different words for destruction. The first word is a word of wiping things away, destroying them, leaving no evidence of them, annihilation. The second word is used in Modern Hebrew for a terrorist - one who delights to cause pain and suffering for others.

This destroyer that God has created is going to destroy the things that are not in line with God's Word (Eg. God used the Destroying angel to kill the firstborn sons in Egypt in the homes where there was no lamb's blood on the doorposts – 1 Corinthians 10:10).

Note: God is constantly looking at our lives to see what needs to be built up or edified, but He is also looking to see what is not in line with His Kingdom, those things that need to be torn down and destroyed.

Verse 17: *“No weapon formed against you shall not succeed, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment shall be condemned. This is the inheritance of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is from Me,” declares the LORD.*”

No weapon formed against you shall prosper: This is a wonderful promise that God has given to us of His faithfulness. We do not need to fear the enemy, but we need to give priority to God. We need to be about His work, committed to His will. When we are walking in the promises of God, we do not need to worry about what the enemy is up.

Every tongue: Every word. The enemy's weapons or words of shame or defeat will have no effect on us.

Their righteousness is from Me: God imputes the very righteousness of His Son on everyone who believes. This is also going to be the status of the remnant in Israel when they believe in Messiah Yeshua.

Declares the LORD: When the Lord declares something it is a promise. We can know with assurance that what He has promised will come to pass.

CHAPTER 55

The gospel message has many wonderful aspects to it, one of which is that it is made freely available to us, without cost. Although it is free for us, Messiah paid a very high price, laying down His life and shedding His blood as He purchased salvation for us. Biblically, redemption always involves a payment. God fully paid this cost for us.

Verse 1: *“Hoy! Everyone who is thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, purchase and eat. Without money and without price come buy wine and milk.”*

Hoy: The first word used here is a word of emphasis. What is going to be said has great significance and importance, so we need to pay particular attention to what is going to be revealed – i.e the message of salvation.

Thirsty: When we are thirsty it means we have a great desire to drink something liquid.

When we drink this liquid, we receive a feeling of great satisfaction as our thirst is quenched. Similarly, when we are in a broken relationship with God, being separated from Him (thirsty for His presence) and we experience intimacy with Him it feels good, there is a great satisfaction.

Come: An invitation is given. This word is what we need to do in response to that invitation.

Waters: Water is an important concept in the Scripture. It can refer to life or eternal life and it can also be used to speak of the concept of blessing - a Kingdom experience. It is only through the gospel that we as sinful human beings can experience the Kingdom of God. Experiencing that gives us great pleasure and utmost satisfaction.

You who have no money: Even those with no money are invited. They can benefit from this.

Purchase: We can acquire this without money - all we have to do is respond to it.

Eat: Receive it. Our response to the Word of God does not require money but it does require us to respond to it with faith. Our response by faith is foundational for us to be recipients of the gospel.

Without money and without price: This does not have a price attached to it. There is nothing that we can pay. There is nothing that we can exchange in order to get this.

Wine: In the Scripture this is often used as a synonym for joy, happiness or gladness.

Milk: This speaks about that which is for the sustenance of a newborn child. A baby desires milk. He desires that which sustains his life.

Note: From a worldly perspective our greatest concern and most basic desire would be the need to sustain our lives (milk). Once this need is met, we then think about joy and gladness. In the Kingdom there is a totally different emphasis. Through the gospel we first and foremost experience the joy and gladness (the “wine”) and then we speak about that which sustains life. This change in order speaks of a Kingdom emphasis rather than a worldly emphasis.

Verse 2: *“Why do you weigh out silver for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? You all listen diligently to Me, and eat that which is good, and delight yourself in that which is fertile in your soul.”*

Weigh out silver: In ancient times when people wanted to purchase something they had to weigh out their silver on a scale so that they could pay the correct price for their purchase.

Bread: Bread is similar to the concept of milk in the Bible. Both speak about what is needed for basic sustenance of life.

Your wages for what does not satisfy: What are we working for? What are we trying to acquire? We should not be paying out to or investing in things that do not bring us life. This world has been corrupted by sin. It deceitfully encourages us to get this or that as a means to find satisfaction, but this is in fact a lie. Many people work very diligently. They make many sacrifices, and they acquire things, but these things do not give them lasting satisfaction. These things do not give them joy, peace or contentment.

Listen diligently: It is of the utmost importance that we comprehend what is being revealed.

Good: This is a word that is related to the will of God. If we want that which satisfies, that which is truly a source of joy, then we need to partake of that which is truly good - meaning that which is God's will.

Verse 3: *“Lend your ear, and come unto Me. Listen, and your soul will live; and I will cut an everlasting covenant with you— the abundant grace of David.”*

Lend your ear: This is another expression that deals with hearing or listening. This is a phrase that means to turn your ear, put it in a position, so that it is able to hear. Oftentimes this positioning of the ear means a drawing closer to someone to hear better. It is a word that demands action – it demands a change in position.

Cut: This is an idiom. In Hebrew when a covenant between two people is established it does not talk about making a covenant, but it speaks of cutting a covenant.

Everlasting (Kingdom) covenant: The commentators who are believers all agree that this everlasting covenant relates to the gospel message. The gospel message is a message of covenant.

On the night that Yeshua was betrayed, He sat down with His disciples, took the cup and told them that it was the cup of the New Covenant in His blood, ratified or established through the shedding of His blood - the giving of His life. An eternal covenant means that this covenant has eternal implications – what God promises is for forever. Jeremiah 32:40 tells us that God is the One who will maintain this new, everlasting covenant. Usually when a covenant is made both parties have an obligation to uphold the terms of the covenantal agreement (this was the case with the Old Covenant – Israel did not hold up their side – Hosea 6:7, this is also the case with a marriage covenant). The New Covenant is different. God is the One, according to Jeremiah, who takes it upon Himself to be the maintainer of it - through forgiveness and by no longer remembering our sins or violations (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

The abundant grace of David: David, the son of Jesse, at this time of Isaiah's prophecy, is already dead and long gone. Judaism teaches that when the name 'David' appears in prophecy, posthumously, it is not referring to David the son of Jesse but is referring to 'Ben David' (the Son of David) – Messiah. This phrase is speaking about the abundant grace (written in the plural – therefore speaking of abundance) of Messiah. This grace is the foundation of the New Covenant – the gospel message.

Verse 4: *“Behold I have given Him as a witness to the nations, a representative and a commander to the nations.”*

Behold: A word of emphasis and a word that reminds us to pay attention.

Him: (The Son of) David – Messiah.

A witness to the nations: There is an inclusivity about the gospel. It is not a message for one or two nations. It is a message for all the nations of the world. Messiah is a witness of God's love and mercy for all nations (John 3:16).

Representative: This word could also be translated 'prince'. It is a word of authority – representation with power.

Commander: This is the same word as the word for commandment. The emphasis here is on the concept of unity (a team or a group of people who are united and working together for a common purpose). Messiah is commanding and this commanding is for the purpose of unity - so that the will and goodness of God can be experienced by all those who are part of this covenant.

Verse 5: *“Behold a people that you do not know you will call, and a people that have not known you will run to you, because of the LORD your God, and the Holy One of Israel; because you have been glorified.”*

Nation: This is written in the singular. It is the word 'goy' and is a word which is commonly translated 'Gentile' (non-Hebrews). However, it is a word that goes much deeper than that. One of the first places that this word appears in the Bible is in Genesis 12:2. God tells Abraham that a great nation (this same word often translated 'Gentile' is used here) is going to come from him. This is a word that can also be used prophetically to refer to Israel – but Israel in an obedient state. In this context it would probably be better translated 'people'.

You will call: There is going to be an invitation. Israel is going to call to a people that they do not know - a people who are not a part of them. Israel will invite the nations to partake of the gospel message.

Known: This is a word of relationship. It is the same word which is used in Genesis 4:1 where we are told that Adam knew Eve and she conceived (alluding to a marital covenant). There is going to be a new type of relationship between the (redeemed) people of Israel and the (redeemed) nations. The two different people groups are going to run together (Zechariah 8:23). Israel is going to finally allow God to use them to be a light, a source of revelation, to the nations.

You have been glorified: This glory shows a distinction or a uniqueness. Most scholars see this as meaning that Israel is going to be distinguished by the call that she has to be that light to the Gentiles. This is the purpose for which God created her (Isaiah 60:1-7).

Verse 6: *“Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is close.”*

Note: When the message of salvation (the Kingdom covenant) is made available to us we need to take up the offer while we can by inviting Yeshua into our lives. God comes close to us through the revealing or presentation of the gospel.

Found: The Lord is found in the gospel

Close: He is near when the gospel is being proclaimed.

Verse 7: *“Let the wicked one leave his way, and the iniquitous man will leave his thoughts; let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, For He will abundantly forgive.”*

Let the wicked one leave his way: This is what the wicked need to do as a response to the gospel.

Leave his thoughts: He is going to think differently. He is not going to rely upon his perception or knowledge (what he thinks is right), but he is going to leave that human way of thinking.

Return unto the LORD: Returning to the Lord involves repentance. It involves turning away from our wicked ways (actions) and thoughts. When we repent of these things and turn away from them then we are in a right relationship with God (the relationship that God created humanity initially to be in).

He (God) will have mercy on him: We can be absolutely assured of this. God does not lie. It does not matter how sinful we have been, if we repent and turn from our sinful ways and thoughts God will have mercy on us.

Abundantly forgive: God does not hold onto our sins once we have repented. He abundantly and totally forgives us (Hebrews 8:12).

Verse 8: *“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not My ways,” declares the LORD.”*

My thoughts are not your thoughts: We do not think as God thinks.

Note: We cannot logically figure out the ways of the Lord (salvation, forgiveness, His mercy, His abundant grace etc) as it will not make sense to us. We simply need to receive the righteous standards of God by faith in Messiah Yeshua.

Verse 9: *“As the heavens are higher than the earth, thus My ways are higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”*

The heavens are higher than the earth: This phrase should make us think of more than just the physical distance between earth and outer space. The implication here is that the Kingdom of heaven (the place where the glory of God dwells) is much, much higher than the kingdom of this dark world – where falsehood, deceit and lies reign. Because we live here on earth, more often than not, we think according to the ways of this world. God’s ways – His gospel – transforms us to think and behave differently.

Verse 10: *“As the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, to there they do not return, but saturates the earth, and makes it bring forth and sprout up, He will give seed to the sower and bread to the one who eats”*

Note: In a human sense, when we give something to someone, invariably we expect something nice back in return. This is how we think with our human mindsets, how the world thinks.

Rain...snow...they do not return: God thinks differently to us. He gives rain and snow as a blessing to us. He invests in us (our lives, our lands, our crops etc) totally, freely, and without any expectation of a return (Matthew 5:44-48).

Saturates: This is a word that alludes to the fact that God gives to us abundantly – more than we could ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20)

Bring forth: A word for birthing. The earth is going to give its produce (its fruit). The earth is going to be fertile.

The one who eats: God provides for those who are hungry. It is within God’s nature to meet our needs. He is a generous giver. He does not give to us to get back from us.

Verse 11: *“Thus shall be My word which will go forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, but it shall accomplish what I desire, and it was successful in the thing for which I sent it.”*

My word...shall not return to Me empty: God’s Word is anointed and therefore it has the power to produce a change in our lives. Those who are wise will study the Word of God. His Word produces fullness – never emptiness.

Empty: There is always a good outcome to what God does (even judgment has a good outcome). What God does always produces fruit. He never does something that is meaningless, or empty. He never does something in vain. This fruit produced is not fruit for God’s benefit, but it is His creation that benefits from it.

It shall accomplish what I desire: It is true that God is free to do whatever He wants to do, but it is just as true that God will never do anything that is ungodly. He will only do that which is good and holy. “Can God lie?” is not a question we should ask when we are contemplating the Sovereignty of God. The answer to this question is “No. God cannot lie”. This does not negate His Sovereignty, but it does uphold His character. God only behaves according to His character, which means that He cannot sin (1 John 3:8-9).

From our perspective we would say that God does only those things which are righteous. From God’s perspective: The ‘things’ are only righteous because God does them. We do not get to define what righteousness and unrighteous deeds are. God defines them.

If God does something, we do not hold Him up to see if He meets the qualification or standard for righteousness. God does not meet the standard for righteousness – God IS the standard for righteousness. He is the source of righteousness.

Verse 12: *“For in gladness they will go forth, and in peace they will be led; the mountains and the hills shall burst forth before you with a shout, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.”*

Peace: Peace is related to the fulfillment of the will of God. Without the will of God being fulfilled there is no peace. Only when we are walking in obedience to the will of God (in His peace) will we experience gladness and joy.

A shout: Referring to a shout of joy.

Mountains and the hills shall burst forth before you with a shout: When the mountains and the hills (the governments and the seats of authority in this world) are changed, when they acknowledge God, it is going to usher in a Kingdom experience. When we are behaving according to the Kingdom of God it is going to bring about a gladness and a joy.

The trees of the field shall clap their hands: Creation is going to acknowledge the things of God and it is going to respond joyfully, praising what God has done in establishing His Kingdom.

Verse 13: *“Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be unto the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”*

The thorn...the brier: In the Garden of Eden there were no thorns, thistles or briars. In the Garden there were no poisonous trees, but all of the fruit on the trees was good for food. Except for the tree of knowledge of good and evil, Adam and Eve could eat freely of all the fruit in the Garden without any concern. Eating from this tree, the first sin, led to the consequence whereby this world was radically altered.

Cypress tree: This could also be referring to a fir or pine tree. God is going to bring about a Kingdom change. He is going to bring about a restoration in creation.

Shall be unto the LORD for a name: This transformation that is going to happen is going to reveal the character of God and show Him for who He really is – One who has a great name, a wonderful reputation in His Kingdom. This has always been true, but at this time it will be seen by all.

Sign: A miraculous happening – something which only God can do.

An everlasting sign that shall not be cut off: This is going to be the eternal condition of the Kingdom of God. This is the message and the miracle of the gospel: God can take a sinner (like us) and declare him righteous in His Presence. God can take a fallen world and He can restore it into a Kingdom of His glory. This is the character of our God. That is why His reputation (name) is great. God’s Kingdom is eternal. It will never be cut off.

CHAPTER 56

Are we people who base our beliefs upon Biblical texts or simply on what others teach? This chapter outlines things for us concerning the last days. It is a passage that speaks about a Kingdom faith - what God wants from His people. In this chapter there is an emphasis on the non-Jew being part of God's people. God's plan has always included the nations – the Gentiles (Genesis 12:3). God created Israel supernaturally. God allowed Abraham and Sarah, who had been barren, to conceive a child of promise when they were very old. God promised them this son based on His desire to bless and give us a Kingdom experience - not just for a season or a time but for all of eternity.

Verse 1: *“Thus said the LORD: “Keep justice, and do righteousness, for close is My salvation to come, and My righteousness to be revealed.”*

Keep justice: Keep God's judgment (what God says). This is a commandment. God obviously wants us to live a just life - to behave justly, but this word also speaks about a ruling, a sentence, a decision. This is not speaking about punishment but is speaking about ruling like a judge, giving decrees, making decisions.

Do righteousness: It is when we agree with God's judgment on a situation (His ruling) and we hold on to what He has said (valuing it and guarding it) that we are going to be executing and bringing forth righteousness. Judgment/Justice is parallel to righteousness. When we agree with God and with His rulings (His decisions) on issues then we are going to be people who do righteousness.

Close is My salvation to come: This is not speaking about the salvation regarding Messiah's work at His first coming. This is speaking about a Kingdom salvation – the victory that we are going to receive in the Kingdom of God.

Salvation...righteousness: These two are parallel concepts. When we walk in our salvation (when we are experiencing the victory of God in our lives) it is going to be manifested in our lives through righteousness - we are going to be doing righteousness (Matthew 6:33).

Verse 2: *“Blessed is the man who will do this, and the son of man who will hold on to it; who keeps the Sabbath without profaning it, and who keeps his hand from doing all evil.”*

Blessed: Happy are those who behave in a certain way (Matthew 5:3-12).

Man: An Aramaic word which speaks of a human being. The emphasis of this passage is not upon the Jewish community, but the emphasis is upon seeing the Gentiles (humanity in a general sense) walking in the truths of God. This is what God called Israel to do. They were supposed to be an influence, a light unto the nations. They were meant to help the nations embrace the same things that God gave Israel to embrace.

This: Keeping the law, keeping the commandments that God has given (The Sabbath and not doing evil are the two commands mentioned in this verse), is not for the Jewish people only but it is something that God requires of all mankind (we do not keep the righteous requirements of the law in order to be saved, but, because we are saved, we keep the righteous requirements of the law).

Son of man: Literally: Son of Adam ie: a human being (Jew and Gentile).

Keeps: This is a word that means that it is something that needs to be applied to our lives.

Keeps the Sabbath: There is no temple or altar today and therefore the Sabbath sacrifices cannot be offered up as was required by the law of Moses (Numbers 28:9-10). We cannot keep the Sabbath today according to the letter of the law. This does not mean that we are exempt from keeping it in the spirit or the newness of the law – ie in a redeemed way (Romans 7:6-7). The message of the Sabbath is just as important and relevant for our lives today as it was in the days of Moses. Yeshua called Himself the Lord of the Sabbath (ie the Lord of the Kingdom - Mark 2:27-28). Many of the miracles that Yeshua performed were on the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a day set aside for rest and restoration – a day set apart to spend in the Word and with the Word – John 1:1-4. The Sabbath speaks about the order of God (it is a Kingdom word). Keeping the Sabbath shows a desire to be restored to His order. Keeping the Sabbath today means that we can study it, we can proclaim its message of rest and restoration to others, and we can apply its truth to our lives. Keeping the Sabbath should be a blessing and a benefit for our lives – never a burden.

Keeps the Sabbath... keeps his hand from doing all evil: Parallelism helps us to interpret passages correctly. When we rightly apply the Sabbath principles to our lives (as led by the Spirit) our hands are going to do good (ie the will of God) and they will refrain from doing evil. Keeping the Sabbath is going to have a sanctifying and purifying effect in our lives – helping us to do the will of God.

Verse 3: *“Do not let the son of the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD speak, saying, ‘The LORD has utterly separated me from His people’; do not let the eunuch say, ‘I am a dry tree.’”*

The son of the foreigner: A Gentile, a non-Jew.

Joined: Attached. In the passive form this is the same word for a Levite. A Levite was someone who joined together with, assisted or served alongside the priests. This is what the Gentile in this verse has done – He has attached himself to the Lord, he is serving the Lord.

The LORD has utterly separated me from His people: This is not something a believing Gentile should say. God does not make a distinction between Jews and Gentiles who believe in Him (Galatians 3:28, Colossians 3:11, 1 Corinthians 12:13).

Eunuch: One who cannot have children – whether through their own choice, but, more often than not, through compulsion. His future, his heritage, his legacy has been dried up, in the eyes of the world, because he is unable to produce any children.

Note: From God’s perspective: the eunuch and the Gentile ought not to think that they have no Kingdom future. Both of them (in Messiah) have a Kingdom future.

Verse 4: *“For thus said the LORD: ‘To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, and choose what I delight in, that hold fast My covenant,’”*

Keep My Sabbaths... choose what I delight in...My covenant: These are concepts which are parallel. The Lord delights in His Sabbaths. When we choose what the Lord desires or delights in, when we want to apply Sabbath truth to our lives, it is evidence that we are holding on to God's covenant – faithful to His commandments. Applying Biblical principles to our lives is not legalism. Legalism is defined as ‘doing good works and obeying the law to merit or earn salvation’. We do not do good works or obey God’s commandments to earn our salvation.

As believers, those who are IN Messiah, we do good works and obey the law as evidence/fruits of salvation. If we claim to be a believer, led by the Spirit of God, but we think that the Sabbath is irrelevant and has no significance for us whatsoever, then we are not hearing from the Spirit of God but are living in deception.

Verse 5: *“Even to them I will give in My house and within My walls a hand and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an eternal name that shall not be cut off.”*

Even to them: In Isaiah’s day the eunuchs (especially those who had made a decision to have themselves emasculated so that they could work in places where they could become very wealthy – Acts 8:27) were thought of as cut off from God. They were viewed as outcasts and as rejected by the family of God. God is saying here that even those who had made unwise, life altering decisions, like the eunuchs did, could repent and find themselves restored to a right relationship with God - being joined to Him and able to serve Him.

My house: A dwelling place. A place of familial intimacy.

My walls: Walls speak of protection. Those who repent and hold on to God are going to experience the benefits of being in a covenantal relationship with Him.

A hand and a name: This is a Hebrew idiom. It speaks about actions (what is done with our hands – our behaviour) leading to our name being known. God is going to give these individuals a good reputation, a reputation based upon their commitment to their covenantal relationship with God.

An eternal name: They will have a Kingdom hope.

Shall not be cut off: Once we have entered into a covenantal relationship (united with God through Messiah), part of His family, nothing is going to be able to change that reality.

Verse 6: *“Also the sons of the foreigner who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants— everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and holds fast My covenant—”*

The sons of the foreigner: Isaiah is again speaking of the Gentiles (non-Jews).

Join: Attach

To serve Him..to love the name...to be His servants: This is a promise for those Gentiles who have attached themselves to the Lord for the purpose of serving Him, and loving Him. There is a large Gentile aspect to the Kingdom of God.

Keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and holds fast My covenant: Keeping the Sabbath holy and holding fast to God’s covenant show that we are servants of God and that we love Him. The way that we hold fast to the covenant of God (holding on to His blessings and promises) is by keeping the Sabbath. As already discussed, this is not talking about keeping the Sabbath through the letter of the law, but through the spirit of the law – being led by the Holy Spirit, who teaches us how to do all things (John 14:26). Sabbath truth should have an influence in our lives. It strengthens our covenantal relationship and our covenantal behaviour with God.

Verse 7: *“Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be a delight on My altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.”*

I will bring to My holy mountain: This is not talking about something in the past, this is a future reality.

Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be a delight on My altar: This is also talking about a future reality. In the millennial Kingdom, the Gentiles and Jews who are still alive on the earth at that time (those with physical bodies) will offer sacrifices on the altar (Zechariah 14:20-21, Ezekiel 46, Isaiah 66:20-21). At this point in time, the church would have already been raptured and would have received their resurrected bodies. We are going to be ruling and reigning with Messiah for these 1000 years. These sacrifices do not apply to us.

Note: The sacrifices made before Messiah (ie in the Old Testament), were a picture to the people pointing forward to the work that Messiah was going to do. For the past 2000 years (the age/time of the Gentiles – Luke 21:24, Romans 11:25) no sacrifices have been made. Once the time of the Gentiles is complete the millennial Kingdom begins. Sacrifices will again be made in this dispensation, but these sacrifices are done pointing back to the cross and the work of Messiah. These sacrifices are going to be like a memorial and a remembrance. In the New Jerusalem (which is created after the millennial Kingdom there will be no temple and therefore no longer sacrifices offered up (Revelation 21:22).

Shall be called: This is not speaking about Isaiah’s day. This did not happen in the past. This is something yet future.

A house of prayer for all nations: The millennial temple is going to be a house of prayer for all nations – Gentiles included. No Gentiles were allowed in the temple during Yeshua’s or Paul’s day. This is going to be a new reality (Isaiah 66:21).

Verse 8: *“The Lord GOD, who gathers up the outcasts of Israel, declares, ‘Yet I will gather to him others besides those who are gathered to him.’”*

Gathers up the outcasts of Israel: This is something that has not yet been done in its fullness. In its completeness, this will be a last day’s event (Matthew 24:31 is speaking of the Jewish people – as seen with the context).

Gather to him others: ‘Others’ is referring to people from the nations. In the millennial Kingdom there is not going to be one lifestyle for a Jew and another lifestyle for the Gentiles. In this Kingdom there will be the same expectation from both groups of people – as there always has been...to the Jew first and then to the Gentile (Romans 2:9-11).

Note: Edification is a very important term in the Bible. God, through His Spirit, works in a believer’s life to edify us - to build us up into the men and women He wants us to be. If we are rebellious (when we are not committed to Scripture or when we are lured away into the things of this world) we can hinder (quench) this work of God in our lives.

Verse 9: *“All you beasts of the field, come to devour, All you beasts in the forest.”*

Verse 10: *“His watchmen are blind, they are all ignorant; They are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; Sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.”*

Watchmen: These are individuals who are set aside to watch in the night (the dark hours). The watchmen spoken of here are not secular security officials that go to a certain post and look out throughout the night to make sure that the enemy does not attack the city. There is no threat of attack in this passage. Isaiah is speaking of something much more spiritual. These watchmen are individuals that, instead of sleeping at night, dedicate themselves for a period of time (a few hours perhaps) in order to pray (Matthew 26:41). These watchmen were meant to be praying and watching for God’s revelation. However, they were not very committed to this task. These watchmen (like prophets), once receiving revelation from God, were meant to share this revelation with the leaders.

Blind: This should not surprise us. There were always many prophets in the Scripture, but, more frequently than not, most of those prophets were false prophets. In the last days there is going to be an increase of false prophets (Matthew 24:11).

Ignorant: They do not know anything regarding God’s revelation. They are not interested in hearing from God and therefore they are not hearing from God.

Dumb: Deaf and mute. They cannot hear from God, and they do not have the ability to communicate anything from God. Although they profess to be God’s watchmen, they are silent and do not communicate any revelation at all.

They cannot bark: Barking dogs can sound an alarm. These “prophets” cannot sound an alarm. They are unable to communicate effectively.

Sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber: Sleeping means more to them than watching and praying. Sleeping means more to them than the revelation of God. They are not serious about the call of God on their lives. These are not true watchmen, but they are sleepers who love to sleep.

Verse 11: *“Yes, they are powerful dogs that do not know how to be satisfied.*

They are shepherds who cannot understand; they all look to their own way, everyone for his own gain, from his own territory.”

Powerful: Strong-willed, strong-headed individuals. These people want what they want, and they will act in such a way as to make sure that they get what they want. They are not submissive and nor are they humble regarding the things of God.

Do not know how to be satisfied: They are always wanting more of the things of this world (Philippians 4:11).

Shepherds: Leaders

Cannot understand: These leaders do not understand. They see what is taking place in their city, in their nation, what they have jurisdiction over, but they do not know what to do about it. They do not perceive what the right thing to do is. They have no discernment or wisdom. They may have some knowledge, but that knowledge will not produce anything that is righteous or proper. Probably one of the main reasons why they do not understand is because they are not interested in the ways of the Lord.

They all look to their own way: They are not interested in God’s way but only in their own ways.

Everyone for his own gain: They are servants of self. They are interested in their own profit.

His own territory: His own region, area or domain. He is all about pursuing his own objectives or goals. He is not interested in the will of God.

Verse 12: *“Come,” one says, “I will bring wine, and we will fill ourselves with intoxicating drink; Tomorrow will be as today, and much more abundant.”*

Come: They are responding, but they are responding to the wrong thing.

Wine: Alcohol can have a very detrimental influence in a person's life. Alcohol can be used as a form of escape. It dulls our senses and perceptions, and it opens us up to be influenced - not by the Spirit of God but by unclean spirits (demonic influence).

Fill ourselves: Overindulge. When this word is applied to food it can be understood as gluttonous.

Intoxicating drink: The implication is that they want to drink until they get drunk. This is something they are doing purposefully and deliberately. They do not see that God is at work. Instead of experiencing edification (being built up by God) they are going to begin to suffer loss (in their marriages, in their families, their finances, businesses etc). God wants us to be a righteous influence in this world. He does not want us to be an unrighteous influence. He wants us to be a blessing to others. These individuals do not live in such a way as to bless others.

Tomorrow will be as today: They have a commitment to their own selfish pursuits.

Much more abundant: They are going to begin to bow down more and more to the unsatisfying influences in their lives. In an attempt to find satisfaction, they will (in this case) drink more and more alcohol as they think that by doing so they will eventually find the satisfaction that they crave. Alcohol begins to play a more and more important role in their lives. They will not have any discernment and nor will they receive any revelation. They will not know how to carry out the purposes of God.

CHAPTER 57

PART 1: Isaiah 57:1-13

There was a constant sin that plagued the people of God: idolatry. Many times, the prophets speak of idolatry as a spiritual adultery. Rather than being faithful to God - her husband - Israel committed spiritual adultery and went after other gods. Moses commanded them not to do so and had warned that such actions would bring about God's judgment upon them (His curse) rather than His blessing. Idolatry was common and popular among the people because it is rooted in the desire of the flesh (what we want rather than what God commands).

In this chapter, God is contrasting the man/woman of God (those who have faith and who are submissive to the commandments of God) with those who are practicing idolatry (those who have removed themselves from the constraints of God's Word).

Verse 1: *“The righteous one perishes, and no man takes it to heart; men of grace are gathered up, there is no one who understands that because of evil the righteous one is taken away.”*

No man takes it to heart: No man pays attention to what has happened. No man understands the reason behind it.

Gathered up: This expression can be used as an idiom for dying - being removed from this world.

Because of evil the righteous one is taken away: God is revealing to us something that He does. There are times when God will take an individual (ie a person dies) as evil is approaching and so God takes them to spare them from it.

Verse 2: *“Peace shall come; they shall rest upon their beds, he who walks before Him.”*

Peace shall come: For the righteous ones, peace will come.

They shall rest upon their beds: Instead of suffering the evil of this world they are going to experience peace and rest – they are going to be comforted.

Beds: A place of safety and security within this context (we are going to see that a bed is not always a place of safety and security. A bed can also be seen as a place of idolatry and idolatrous practices. It can be seen as a place of discomfort).

Walks before Him: These are not the words for walking uprightly, although the implication is they will be walking uprightly. The word means to ‘walk before Him’ – to be in the presence of Someone (ie God).

Peace...rest...walks before Him: This righteous person who has perished is going to be brought into peace. He is going to find rest, as he is going into the very presence of God (2 Corinthians 5:8).

Verse 3: *“But you draw near, children of the sorceress, you seed of the adulterer and of she who played the harlot!”*

But: This conjunction shows that there is a contrast. In this case it is a contrast/difference between a righteous person (those who are going to experience God’s peace and being in His presence) and an unrighteous person (those whom God is not pleased with).

You: Isaiah is speaking to the majority of the people of Israel.

Draw near: They need to come closer so that they can hear.

Sorceress: That which has to do with the occult.

Seed of the adulterer: These people have been born out of adultery. This is part of their character and heritage.

Harlot: Isaiah is speaking about harlotry as spiritual harlotry (ie idolatry).

Verse 4: *“Whom have you mocked? Against whom do you make a wide mouth and stick out the tongue? Surely you are children of transgression, the seed of falsehood.”*

You: Written in the plural.

Make a wide mouth and stick out the tongue: They make a wide mouth so that they can stick out their tongues.

Transgression: Crime (physically and spiritually they practice crime). Sin.

The seed of falsehood: They do not belong to the seed of Abraham.

Verse 5: *“Warming yourselves with idols under every green tree, slaughtering the children by the rivers, under the clefts of the rocks”*

Warming yourselves: Exciting or arousing themselves in a fleshly way, a way that is displeasing to God.

Green tree: A tree of refreshment. A strong and pretty tree. When idolatry is spoken of in the Bible a tree is often alluded to. Some commentators say that a tree should remind us of the same mentality that Eve had when she went to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. She went there for herself. She went there to exalt herself - doing what she thought was best. This is the same mindset that those who go under these trees employ.

Slaughtering the children: Their idolatrous mindsets deceived them to the point that they were even willing to sacrifice their own children. The word used here for slaughtering refers to a religious slaughtering. They killed their children for the sake of their religion.

By the rivers, under the clefts of the rocks: They went to these places which were beautiful and pleasing to the eye. They gratified themselves there, and the outcome of that was that they ritually slaughtered their children in these beautiful places.

Verse 6: *“Among the smooth stones of the river is your portion; they, they, are your lot! Also to these you give an offering of a libation, you have offered a grain offering. Concerning these I will be comforted?”*

Smooth stones: Smooth stones were used in idolatrous worship practices.

They are your lot: This is their future. All they get is a bunch of rocks - nothing of significance, nothing with good spiritual implications, nothing that resembles life.

These: Referring to the rocks.

An offering of a libation: A liquid offering.

Grain offering: A sacrificial offering.

Concerning these I will be comforted?: Will God respond favourably to their offerings? Will He find comfort in them? No, He will not.

Verse 7: *“You have set your bed upon a high and exalted mountain; Even there you went up to offer sacrifice.”*

Set your bed: This is contrasting the heavenly bed, a place of true comfort, with the falsehood of idolatry and the bed that they make for themselves.

You went up to offer sacrifice: They went up into a mountain but not the proper mountain - not the temple mountain - but rather a place of idolatry. They did not go to the place where God's name and character dwells.

Verse 8: *“Also behind the doors and their posts you have set up your remembrance; for from Me you have departed, and have gone up into the wide places of your bed and cut a covenant with them; you have loved their bed, where you saw their power.”*

Behind the doors and their posts you have set up your remembrance: The Jewish people place a mezuzah on the front of the doorframes of their homes (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

Instead of putting their remembrances/memorials in the place where God commanded them to, these people are putting them behind the doors and posts - not in front of them. *Gone up into the wide places of your bed:* They have built their own resting places. The people have rejected God's provision, His purposes, plans and instructions. They labour hard to get what they desire; they do not pursue the desires of God.

Cut a covenant with them: These people made a covenant with idols.

You have loved their bed: They have exchanged the comfort (rest and peace) of the Kingdom of God, and they prefer to make their bed in the midst of idolatrous practices.

Power: This is not the word for nudity but is the word for a hand – ie authority and power.

Verse 9: *“You travelled to the king with scented oil and multiplied your perfumes; you send forth your messengers unto far away, you humiliate yourself unto Sheol.”*

You: The people of Israel.

The king: This is not referring to God – the King of kings – but is referring to the kings of this world.

Scented oil and multiplied your perfumes: Song of Songs 1:3 reveals to us that a pleasant fragrance or ointment that is good deeds - a Godly character. These people do not have good deeds. They do not have a character that resembles God's character. They are therefore coming before the king with their own deeds.

Sheol: The place of death. Instead of humbling themselves and being exalted they act disgracefully and humiliate themselves. Their end is this place of death. They will not know rest or peace.

Verse 10: *“You are exhausted in the abundance of your way; yet you did not say, ‘There is no hope.’ You have found the life of your hand; therefore you were not grieved.”*

Exhausted in the abundance of your way: Their own way is not bringing them rest or peace. Satisfying their flesh is bringing them no comfort.

You did not say, ‘There is no hope’: There are in despair, but they are not admitting to it.

You have found the life of your hand: They have given in to a powerful delusion, a false sense of their security. They think everything will eventually just work out. They will not admit that they are spiritually sick and afflicted.

Verse 11: *“And whom have you been concerned with, whom are you fearful of, that you have lied and not remembered Me, nor taken it to your heart? Surely I have been quiet from of old that you do not fear Me?”*

Not remembered Me, nor taken it to your heart: They have not been paying attention.

I have been quiet: God has been quiet (withheld His judgment) for a purpose – He gave the people time to understand the fruitlessness of their ways and to repent. This lack of immediate judgment on God's part caused the people to become complacent and led to a lack of the fear of God.

Verse 12: *“I will declare your righteousness and your works, for they will not profit you.”*

Note: In this verse God evaluates the idolaters and He tells them what His perception of their behaviour is.

I will declare your righteousness: These idolaters think that what they are doing (their works) are righteous.

They will not profit you: Although they thought they were righteous from God’s point of view they were not. This is not going to lead to a good conclusion for them.

Verse 13: *“When you cry out, will your collection of idols deliver you, but the wind will carry them all away, a breath will take them. But he who puts his trust in Me shall inherit the earth and shall take possession of My holy mountain.”*

Deliver: Save

The wind will carry them all away: These idols have no substance or value.

My holy mountain: God's holy mountain is an idiom for the Kingdom. Those who trust in the Lord are going to be part of that Kingdom hope and inheritance.

Note: There is a very significant distinction between those who are of grace (those who demonstrate righteousness) and those who are practicing idolatry (committing spiritual adultery). We can expect these two groups to experience very different futures from an eternal standpoint.

CHAPTER 57

PART 2: Isaiah 57:14-21

Only God can make a righteous and good change in our lives (ie a Kingdom change, whereby we are no longer bound to this dark world and its power but are liberated/freed to belong to the Kingdom of God – having an eternal hope). God wants to make this change in our lives, but the question is whether we will submit to the spiritual laws that God has established so that these changes can be experienced in our lives.

Verse 14: *“And he will say, “Build up! Build up! Clear the way, lift up the stumbling block out of the way of My people.”*

Build up!: This is a form of a commandment. It means to establish something which is going to have a good outcome – a Godly purpose.

Prepare the way: This passage is speaking about God wanting to bring a transition/change to people.

Clear the way: Clear a pathway.

Stumbling block: Obstacles

Lift up the stumbling block: Most scholars see this as meaning that this obstacle that needs to be removed is that idolatrous spirit, that desire that wants what it wants at any cost. This stumbling block is when people want their own ways rather than the way of God.

Verse 15: *“For thus said the Exalted and Lifted up One who dwells in eternity, Holy is His name: ‘Exalted and in holiness I will dwell in the exalted and holy place, with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to make alive the spirit of the lowly ones, and to make alive the heart of the contrite ones.’”*

I will dwell in the exalted and holy place: God, being omnipresent, is everywhere – in all places. However, in a unique way, He is manifested/revealed in those things which are high and exalted – those things which are holy.

Contrite: A word that is related to humility. Due to failure or difficulty (a realisation of one’s own inadequacy) this one has been broken to the point where he has had a heart change. These people realise that they are unable to achieve what is proper, right or satisfying. They are therefore in a position whereby God can lift them up (James 4:10)

Lowly in spirit: Referring to one who has been brought low, one who has been humiliated. This humiliation happened to them because they set their life on a specific course and this path caused them to experience humiliation. This humiliation brought about a change in their thinking processes and attitudes.

Verse 16: *“For not forever I will contend, not for eternity I will be angry; for the spirit would faint before Me, and the souls which I have made.”*

Note: God is angry with His people, but He is willing to forgive.

Contend: To be in conflict with. God is not going to be in conflict with people forever.

Not forever I will contend, not for eternity I will be angry: A time is coming when God is going to change the way He deals with people.

Spirit: Referring to the spirit of mankind

The spirit would faint before Me: If God was angry and contended with man forever, mankind would all be wiped out. There would be no hope for us.

The souls which I have made: God has made man, and He knows man’s limit. God loves man and He desires to help and bless man. God cannot help man if there is no man left to be helped.

Verse 17: *“For the iniquity of his covetousness I was angry and I struck him; I hid and was angry, and he went on backsliding in the way of his heart.”*

Covetousness: Profit. This one functioned in an evil way to gain profit for himself. His desire for profit produced iniquity in his life.

I hid: When God hides His face from people it can mean that He hides His blessing, help and assistance from them. God hid because He was angry with His people.

Backsliding: This is a word related to rebelliousness - going in a contrary direction to the will of God.

The way of his heart: His heart was previously not contrite. It was rebellious and led to him having a backsliding nature. These are against everything that God stands for, everything that is related to His will.

Verse 18: *“His ways I have seen and I have healed him: I have led him, and I will pay comforts unto him and to his mourners.”*

His ways I have seen: God took notice of the ways of His people, He looked to see how they were behaving.

I have healed him: Many scholars believe (although this is written in the past tense, and +- 800 years before Messiah did His work on the cross) that this is talking about God having done the work of redemption (Revelation 13:8). God transcends time. He is not bound or limited to past, present or future.

Pay: God is going to provide them with compensation and this compensation is going to be in the form of abundant comfort.

Note: We all falter and stumble at times, but God is available to do His work of healing and to pay out abundant comfort to all of those who repent.

Mourners: Individuals who are grieved about their disobedience or grieved about the disobedience of those around them (family, friends, children etc).

Verse 19: *“Is this the fruit of the lips: Peace, peace to the ones who are far away and to the ones who are close,’ said the LORD, ‘I will heal him.”*

The fruit of the lips: This speaks about an utterance, something that is said which is pleasing to God – it produces fruit (this is fruit that is pleasing to God, something which is in accordance to His will).

Is this the fruit of the lips: Is this the utterance that God finds approving? Is it something that creates peace?

Peace: Peace (unity with God – a broken relationship that has been healed) is the end result of God’s will being fulfilled. When God proclaims peace, it is a good utterance.

Verse 20: *“But the wicked ones are as the sea that is troubled, for it is not able to be made quiet; whose waters cast up mire and dirt.”*

The wicked ones: Those who persist in their idolatry – those who persist in doing things their own way or make decisions only for themselves. Seeking God’s will and ways should always be our desire (Matthew 6:33). His will should become our will.

Troubled: Agitated.

It is not able to be made quiet: We cannot bring calm, peace and tranquility to a raging sea. Only God can do that, but the wicked will not receive it. They do not want to know peace or the Prince of peace (Isaiah 9:6)

Mire and dirt: These things are worthless and are not pleasing to the Lord. Satan does not pay well. There are only worthless dividends when we work for him. Anything that he gives turns out to be counterfeit and will not satisfy.

Verse 21: *“There is no peace,’ said my God, ‘for the wicked ones.”*

There is no peace...for the wicked ones: This is an authoritative statement from God. It is a promise. Those who reject the will of God will never experience peace. This is an eternal consequence of choosing wickedness.

CHAPTER 58

PART 1: Isaiah 58:1-12

Serving God is a spiritual battle. The good news is that we not only have armour to put on (Ephesians 6:11-13), but we have another mighty weapon in our spiritual arsenal: fasting.

Verse 1: *“Cry aloud, do not save; as a trumpet lift up your voice; declare to My people their transgression, and to the house of Jacob their sins.”*

Do not save: Hold nothing back. God is telling the people that He wants total commitment. He wants us to demonstrate intensity and seriousness concerning spirituality related to His will. The only things that are pleasing to God are those things which are centered upon His will and purposes.

Trumpet: Referring to the shofar or ram’s horn. The shofar should always remind us of God’s provision (Genesis 22:13-14). God will provide everything we need to carry out His will, everything we need to be found faithful, everything we need to defeat the enemy.

My people: The children of Israel (those who were living at the time of Isaiah).

Declare to My people their transgression, and to the house of Jacob their sins: If we are going to serve God we have to first and foremost begin with acknowledging our sin and transgression. We then have to deal with that sin and transgression appropriately [ie. through the blood – in the Old Testament it was through the blood of bulls and goats (this forgiveness lasted for one year), in the New Testament it is through the blood of the Lamb – Messiah Yeshua – this forgiveness lasts for eternity).

Verse 2: *“Me daily they shall seek, and the knowledge of My ways they delight in, as a nation who righteousness did, and the justice of their God have not forsaken. They will seek Me and they will seek righteousness; they take delight in drawing near to God.”*

Note: In this verse we are told about what God expects from His people.

Seek: This is a word which is related to a strong desire. It is a word that shows commitment and seriousness.

They delight in: They place great value on knowing God’s ways.

Justice of their God have not forsaken: They have not left God’s justice.

Righteousness ... justice: There is a correlation between justice (carrying out God’s judgment) and righteousness. We need to get involved in making sure that justice is carried out. When justice is maintained, the outcome is righteousness. Righteousness, in turn, reveals the glory of God.

Note: All of the actions being taken by the people are for one purpose: to draw them near to God (ie to be in the presence of God). These actions are not for the purpose of being blessed in a materialistic way, but for being blessed with the very presence of God.

Verse 3: *“‘Why have we fasted,’ they say, ‘and You have not seen? Why have we afflicted our souls, and You take no notice?’ Behold in the day of your fast you seek what you want, and all your works you carry out.”*

Note: God is speaking to His people about taking His Word seriously and demonstrating faith. Biblical fasts were always accompanied by prayer. How we behave impacts our prayer life and therefore impacts our fasting. In this chapter, God begins to teach us how we can fast more effectively. Fasting effectively leads to us being transformed into an obedient servant of God – able to carry out His purposes. The people have heard what God’s expectation of them is – how they are to seek Him and live according to the knowledge of His ways.

Why have we fasted,’ they say, ‘and You have not seen’: This is how the people answer God. They tell Him that they have fasted, but He has not been watching them do it. They are doing these things, but they are not getting the response from God that they want to get. They are willing to be so called “spiritual” to accomplish their own objectives and materialistic purposes. God is not pleased with His people.

Seek what you want, and all your works you carry out: They are not fasting and praying for the purposes of God. They are trying to manipulate God to do for them what they want done for themselves. This is not pleasing to God.

Verse 4: *“Behold you fast for contention and strife, and to strike with the wicked fist. You will not fast as you do this day, to make your voice known on high.”*

Contention: Argument.

Strike with the wicked fist: They are wanting to be empowered by God so that they can inflict pain, suffering and a victorious blow upon their enemy. They wrongly think that God is going to bless their contention and strife.

Not ... to make your voice known on high: This kind of fasting is not going to cause God to hear them. This kind of fasting will have no positive influence in their lives because their commitment is to their own objectives and not to the will of God.

Verse 5: *“Is this the type of fast that I will choose, the day that a man afflicts his soul? Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush, and to spread out sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day to the delight of the LORD?”*

Bulrush: A reed found by the waters. It very easily bends down as it is a soft plant, it is weak and not strong.

Note: They are fasting, but God is not recognising it as a fast unto Himself. He is not impressed with their behaviour, and He is not going to respond to it. They are not demonstrating a contrite heart, nor the right attitude. Although they are using the right terminology, what they are doing is a form of idolatry.

Verse 6: *“Surely this is the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, to remove the bundles of the yoke, to send forth of the ones who are oppressed, and every yoke upon them you shall break.”*

Loose the bonds of wickedness: People are suffering injustice. God wants us to set them free, to open up the cords of wickedness that people are suffering from.

Yoke: This is literally the word for a pole or a rod. There are bundles of these rods upon the back of an individual. The people’s own wants and desires are weighing them down like a heavy burden on their backs. This is not God’s will for His people (Matthew 11:29-30).

Send forth: Set the oppressed free.

Note: This is the principle that we learn in this verse: If we want God to deliver, assist and help us then we need to be helping, assisting and blessing others. It is righteous behaviour that should lead up to our fasting. We should be seeking out ways to carry out God's will; ways to alleviate the suffering of others; removing the injustice, unrighteousness and the weighty things of this world that afflict people. We need to get involved in other people's lives.

Verse 7: *“Surely your bread slice for the hungry, and the poor who are cast out bring into your house; the one that you see that is naked cover him, and from your flesh do not ignore.”*

The poor who are cast out: The homeless.

Your flesh: A fellow brother. Someone who is part of your own family.

Note: We are not to ignore the suffering or the plight of our fellow human beings. God wants us to get involved in their lives. If they are naked, we are to clothe them. If they are hungry, we are to feed them. If they are homeless, we are to bring them into our homes.

Verse 8: *“Then your light shall break forth like the morning, and healing quickly will sprout forth, and shall go before you your righteousness; the glory of the LORD it will gather you.”*

Your light shall break forth: If we take to heart and are obedient to what God commands in Isaiah 58:7 then we are going to be instruments that manifest God’s glory (Matthew 5:16). This is the responsibility that is incumbent on us as believers – being instruments that manifest God’s glory.

The glory of the LORD it will gather you: When we do what we have been called to do we are brought into the presence of the Lord.

Verse 9: *“Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, ‘Behold Me.’ If you take away the yoke from your midst, stop the pointing of your finger, and stop speaking wickedness,”*

You shall call, and the LORD will answer: Being obedient to what God has called us to do will cause our prayers to be effective.

Take away the yoke: Remove that which is a burden on others.

Pointing of your finger: This speaks of a condemning of others.

Take away the yoke...stop the pointing...stop speaking wickedness: When we do the things mentioned above, we are going to experience a change in the way that we think and behave toward others.

Note: Effective fasting is going to change our behavior. It is going to bring us into agreement with the will, purpose and objectives of God.

Verse 10: *“If you extend to the hungry your soul and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your light shall shine in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday.”*

Extend...your soul: Give to them of everything that you have, the essence of yourself. When someone is truly in need, minister to them.

Satisfy the afflicted soul: When people are suffering move to eliminate or lessen that suffering.

Note: When we behave in this way, our fasting is going to bring change. This is the type of behavior that empowers our prayer and brings God's provision into our lives. This kind of behaviour transforms us, so that the glory of God is seen or manifested to others through us.

Verse 11: *“The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in the arid places, and your bones released; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.”*

Note: In this verse we see the benefits of carrying out the kind of behaviour (loving others) that God delights in.

Your bones released: Sometimes when people are suffering, they feel as if a great weight (sometimes physically but often spiritually) has been placed upon their bodies. Their bones feel dislocated and out of joint from the heavy burden upon them. This is a word that talks about the releasing or the freeing of those bones and joints (This is the same word used for a corkscrew unpoping the cork from a wine bottle so that the wine can be released – from being tense to being free).

Watered: The word for being saturated.

A spring of water, whose waters do not fail: This spring never runs dry. It never ceases to give water.

Fail: This is the word for a lie – a falsehood. God has created us in His image but because of sin we are corrupted and deceitful. We were created in His image to reflect His image (His character) by behaving like Him. We do not always do this though and we give a false image or a false impression. This verse is telling us that God is going to move in such a way that there will be nothing false about what we are doing.

Verse 12: *“They shall build from you the eternal desolations; you shall establish the foundations of many generations; and you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of the pathways of dwelling.”*

They shall build: This is going to be the foundation on which they build.

From you: From the people who live in the way that God delights in (ie: as mentioned in the verse above).

Eternal desolations: Those things that have been destroyed for a long time. These things are going to be built back. A connection to the past will be restored – ie God is going to redeem the days that were wasted (Joel 2:25). He is going to establish what He wanted to so long ago.

Pathways of dwelling: Kingdom pathways - pathways they lead into the Kingdom of God, that we might dwell with Him.

Note: This chapter has taught us, so far, about how we can live effectively. An effective lifestyle is rooted in prayer, fasting, being committed to righteousness and the justice of God. When we live in the ways described, God is going to work mightily in and through our lives and in the end He is going to bring about a restoration, fixing the breaches that need to be fixed, restoring those dwelling places that relate to the Kingdom (ie setting things in order). All of this restoration and repair is for the purpose of getting people ready for God's Kingdom.

CHAPTER 58

PART 2: Isaiah 58:13-14

If we would like to experience God in a more powerful way, have His perspective (so that we can see things from His vantage point and not from our own), and be drawn into His presence in such a way that He is able to move in our lives to bring about the fulfillment of His purposes in our lives, He has supplied something for us so that these things are not just what we desire but can become a reality in our lives: the Sabbath – the seventh day [The Jewish people do not count days like we count days. A day goes from sundown of one day to just before sundown of the next day..."the evening and the morning were the first day" (Genesis 1:5). Shabbat is therefore celebrated on Friday evening and Saturday morning].

There is a false understanding that's very prevalent among many believers. They believe that God wants us to choose and set apart one day of rest a week, but they also believe that we can choose what day this is – which day is most convenient for us. This is not the case. The Bible says that God sanctified (set apart) the seventh day - not a day of our choosing (Genesis 2:3). More than any other day of the week, this seventh day, in a unique way, is a day related to the purposes of God. Man was created on the sixth day. The very first day of man's life (the seventh day) he got to experience Shabbat – the Sabbath rest – with the Lord God Almighty. God did not need to rest after creating. He chose to rest. He chose to set aside and spend this day in fellowship with the man and woman that He had created. This was an example and a precedent that God set for mankind. The Sabbath day is not a day of reward. We should not think that because we have worked for six days we have earned the right to have a rest on the seventh day. Man, having been created on the sixth day, had not done any work before he experienced his first Sabbath. It was out of fellowship with God that man was given his work, his assignment, his calling (to work the garden, to name the animals etc). When we apply the relevance of Shabbat to our lives it is going to give us a clarity and perspective for what we are called to do. Shabbat is a day when restoration and a renewal takes places.

It is important to remember that we are not under the law which means that we are not going to be judged by the law (we are not under the law's condemnation as Messiah took the punishment for all of our transgressions). We are living in a period of time where there is no temple and so, even if we wanted to, we could not keep the Sabbath according to its Biblical requirements – the oldness of the letter (sacrifices etc). Not a single person on earth can keep the Sabbath completely. As believers, we have the privilege of being able to fulfil the righteousness of the Shabbat law according to the newness of the Spirit (Romans 7:6).

When we take a commandment of God and apply it to our lives, being led by the Spirit, we are going to fulfil the righteous requirement of that law. Fulfilling the righteousness of the law manifests the glory of God.

In Mark 2: 28 Yeshua identifies Himself as the Lord of the Sabbath. This fact alone should cause us to conclude that the Sabbath has significance and relevance. Applying Sabbath truth to our lives is not us keeping the Sabbath. God did not create us so that we could be Sabbath keepers. The Sabbath was created to keep us (Mark 2:27). It is there for our benefit. The objective is not for the Sabbath to be kept, but when we apply Sabbath truth to our lives it keeps us in God's will, it has a good outcome in our lives.

Verse 13: *“If your foot you bring back from the Sabbath, from doing your desires on **My holy day**, and call the Sabbath a delight, to mark as holy the honourable LORD, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own delight, nor speaking your own words.”*

Your foot you bring back from the Sabbath: This means that because it is the Sabbath day you have caused your foot to be brought away from doing its own desires. One of the things that we learn from the Sabbath is submission. Nothing good happens spiritually in our lives until we have learned how to submit to the instructions of the Lord.

Your desires: Those things that delight us.

My holy day: This is very important. The Sabbath is the Lord's holy day. It is the only day that He has sanctified. No where in the Scripture (Old or New Testament) are we told that this has been changed. Some people teach that the Shabbath has been changed to the first day of the week (Sunday) because Yeshua rose on Sunday – the first day of the week (Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:1-2). There is no Biblical basis for this, it is an assumption and was changed based upon the writings of man – not based on Scripture.

Call the Sabbath a delight: The Sabbath day is not only a day for the Jewish people. It is a day that God sanctified for all of humanity. Adam, a Gentile, submitted to God's instruction to rest on the seventh day. Yeshua, called Himself the Lord of THE SABBATH (Mark 2:28) but Acts 10:36 tells us that Messiah Yeshua is Lord of ALL – Jew and Gentile.

To mark as holy the honourable LORD: When we acknowledge Shabbat and submit to Shabbat instructions, we are marking this day as God's holy day. God is honoured when we do this.

Not doing your own ways, nor finding your own delight, nor speaking your own words: All of this is to teach us about submissiveness. We do not go where we want to go, we do not do the things we want to do, and nor do we speak about the things that we want to speak about. Everything that we do on this day is under the submissive will of God. This is for this purpose: to honour God by recognizing this as His holy day.

Verse 14: *“Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; and I will cause you to ride on the high places of the earth, and I will feed you with the inheritance of Jacob your father.’ The mouth of the LORD has spoken.”*

Then: If we do the things mentioned in Isaiah 58:13 then...this is going to be the result, this is going to be God's response to our obedience to His instructions.

You shall delight yourself in the LORD: We are going to experience the Lord's delight, when, through the help of the Holy Spirit, we have recognised and applied the principles of the Sabbath to our lives – a day set aside for not going where we want to go, not doing what we want to do, not speaking about what we want to speak about. In other words, we restrain ourselves. Shabbat changes the behaviour, thoughts and speech of an individual. In a unique way God is going to cause us to have great joy when we submit to His instruction regarding the Sabbath.

Cause you to ride on the high places of the earth: He will cause us to see things from a different (elevated) perspective (we will have discernment). When we are in an elevated place we can see more clearly, and we can see for a greater distance. This is helpful as it causes us to respond a lot more quickly to what we are seeing.

Note: When we apply Shabbat truth to our lives, we are going to have a better understanding or discernment regarding the things relating to the Kingdom of God so that we can live a Kingdom-centered life. We are not under Shabbat. We are not judged because of Shabbat, but when we honour Shabbat, we are going to see a Godly change in our lives.

CHAPTER 59

Throughout the book of Isaiah, God was not pleased with the children of Israel. God loves to bless His people. However, as so frequently is the case in the prophecy of Isaiah, we are going to see that God is not blessing, helping or delivering. He's not doing anything to assist the people. The reason is simple: the people are in sin and God is not pleased with them because they are not committed to His will. Is God pleased with us? We do not need to guess the answer to this. All we need to do is reflect upon our lives. Are we committed to the things of God? Are we serving Him? Are we applying His truth to our lives and are we doing those things which are pleasing to Him?

Verse 1: *“Behold, not short is the hand of the LORD from saving; and not heavy is His ear from hearing.”*

Short: Lacking.

The hand of the LORD: This is a term that speaks about the power of the Lord. It also speaks about His ability and His authority. There is nothing lacking in God's ability or power. He is omnipotent and sovereign, and He can do all things. If people are not experiencing God (His blessing, provision, nearness etc), it is not because of a lack from God's side, but rather a poor spiritual condition on their side. The children of Israel had been brought into a covenantal relationship with God, but their lives were not demonstrating or reflecting that they had any kind of relationship with God.

Heavy: Dull (in hearing). God hears perfectly, but He is not responding to the people. The people are confused as to why God is not listening to them and why He is not moving in their situations.

Verse 2: *“But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.”*

Your iniquities have separated you from your God: This is the reason why God does not respond to them. Their sins have become a barrier between them and God.

Iniquity and sin bring about an adverse situation in the lives of people – not only spiritually, but sometimes also manifesting itself in the physical. When we practice sin and iniquity, we are empowering the enemy, allowing him access into our lives to wreak havoc and bring about adversity – exposing our shamefulness before God.

Hidden His face: They cannot see or feel God's presence or blessing around them.

He will not hear: 'Hearing' is probably related to prayers. God is not listening to the prayers of the people. As a result, they are not receiving a response from God.

Verse 3: *"For your palms are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips speak falsehood, your tongue has evil that it utters."*

Blood: This is referring to the shedding of innocent blood.

Evil: This is not the normal word for evil. It is a word that speaks of having malice in their hearts. They behave in a very unkind and wicked way toward others as they are only thinking of themselves and what they believe they are entitled to (their 'rights'). This is the exact opposite of the way we should be behaving as children of God. God desires that we 'love others as we love ourselves' (Matthew 22:39). This is a foundational truth in the Bible.

Verse 4: *"No one calls in righteousness, there is no one making judgment by faith. They trust in empty words and speak lies; they conceive evil and give birth to wickedness."*

No one: No one is interested in what God is interested in. If we are wise, we are going to be people who explore the things that God is interested in and then we would participate in those things. When we are interested in what God is interested in, He will be interested in what is going on in our lives. His hand will not be short, and His ear will not be dull unto our cries.

No one calls in righteousness: No one calls unto the Lord prayerfully, for the purpose of righteousness.

There is no one making judgment by faith: No one is applying faith to how they render judgment. When they make decisions, they are not utilising faith as part of their decision-making process.

Empty: This same word is used in Genesis 1:2 to speak of a world in chaos and out of order.

Conceive: They think about trouble – about bringing adversity into the lives of others.

Wickedness: Instead of producing righteousness (that which is of the Kingdom) they are producing that which is wicked and is in conflict with the character of the Kingdom.

Verse 5: *"The eggs of a viper they hatch and weave the spider's web; he who eats of their eggs dies, and from that which is crushed a viper breaks out."*

Note: In this verse we are given an analogy – an illustration of what the people are doing.

The eggs of a viper they hatch: Their behaviour is likened to the birthing of many little vipers. What they are doing is dangerous and potentially life threatening. Some understand this to mean that they are inviting and empowering a demonic influence into their lives.

Weave the spider's web: A spider weaves a web for the purpose of catching prey.

He who eats of their eggs dies: Their wicked behaviour leads to death and destruction.

From that which is crushed a viper breaks out: The people who act wickedly are not victims. A viper comes out of a viper's egg. That is the natural course of the viper's lifecycle.

Similarly, the natural outcome of a wicked person's life is that they will experience hardships, problems, demonic activity etc. This is not happening to them randomly but is as a result of their poor choices and poor behaviour.

Verse 6: *"Their webs will not become garments, nor will they cover themselves with their works; their works are works of wickedness, and the act of violence is in their palms."*

Webs: Could also be translated 'threads'.

Nor will they cover themselves with their works: Their deeds are not going to be a covering for them. Their deeds are what a righteous person would "not be caught dead" wearing as they are clothes of shame. Good deeds are worn with a sense of delight and thanksgiving. When we are clothed with good deeds, we are glorious and have a God-pleasing testimony (Revelation 19:8).

The act of violence is in their palms: When we worship, we have been instructed to lift up holy hands (1 Timothy 2:8). 'Holy hands' mean that our hands need to be unstained by sin. They need to be hands that do not invoke the displeasure of God. Those who are wicked love violence for the sake of violence. Their hands are stained with violence.

Verse 7: *"Their feet run to evil, and they are quick to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of wickedness; destruction and catastrophe are in their pathway."*

Destruction: This is a word that speaks about being plundered, being robbed or of suffering a great loss.

Catastrophe: They are suffering a great loss in their lives, and it comes in the form of a catastrophe.

In their pathway: They are not walking in truth or according to the instructions of God. They walk according to the objectives of their fleshly desires - which are for iniquity and sin.

Verse 8: *"The way of peace they have not known, and there is no justice in their ways; their pathways are crooked; whoever takes that way shall not know peace."*

The way of peace: They have none of the peace associated with fulfilling God's will.

No justice in their ways: They live their lives as if they are running around in circles and never really achieving anything.

Crooked: This is a word that also means 'stubborn'. They are constantly moving stubbornly away from the instructions of God. They are bent in the wrong direction.

Whoever takes that way shall not know peace: Whoever walks in this crooked way will never know the peace of God, the fulfilment of His will. Their behaviour is not moving them toward the Kingdom of God but is moving them away from it.

Verse 9: *"Therefore justice is far from us, nor does righteousness overtake us; we hope for light, but behold darkness! For a strong light, but in thick darkness we walk!"*

Nor does righteousness overtake us: They do not get justice and nor do they obtain righteousness.

We hope for light, but behold darkness: Even when the people are hoping for the right thing, they are not going to receive it because God is not willing to participate with them until they truly repent and seek His grace. These people who are not happy with their experience but who are unwilling to change their behavior to have a different experience are an unredeemable people.

Thick darkness: Abundant darkness

Verse 10: *“We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes; we stumble at noonday as at nighttime; we are as dead men in desolate places.”*

Grope: Searching with their hands

Note: They are spiritually dead. They are like blind men who cannot find their way.

Dead men in desolate places: Speaking about their eternal condemnation.

Verse 11: *“We all growl like bears, and moan sadly like doves; we hope for justice, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far from us.”*

Growl like bears: This shows that they are angry.

Moan sadly like doves: They are very sad. They have no joy.

There is none: There is utter corruption in the city so justice cannot be found in it.

Verse 12: *“For our transgressions are multiplied before You, and our sins testify against us; for our transgressions are with us, and our iniquities, we know them.”*

Our transgressions are multiplied before You: God would be willing and able to help them, but their sins are acting as a barrier between them and God.

Our transgressions are with us, and our iniquities, we know them: They are willfully and cognitively choosing sin and transgression. This is their spiritual condition. Even though they are unhappy with the situation they do not want to repent and turn away from their sins. They do not want to turn to God, but they do want Him to stop their discomfort, the unpleasant things in their lives.

Verse 13: *“In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing from our God, speaking oppression and apostasy, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.”*

Transgressing: Violating God’s Word.

Lying: Being deceitful. This is how they respond to the Lord.

Departing: Moving away from

Uttering from the heart words of falsehood: This whole community is based on lies. Truth cannot be found here. They have chosen a lie, and their lives are vain and futile, they produce nothing good.

Verse 14: *“They turn away from justice, and righteousness they stand at a distant from; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.”*

Justice, and righteousness: They keep as far away as possible from justice and righteousness. They want nothing to do with either of these two things.

Truth is fallen: Truth is put down, it is ignored.

In the street: In public.

Equity: God wants to bring about fairness, but they do not allow it into their lives.

Verse 15: *“So truth shall be missing, and he who turns from evil makes himself crazy. Then the LORD saw it, and it was evil in His eyes that there was no justice.”*

Crazy: The word used here is not the word for ‘prey’. It is a word for behaviour that is intolerable, behaviour that is riotous. What this is saying is that those who turn from evil are seen as a threat to society.

Verse 16: *“And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore His arm brought salvation unto Him; and His righteousness supports Him.”*

He saw that there was no man: No one was interested in the things of God.

No intercessor: There was no one who was interceding for this situation.

His arm: This is a reference to Messiah – God’s Son.

Supports Him: He leans on it. God’s righteous desires are carried out. He trusted His Son to bring about redemption.

Verse 17: *“For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on His head; He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak.”*

Verse 18: *“According to their deeds, accordingly He will repay, wrath to His adversaries, recompense to His enemies; the coastlands He will fully repay.”*

He will repay: He is going to give them what they have earned by their behaviour.

Coastlands: The islands, the far away places.

He will fully repay: God is fair. When Yeshua returns, He is going to pay to everyone what they deserve, what they have earned. This payday will not be a good day for those who have not experienced redemption.

Verse 19: *“So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun; for the enemy will come in like a river, the Spirit of the LORD will set up a banner against him.”*

Name: The character. They are going to fear God within the context of His Judgment Day.

The rising of the sun: I.e: From the east.

The enemy will come in like a river: The enemy is going to come quickly – like a rushing, flowing river.

A banner: Another reference to Messiah – Messiah Yeshua. Yeshua is going to be against all of this evil.

Verse 20: *“The Redeemer will come to Zion, and will turn the transgression away from Jacob,” declared the LORD.”*

Note: In Judaism this is a very important verse, and it is recited daily in the synagogue. It is seen as a promise from God. The survivors of Israel in the last days are going to be unredeemed but not unredeemable. They are going to be in a very vulnerable position and 2/3rds of them are going to be put to death.

The Redeemer will come to Zion: Referring to Messiah Yeshua.

Turn the transgression away: God is going to move in a mighty way through the work of Messiah.

Declared the LORD: These are the words of a promise. If God has said it, we can be assured that it is going to happen.

Verse 21: *“And I, this is My covenant with them,’ said the LORD: ‘My Spirit will be unto you, and My words which I will place in your mouth, they will not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your seed, nor from the mouth of the offspring of your offspring,’ said the LORD, ‘from this time and forevermore.’”*

This: When this word stands alone in Hebrew it means that it is talking about the main thing, the primary objective. This is the key idea.

Them: There is a play on words here in the Hebrew. This is a word which alludes to purity. This is all coming about because of God. He is the One who will purify them in the midst of His Covenant, but it is through His Covenant that purity is brought into their lives.

My Spirit will be unto you: This is what the outcome of this New Covenant will be.

Seed: Offspring.

Note: Redemption, through the gospel, is coming for the remnant of the people of Israel in the last days. In the last days, Israel is going to be looking for her Messiah and they are going to see the One who was pierced. They are going to mourn when they recognise Him (Zechariah 12:10). They are going to receive Messiah in the same way that Thomas did – by sight, and not through faith (John 20:25). Although it is better to believe through faith and not through sight (John 20:29), when the remnant of the Jewish people witness His return (with their own eyes) they are going to believe in Him.

Forevermore: This is going to be an eternal reality. This is the reality: Messiah, the Redeemer, has come. He has already done the work of redemption. If we have accepted the gospel, He has turned away sin and transgression from us – He has taken it away and has replaced it with His Spirit. This is our eternal condition once we have believed in and accepted Messiah Yeshua as our Lord and Saviour.

CHAPTER 60

On God's agenda is the establishment of His Kingdom. Israel (the people and the land) is going to play a major role in the events that will lead up to the Kingdom coming and being established. Many scholars agree that this chapter is Messianic and has to do with the end times – particularly the last seven years of Daniel's 70th week.

Verse 1: *“Arise and shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is upon you and it has shined.”*

Arise and shine: This is written in the feminine and is talking about Israel.

Shine: This is the literal word for 'light' in verbal form. It is a word that speaks about light being seen.

Your light has come: A spiritual change is going to be brought about in Israel in the last days through the light that is to come - Messiah. This spiritual change is going to lead to physical changes. Messiah is going to give light to Israel and He is going to enable them to shine. This is not speaking of the time of the rapture but is speaking of Messiah's second coming to Earth.

Verse 2: *“For behold, the darkness will cover the earth, and fog the people; but upon you the Lord will shine, and His glory will be seen upon you.”*

Darkness: Many scholars believe that this darkness has to do with the spirit of deceit that the antichrist will bring upon this world – a strong delusion (2 Thessalonians 2:11). When this deception is being worked out people are going to be out of place, they are out of God's will and therefore will be a candidate for His judgment.

Fog: This is a word for camouflage. Camouflage covers up, it conceals the nations.

You: Israel.

The Lord will shine: This concept of light shining is related to blessing. Messiah is coming to save and deliver Israel. He is going to enable Israel to be in a position where she can be blessed.

Verse 3: *“The nations shall walk to your light, and kings to the brightness that is going to shine on you.”*

The nations shall walk to your light: When Israel gets right with God (when they undergo a spiritual change), they are going to have an impact upon a remnant of the nations (Gentiles). Israel, for a moment, is going to be used at the end of this age to bring a remnant of the nations to the Lord (Zechariah 8:23).

Verse 4: *“Lift up all around your eyes, and see: they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be established at your side.”*

Your daughters shall be established at your side: Most of the Rabbinical commentators see this as being in a family – the family of God. In Genesis 2:18 God said that it is not good for a man to be alone. Therefore, God made a man and a woman, and He established them in a family.

Verse 5: *“Then you shall see and stream, and your heart shall fear and be broadened; for He will overturn you like the abundance of the sea, the wealth of the nations shall come to you.”*

You shall see: They are going to see things from God’s vantage point.

Stream: Be moved...like a moving river.

Your heart shall fear and be broadened: A change is brought about. The people’s hearts (which has to do with their thoughts, their thinking) are going to be broadened and made different. They are going to be people who give God priority.

The abundance of the sea: The sea has an abundance of life within it. The sea can feed a large portion of humanity. This is talking about God’s abundant provision.

The wealth of the nations shall come to you: Through redemption (salvation), the people of Israel are going to experience God’s abundant provision (John 10:10. See also Exodus 12:35-36 – after redemption came a plundering of the wealth of the nations). God is going to bring Israel into her fullness (after the Gentiles have been brought into their fullness – Romans 11:25).

Verse 6: *“The abundance of camels shall cover your land, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and incense, and the praises of the LORD they shall proclaim.”*

Abundance of camels: This is again alluding to the great wealth that they are going to receive. The camel being referred to here is the two-humped camel.

Dromedaries: The one-humped camels.

Midian and Ephah: These two tribes were descended from Abraham through his wife Keturah (Genesis 25:4, 1 Chronicles 1:33). They lived in an area where camels were very common and very numerous.

The praises of the LORD they shall proclaim: Israel is going to get right with God.

Verse 7: *“All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together to you, the rams of Nebaioth shall serve you; they shall go up upon the delight of My altar, because the house of My splendour I am going to magnify.”*

They: Referring to the sheep and the goats.

They shall go up upon the delight of My altar: This means that they are willingly going to go to God’s altar to be sacrificed because they know that this brings delight to the Lord. No longer will animals have to be trapped or captured to be offered up for sacrifice. Animals are going to put themselves upon the altar. This is a reference to a Kingdom change – a submissiveness, even of the animals, to God’s order and programme.

Verse 8: *“Who are these that like a cloud fly, and like doves to their chimneys?”*

Like doves to their chimneys: Like doves going to their homes. God is coming to supernaturally put things into order. He is bringing things back to the places where they should be – bringing them “home”.

Verse 9: *“For to Me are the islands and they will hope; and the ships of Tarshish at the beginning, to bring your sons from a distance, their silver and their gold with them, on account of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for He will glorify you.”*

Islands: The far away and remote places.

To Me are the islands: This speaks about God's authority and rule over all of His creation.

They will hope: They are not going to feel so remote, isolated or left out. They will feel connected to what God is doing.

The ships of Tarshish at the beginning: In the past Tashish was a place of great wealth due to its shipping industry. This is going to happen for them again.

He will glorify you: This glory is related to the righteousness of God. When God's glory is manifested we can be sure that it is because righteousness is being done. When God brings a righteous change to Israel, when they begin to reflect the order of God, God's glory is going to be manifest through them.

Verse 10: *“The sons of foreigners shall build up your walls, and their kings shall serve you; for in My wrath I struck you, but with My delight I will be merciful unto you.”*

Sons of foreigners shall build up your walls: Foreigners are going to play a role in Israel's security.

In My wrath I struck you, but with My delight I will be merciful unto you: This is speaking of a time when God's wrath has passed, and Israel is no longer a recipient of God's judgment.

They are going to be put into the order of God. One of the characteristics of His order is that He supplies mercy to them. Nothing good spiritually happens to us until we are recipients of God's mercy. His mercy is foundational and that's why confession of sin is so vital.

Confession of sin brings about God's mercy.

Verse 11: *“Therefore your gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day or night, that men may bring to you the wealth of the nations, and their kings have led them.”*

Note: God's mercy is going to bring about security for the people of Israel. Throughout history, the Jewish people have been a persecuted people. They have suffered greatly, but this is not going to be what happens in the Kingdom of God.

Continually: Day and night.

Their kings have led them: The leaders of the nations are going to be in submission to God's purposes and desires. They are going to lead their nations to bring their wealth as an offering to God. They are going to be in agreement that God must be worshipped.

Verse 12: *“For the nation and kingdom which will not serve you shall perish, and those nations shall be utterly ruined.”*

The nation and kingdom which will not serve you: Things are not going to go well for those nations who do not recognise Israel's leadership within the Kingdom of God.

Verse 13: *“The glory of Lebanon shall come to you, the cypress, the fir tree, and the box tree together, to glorify the place of My sanctuary; the place of My feet I will honour.”*

The cypress, the fir tree, and the box tree: The chief trees, the most glorious trees in Lebanon.

The place of My feet: Scripture speaks of the Earth, this world, as being the footstool of God (Isaiah 66:1). God has His throne in heaven, but His footstool is still here on the earth during the millennial reign of Messiah.

Verse 14: *“Also the sons of those who afflicted you shall come bowing to you, and all those who blasphemed you shall fall prostrate at the soles of your feet; and they shall call you The City of the LORD, Zion of the Holy One of Israel.”*

The sons of those who afflicted you: Those who had previously persecuted Israel.

Shall come bowing to you: Nations who formerly persecuted the Jewish people are going to be transformed through repentance, through understanding God's revelation in the last days.

Blasphemed: Spoke negatively against.

All those who blasphemed you shall fall prostrate at the soles of your feet: God is going to elevate Israel. This is what He always wanted to do, but Israel was not willing in the past because she was not submissive to the plan of God.

Zion: More often than not this is a word that sets a passage within a Kingdom context – Jerusalem in her redemptive state. This is speaking of the time when Messiah has come (Yeshua has arrived on Earth for His second coming) and His Kingdom has been established. The remnants of the nations are going to recognise this. They are going to honour Israel, who are going to be leaders in the millennial Kingdom (Believers – the raptured church – are going to be ruling and reigning with Messiah. The role of the church will be supporting and overseeing the leadership role, the transformation, that Israel is going to be granted over this 1000-year period of time).

The Holy One of Israel: Holiness is always connected to the purposes of God. It is through the millennial reign of Messiah that God's purposes and His order are going to be manifest in this world.

Verse 15: *“Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, so that no one went through you, I will set you as an eternal majesty, rejoicing from generation to generation.”*

Note: An exchange is going to take place in Israel. They are going to experience an improvement taking place in their lives. Hatred and abandonment are going to be exchanged for majesty and joy.

Verse 16: *“You shall drink the milk of the nations, and the breast of kings you will nurse from; you shall know that I, the LORD, am your Saviour and your Redeemer, the knight of Jacob.”*

The knight of Jacob: This is a term of great splendor, respect and honour being given to the name 'Jacob'. There is going to be a change.

The nations are going to recognize God's purposes for Israel. They are going to nourish and provide for Israel. All of this is happening to the Jewish people because they are now going to be committed to the purposes of God.

Verse 17: *“Instead of copper I will bring gold, instead of iron I will bring silver, instead of wood, copper, and instead of stones, iron. I will set your charge as peace, and your taskmasters are going to be righteous.”*

Note: In this verse we see the change of behavior among the nations. For centuries Israel has been hated and abandoned by the nations, but a time is coming when the nations are going to nourish them and provide for them.

Instead of copper I will bring gold: There is an upgrading happening here.

Your charge: This is a word that speaks about a proclamation or an order.

I will set your charge as peace: God is going to command/order peace for Israel. Peace is what we experience as a fulfilment of God’s will.

Taskmasters: This word reminds us of Egypt.

Peace...righteous: Parallel concepts. When we are in God’s will we are going to be found to be in a righteous condition. Israel, through redemption, is going to be in a righteous condition.

Verse 18: *“Violence shall no longer be heard in your land, neither thievery nor destruction within your borders; but you shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise.”*

Salvation: Salvation is related to victory. Walls speak of the provision of protection.

Verse 19: *“No longer will the sun be your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; but the LORD will be to you an everlasting light, and your God is going to glorify you.”*

No longer will the sun be your light by day: This is very reminiscent of what we see in Zechariah 14:6-7. One of the things that characterizes the Kingdom is that light is not going to be from a natural source (ie the sun or the moon). The light is going to be supernatural (like the light created on the first day of creation – Genesis 1:3-5 (God only created the sun and the moon on the fourth day of creation – Genesis 1:14-19).

The LORD will be to you an everlasting light: Both Christian and Jewish scholars agree that this light represents the glory of God. Where God’s presence is, His glory is. The Kingdom of God is unique. In a very powerful way and in a very revealed way the Presence of God and the glory of God are going to be there, and this is going to be the source of light for His people in the Kingdom.

Verse 20: *“Your sun shall no longer go down, nor shall your moon be gathered up; for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and the days of your mourning shall be ended.”*

Your sun shall no longer go down: No longer is the sun going to rise or set.

Nor shall your moon be gathered up: No longer is the moon going to go through her cycles.

Mourning: Sorrow and death are going to cease as there will be no more sin.

The days of your mourning shall be ended: There is going to be a fulfilment. Things are going to reach their completion (Zechariah 12:10-14, Revelation 21:4).

Verse 21: *“Also your people shall all be righteous; they shall inherit the earth for eternity, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified.”*

They shall inherit the earth for eternity: They are going to be the recipient of all of God's blessings.

The branch: This is the same word that defines faith in Messiah. In modern Hebrew it is the word used for a Christian.

That I may be glorified: God's purpose in doing all of these things, and in bringing about all of this change (in both His New Covenant and Old Covenant people who are going to become New Covenant people), is so that He can be glorified.

Verse 22: *“A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a mighty nation. I, the LORD, in its time will hasten it.”*

Little one shall become a thousand: Something which was small and insignificant is going to be transformed and become abundant and great.

In its time: At the right time.

CHAPTER 61

In this chapter we find one of the most famous Messianic prophecies there is. In Luke 4:16-21 Yeshua was in Nazareth (His hometown) and He was handed the book of Isaiah. He turned to this passage and read it before the people. Although this is a prophecy of only good and wonderful news (a revelation about what God is ultimately going to bring about for His people), those in Nazareth did not welcome Yeshua applying it to Himself. They neither honoured nor respected Yeshua.

This prophecy contains numerous promises that God makes to His people. God's desire is that we would receive them in faith, take hold of them and allow them to influence our thoughts and our behaviors so that we might participate with God in bringing these things about. How do we participate with Him? We are called prophetically to be those who execute righteousness – doing those things which reflect the character and will of God to others.

Verse 1: *“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to proclaim good tidings to the humble; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim to the captive's freedom, and to prisoner's redemption.”*

Me: Referring to Messiah

Anointed Me to proclaim good tidings to the poor...: The reasons why the Spirit was upon Messiah are now listed.

Proclaim: Evangelise. This is a word which is related to the word for 'gospel'. Yeshua was not sent to proclaim just any good news or glad tidings. He was sent to proclaim the good news that is related to redemption.

This redemption began at Messiah's first coming (Yeshua did the work of redemption at His first coming – He paid the price for redemption), but it is going to reach its completion (final redemption) as His second coming when He comes to establish His Kingdom. Within God's Kingdom we are going to experience the fullness of the promises and blessings of God (ie. the outcome of redemption. The price was paid at Yeshua first coming. At His second coming He is completing the transaction – collecting what belongs to Him). When Yeshua came the first time He promised these things, but when He comes for the second time, He is going to deliver on them.

Humble: In its simplest form this is the word for humble. Derived from this same root, it can also be understood to mean those who are afflicted ones, those who are suffering because of righteousness (those who are rejected and persecuted in this world because of their allegiance and their faithfulness to God).

Heal: In modern Hebrew this is the word for a paramedic – someone who arrives on the scene to alleviate suffering and pain. It speaks of someone who deals with injuries or very sick people.

Brokenhearted: Those who are full of grief - whose hearts are broken because of the injustice and unrighteousness that dominates the world.

Freedom: The purpose of being set free is not simply for the sake of freedom. We are set free to be able to behave in a different way (Those in prison have to abide by the rules of the prison. When they are set free, they have to abide by the rules of society. They are not exempt from laws in either place. Likewise, when we are enslaved by sin, we live by the law of sin and death. When we are set free from sin, we no longer follow the rules of sin and death, but we have a whole new set of laws – living by the laws of the Spirit...Romans 8:2-4).

And to prisoner's redemption: This is not the normal word for redemption but is a unique word which alludes to redemption that is related to a freedom or a liberty. There is a change in the prisoner's condition or circumstances. This is what Messiah came to bring about – a righteous change, a change that is related to the will and purposes of God.

Verse 2: *“To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn.”*

The acceptable year: The year of delight. This is related to the will of God - those things that He likes, those things that are related to what He sees as proper or acceptable. This is referring to a time yet future. A time known as “the days of Messiah”, the days when all things will be acceptable to God.

The day of vengeance: A Day of retribution. Those things which are not acceptable to Him are going to be judged and destroyed.

Comfort all who mourn: God's vengeance against His enemies leads to His people receiving comfort (Revelation 6:9-11). Mourning, a form of grief and of dealing with loss, is related to death. Death is always related to sin (Romans 6:23). Sin brings grief and sorrow. God is going to deal with sin and, once sin has been dealt with, ‘sorrow and sighing will flee away’ (Isaiah 51:11).

Verse 3: *“To console those who mourn in Zion, to give them glory for ashes, the oil of gladness for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; to proclaim to them that they are trees of righteousness which have been planted by the LORD, that He may be glorified.”*

Zion: A Kingdom word.

Console those who mourn in Zion: This is speaking about those who look at the world in its current condition and they see how remote and far away the Kingdom principles and Kingdom character are. This fills them with grief and sadness and sorrow. These ones, who are grieved about the corruption and the unrighteousness in this world, are known as ‘those who mourn in Zion’.

Them: Referring to those who mourn about the unrighteous, worldly state of affairs.

Glory for ashes: Another exchange is going to occur, an ‘upgrade’ in status.

Ashes: Referring to those who sat in sackcloth in ashes (those who were in an active state of mourning).

The spirit of heaviness: A gloomy spirit. Referring to those who are sad.

That He may be glorified: All of the wonderful things that God brings about, all of the changes that take place, are done for the purpose of bringing glory and honour to God. If we are not committed to bringing glory and honour to God, then we have not understood the gospel message. We want the forgiveness of sins, to be reconciled to God. We want the invitation to be in His Kingdom. We want to experience the good things of God. However, all of these changes that God brings about are so that we can be placed in a new condition - a redemptive condition - whereby we become a new creation in order to bring honour and glory to Him. We obviously benefit from the changes that God brings about, but all of these changes are ultimately about God being glorified – not ourselves. Everything is for Him.

Verse 4: *“And they shall rebuild the ancient desolate places, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations.”*

Note: There is going to be a restoration. These places had been destroyed by the enemies of God. They had not wanted Israel to thrive. The sinfulness of God’s people allowed the enemy access to them and to their lands. In the last days, a rebuilding, and a restoration, is going to take place in the land of Israel (this has been happening since 1948, after a 2000-year period of desolation).

Verse 5: *“Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the foreigner shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers.”*

Strangers: Foreigners. Those who at one time did not have a covenantal relationship with God.

Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks: This change that happens to Israel is going to have an impact on not only the Jewish people but also on those within the nations.

Plowmen: Farmers.

The sons of the foreigner shall be your plowmen...: Many from the nations are going to go to Israel to participate in God's restoration and reestablishment of the land. Jews and Gentiles (who are going to be of the same faith) are going to work together for the same purpose. The remnant of the nations also undergoes a change.

Instead of wanting to tear Israel down they are going to want to build her up. The nations are going to catch the vision that God reveals in this passage.

Verse 6: *“But you, the priests of the LORD, shall be called servants of our God. It will be said concerning you that the wealth of nations you will partake of, and in their glory you shall boast.”*

You: Referring to Israel, the Jewish people, the sons and daughters of Jacob.

The wealth of nations you will partake of: Israel being blessed is a covenantal obligation (Genesis 12:3). When Israel gets right with God, a change is going to happen within the nations. Instead of wanting to destroy Israel, they are going to bring their resources to her. They are going to want to see her (the people and the land) built up.

Verse 7: *“Instead of your shame you shall have double honor, and instead of confusion they shall rejoice in their portion. Therefore, in their land they shall possess double; everlasting gladness shall be theirs.”*

Your: Referring to Israel.

They: Referring to the remnant of the nations.

Note: God is saying that a time is going to come whereby the remnant of the nations are going to minister to the Jewish people. This remnant is going to minister to, bless, help and participate in what God's doing - this restoration of the land of Israel and the Jewish people. Israel is going to be blessed with a double portion, but those who bless Israel are themselves going to be blessed (Genesis 3:12). With the measure the nations use to bless, it will be measured back to them as a double portion (Matthew 7:2).

Everlasting gladness shall be theirs: Those from the nations who participated in the will and purposes of God are going to inherit eternal, Kingdom, gladness.

Verse 8: *“For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery with burnt offerings; I will set their activity in truth and will cut with them an everlasting covenant.”*

Robbery with burnt offerings: This person feels that they can afford to intentionally sin. They have enough money to buy the animals for a burnt offering to pay for their sin. They feel that because they are able to pay for the offering they are justified in their sinning. This is heresy and it is displeasing to God. This is not the heart of God, and nor should it be the heart of a true believer.

Set their activity in truth: This is talking about the Gentiles. God is going to make a change in Israel, but He is also going to make a change in the nations. God is going to set the behaviour of the nations in truth. Why? Because He is going to make an eternal covenant with them. As they embrace the things of God, they are going to be prepared by Him to enter into a covenantal relationship with Him (which is not brought about through human works of righteousness)

Verse 9: *“Their offspring shall be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples. All who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the offspring that is blessed by the Lord.”*

Their offspring: The next generation. This is still speaking about the Gentiles.

Known among the nations: Their children (the future generations) are going to have an influence upon the nations. Even though they are of the nations they can never-the-less influence the nations. Believing Gentiles have had an influence on the nations, and this is going to become more dramatic in the last days.

All who see them shall acknowledge them: They are seen because of the blessing that the Lord has placed upon them. The remnant of the Gentiles are going to go through their own transformation and they are going to have their own ministry among the nations. They are going to be known and recognized as the heritage of the Lord, as those who have been blessed by God.

Verse 10: *“I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, with the cloak of righteousness He has covered me, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.”*

Note: It is possible that Isaiah, in this verse, makes this revelation personal to himself. He gives us a glimpse into how these events relate to himself and how he responds to them.

He has clothed me with the garments of salvation: This is a Kingdom outcome.

The cloak of righteousness: Righteousness is such an important component of the Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33).

Salvation...righteousness: These are parallel concepts. The message for us is very simple: salvation produces righteousness. When we are saved, we are declared righteous by faith. We have the righteousness of Messiah imputed to us. Once we have been saved, and although we have been declared righteous, God works to bring about a change in our lives whereby we begin to behave in a way to demonstrate righteousness (declarative righteousness leads to demonstrated righteousness).

As a bride adorns herself with her jewels: A bride beautifies herself with her jewels – in a physical or discernable way. This is how righteousness should be for us – like jewels it should be physical and discernable in our lives after salvation. When God works in our lives there should be visible evidence of it.

Verse 11: *“For as the earth brings forth its sprout, as the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.”*

Sprout: Produce

The Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations: Righteousness and rejoicing are a powerful and visible testimony to the nations of the work that God does in our lives. Righteousness and rejoicing are chief characteristics in the Kingdom. We have the privilege, as the body of Messiah, to work the Kingdom work today, to do the things that demonstrate the Kingdom’s power and reality that is in our lives. This is what we are called to do.

CHAPTER 62

Those who are wise are always going to agree with God. The things that are important to God will be important to them. Their thoughts and words will reflect this, and their actions and behaviour will demonstrate this.

Verse 1: *“For the sake of Zion I will not be silent, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as a bright light, and her salvation as a torch that burns.”*

For: On account of, for this reason, for the sake of. This is a word that usually speaks of something that has significance or importance. This significance leads to action.

Zion: Nearly every time this word appears in the Bible, we should think of it as relating to the Kingdom of God. We should not simply substitute the word ‘Jerusalem’ in for this word ‘Zion’. ‘Jerusalem’ is a word that refers to the Jerusalem of today – a city in her fallen state (Revelation 11:8). Zion is the word for Jerusalem in her redeemed and transformed state. God is going to bring about a change in Jerusalem’s status.

Silent: God is not going to be still or inactive in regard to Zion. He is going to move to act on her behalf.

Note: One of the foundational things we learn in this chapter is that we ought to be those who participate with God. We need to understand what God's doing, what His Kingdom work is, and we need to be about it - doing it, participating with Him.

I will not be quiet: We know, from creation, that when God speaks things happen. God’s Word carries power and authority. God’s Word is obeyed. God only needs to speak to bring Jerusalem into her redemptive/Kingdom state – ie Zion.

Righteousness...salvation: Once more we see righteousness paralleled with salvation. There is a very strong relationship/link between salvation and righteousness. We are not saved through our righteous behaviour, but once we are saved righteousness is manifest (shines) through us. If someone professes to be a believer but they are not concerned about living their lives according to the commandments and righteousness of God then it is questionable as to whether they are truly saved.

Bright light...a torch that burns: Zion is going to be a city that manifests light, a city that is going to manifest the glory of God.

Verse 2: *“The nations shall see your righteousness, and all kings your glory. You shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD will name.”*

The nations shall see your righteousness: In her Kingdom condition, Israel is finally going to be the witness and testimony that God always intended her to be to the nations.

Righteousness...glory: In this verse we see a connection drawn between righteousness and glory. Once someone has been saved, they begin to be committed to behaving righteously. This righteous behaviour manifests the glory of God.

New name: Name is related to character. Salvation produces a new (righteous) character in the people who commit their lives to God.

Name: This is a word that usually relates to punching or making a hole in something (eg piercing through paper). When something is pierced through it is permanent. God is going to give Israel a new name, and that new name is going to have an eternal quality to it. This name is going to represent His people for eternity.

Verse 3: *“You shall also be a crown of glory In the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem In the palm of your God.”*

You shall also be a crown of glory: Again, alluding to a change or a transformation that is going to take place in Israel. They are going to become a Kingdom people.

The hand of the LORD: The hand of the Lord can be looked at in two ways:

- 1) His hand can make us think about His workmanship. God is going to fashion His people into a crown of splendour. His work in our lives makes this a reality. His work in our lives spurs us on to do good deeds and to behave righteously.
- 2) The hand of the Lord also speaks of His authority. When we recognize, submit to and demonstrate God's authority in our lives it causes us to become like the crown of splendour spoken about here.

Diadem: A turban. A jewelled crown or head band worn as a symbol of sovereignty. Not only is the city going to be different but the people within the city are also going to be transformed.

Verse 4: *“You shall no longer be termed Forsaken, nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be married.”*

Forsaken: Abandoned.

Hephzibah: This is a name which means ‘My delight is in her’. God delights in His Kingdom people.

Beulah: This is a name that means to ‘be married’. It is a word that literally means to exercise Lordship over. God is going to exercise his Lordship over His people. When a good husband exercises lordship over his wife it means that he loves her and takes care of her. He provides for her, is faithful to her and ministers to her. This causes her to feel secure and valued. This causes her to be gloriously transformed – to grow and mature in her love for him. Exercising lordship over another should never be done with the intention to exploit or abuse.

Your land shall be married: Their land is going to have a Master. It is not going to be forsaken. It is not going to be unattached, but it is going to exist within the bounds of a covenantal relationship. This means that God Himself is going to care for it. He is the One who is going to demonstrate His delight over this land.

Verse 5: *“For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.”*

Marries: Exercises lordship over.

The bridegroom rejoices over the bride: The bride is going to be transformed, able to fulfil the desires of her husband. God, through the outcome of salvation, desires a marvelous, righteous, change to take place in His bride.

Verse 6: *“I have established watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent.”*

Watchmen: This could be referring to those who pray continuously – day and night. These ones are never at rest but are always responding, looking out for Kingdom work.

They shall never hold their peace: They are going to be those who are a constant remembrance before God and before others.

Do not keep silent: Be responsive.

Verse 7: *“And give Him no rest till He establishes and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.”*

Give Him no rest: This is a command to those who are watching and praying. They need to give God no rest, but need to be constantly petitioning their prayers before Him.

Till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth: Jerusalem is going to become the praise of the world. This means that all the world is going to praise the Kingdom of God. All the world is going to understand the glory that God placed in Jerusalem.

Verse 8: *“The LORD has sworn with His right hand and with His powerful arm: “Surely I will no longer give your grain as food for your enemies; and the sons of the foreigner shall not drink your new wine, for which you have labored.”*

His powerful arm: This speaks of God being strong. It speaks of God’s sacrifice. It is a term that alludes to God’s Son, the Messiah – Messiah Yeshua.

Will no longer give your grain as food for your enemies: God is no longer going to allow the exploitation of Israel. Israel will no longer be used by the enemy. They are going to be placed in a position whereby they can enjoy the fruit of their labour without worrying that it will be taken from them.

Verse 9: *“But those who have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the LORD; those who have brought it together shall drink it in My holy courts.”*

Eat it, and praise the LORD: Deuteronomy 8:10

Drink it in My holy courts: This is the place where they are going to experience their blessing – in the courts of the Lord.

Note: God is going to keep covenant with His people. He is going to establish His Kingdom, and, in this Kingdom, He will not forget any of our good deeds. We are going to reap and enjoy the benefits of all our faith-filled labour (labour done for Him and based on the foundation of Messiah – 1 Corinthians 3:10-15).

Verse 10: *“Pass through, Pass through into the gates! Prepare the way for the people; Lift up, Lift up the highway! Remove the stones, Lift up a banner for the peoples!”*

Lift up the highway: Prepare a highway.

Lift up a banner: This is a miraculous banner. It is a pole that is set up to announce victory to the people. It is a word that also relates to Messiah. The One who was lifted up on the pole (Messiah Yeshua) is the One who brings victory for us. This victory is a testimony to others.

Verse 11: *“Behold the LORD has proclaimed unto the end of the world: “Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Surely your Saviour is coming; Behold, His reward is with Him, And His work goes before Him.’”*

Saviour: The term for salvation is usually written in the feminine but, in this verse, it is written in the masculine. This use of the masculine could suggest that this is referring to Messiah.

Verse 12: *“And they shall call them a Holy People, the Redeemed of the LORD; and you shall be called Sought Out, a City Not Forsaken.”*

Them: Israel, the people of God.

A Holy People, the Redeemed: Through redemption the people become holy and pleasing to the Lord. Holiness is connected to the purposes of God, which, in turn, is connected to the new state of being for the people of God.

You shall be called Sought Out, a City Not Forsaken: God always keeps the promises that He makes.

CHAPTER 63

PART 1: Isaiah 63:1-6

We need to be very specific when we talk about the “coming of Messiah” as to whether we are talking about our blessed hope (the rapture) - which takes place before God's wrath – or if we are talking about His second coming, which takes place at the end of Daniel's 70th week – the final seven years of the outpouring of God’s wrath.

God’s wrath features significantly in this chapter, so we can know with assurance that it is not referring to the rapture but to the second coming of Messiah. The purpose of the rapture is that of delivering the New Covenant people (believers) out of this world in order that they do not experience any of God's wrath. The first purpose of the second coming of Messiah is to deliver Israel and bring a 1/3rd remnant of them to faith. Its second purpose is to destroy Israel’s (God’s) enemies (hence the final outpouring of God’s wrath).

The book of Obadiah reveals to us that there is going to be a final battle and it is going to involve Edom – the sons of Esau – and the sons of Jacob (the children of Israel). Isaiah 63 focuses on this battle. We know (from various prophecies) that the nations of the world are going to side with Edom.

From Scripture we know that Messiah is going to place His feet in three very specific places when He returns:

1. Bozrah, Edom, Mount Seir. When Yeshua returns this is a location where He will pour out His judgment. Scholars identify Bozrah to be the capital of Edom. Bozrah is a word which means a citadel, a stronghold or a fortified place (a walled city with many soldiers). Mount Seir is the name of this mountain of Esau – the place from which God is going to judge Edom.
2. Armageddon – the Jezreel Valley, Jehoshapat (the valley of the Lord’s judgment). Messiah is going to destroy the armies of the enemy at this location.

3. The Mount of Olives (Acts 1:9-12, Zechariah 14:4)

Verse 1: *“Who is this coming from Edom, whose garments are soiled from Bozrah, This One who is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the abundance of His power? ‘I who speak in righteousness, abundant to save.’”*

This: Referring to Messiah.

Soiled: Stained.

Bozrah: The capital city of Edom. Edom is God’s eternal enemy.

Glorious: Speaking of splendour.

Traveling: This could also be the word for marching – marching like an army. This is a word that has a military overtone.

Traveling in the abundance of His power: Messiah, as a one-man army, is coming and defeating all the armies of the world, who have united with the antichrist against Israel.

I who speak in righteousness: This is Messiah’s purpose – righteousness (Matthew 6:33). The best adjective used to describe the Kingdom of God is this word – righteous. The objective for those who are truly saved is to live righteously.

Abundant to save: God saves us so that we can be part of His righteous Kingdom, and so that we can be people who begin to live righteous lives.

Verse 2: *“Why is your apparel red, and Your garments like one who treads in the winepress?”*

Note: He has a soiled garment. His garment is red like the garments of those who have been working with the grapes – those who have been treading them down in a wine vat. It looks like His garments have been stained by wine, but in reality they are stained with the blood of His enemies.

Verse 3: *“I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with Me. For I have stamped on them in My anger and trampled them in My wrath; He will sprinkle their blood upon My garments, and I have stained all My robes.”*

I have trodden the winepress alone: The source of this wrath is Yeshua, and He alone has brought it about (all matters of judgment have been given to the Son. He is the One who is responsible. He paid the price for all sin and has earned the title: ‘Lord of lords and King of kings.’)

The peoples: The nations.

From the peoples no one was with Me: The reason for this is that just prior to this event (the beginning of the wrath of God) Messiah gathered up all those who were ‘IN Him’ – those from every tribe, language and nation. Of those left behind, none among the peoples were now for Him.

Trampled them in My wrath: This is clearly a reference to Messiah coming back and pouring out the anger and wrath of God upon the peoples who have no covenantal relationship with God the Father.

Stained all My robes: His robes have become polluted. They have become that which is rejectable because they have Edom’s blood on them – a people who are forever rejected.

Verse 4: *“For the day of vengeance is in My heart, and the year of My redeemed has come.”*

Vengeance: In the New Testament this is a word related to bringing out righteousness and justice from a situation. God's judgment destroys everything that is not righteous and just, which ensures that everything left behind is righteous and just.

Day of vengeance...year of My redeemed: There is a relationship between redemption and this concept of vengeance (destroying all things that are not right, holy or according to the will of God).

Verse 5: *“I will gaze and I will look, but there was no one to help, and I was amazed that there was no one to trust; therefore, My arm was salvation for Me; and My own wrath sustained Me.”*

There was no one to trust: There was no one that He could rely or depend upon. All of the nations who were left (after the rapture) were a faithless people. None of them were repenting or turning from their sin (Revelation 9:20-21).

Note: The exception to this, at this time, is going to be the remnant from the house of Israel – those within the tribes who are brought to faith (Zechariah 12:10-14). However, this is not the subject of this passage. This passage talks about the retribution that God is going to place upon the nations.

My arm: A reference to Messiah – the seed, the offspring, the sacrifice, the Son.

My arm was salvation: Messiah sacrificed Himself, being delivered over to death, in order to pay the punishment for our sins, in order to redeem us. Messiah's purpose was to bring salvation to mankind.

My own wrath sustained Me: God's wrath supported Him – He was able to lean on it. His wrath is what brought appeasement to Him. God hates evil and unrighteousness, and His wrath destroyed those things. With what was left it was now possible for God to create and establish His Kingdom.

Verse 6: *“I have trampled peoples in My anger, and I have caused them to be drunk in My wrath and brought their blood down to the earth.”*

I have trampled peoples in My anger: The first coming of Yeshua was not for the purpose of condemnation but for the purpose of salvation. This is not the purpose for His second coming. The New Testament reveals to us that the purpose of His second coming is apart from salvation - the implication is that it is for the wrath of God - to destroy those who have rejected His covenant. He is not coming to save or deliver but He is coming to destroy those things which are in opposition to His Kingdom purposes. The outcome, ultimately, of God's judgment and wrath is the establishment of His Kingdom - a Kingdom of righteousness, holiness, justice and perfection.

CHAPTER 63

PART 2: Isaiah 63:7-19

The concept of redemption is a very important concept in the Bible. It is only through the redemption of Messiah that there is eternal reconciliation to God. It is only through redemption that we can become part of the eternal Kingdom of God. Before God's Kingdom is established there must be judgment. God is going to move, through Messiah, to bring about His judgment on earth. Once the wrath of God has been poured out on, and destroyed, Israel's enemies then God can move to bring salvation to the remnant of His people.

Verse 7: *"The abundant grace of the Lord I will make mention of, the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord has bestowed on us, and the abundant goodness toward the house of Israel, which He has bestowed on them according to His mercies, according to the abundance of His grace."*

Abundant grace: Lovingkindness. It is through God's kindness to us that we can experience His love. It is through the grace of God that we find redemption.

I will make mention of: Isaiah is causing us to remember God's abundant grace and the outcome of Him moving to keep His covenantal obligations to His people.

The praises: When we remember the grace of God (what He has done graciously for us but also how He will establish His Kingdom) it leads us to praise Him.

All that the Lord has bestowed on us: Through grace God redeems us (makes the payment of redemption) which in turn leads to the blessing of God in our lives – the fulfilment of His promises.

Verse 8: *"For He said, 'Surely My people are they, sons that will not lie'. And He will become for them a Saviour."*

Sons that will not lie: God expects those who have entered into a covenantal relationship with Him (those who have experienced redemption) to be people of truth.

He will become for them a Saviour: God is going to move in His integrity, based upon His truth, apart from anything that's false, to bring about salvation.

Verse 9: *"In all of their affliction, to Him was trouble. The Messenger of His Presence saved them; in His love and in His compassion He redeemed them; and He raised them up and carried them all the days of old."*

Affliction: This is a word for trouble - all the troublesome things that they have experienced.

To Him was trouble: Messiah bore what we were experiencing. Not only did He bear what we have borne but He also bore the punishment that should have been ours.

Messenger: This is a word that can mean both messenger or angel – one who is sent on a assignment. Angels were created. Messiah was never created – He is eternal.

The Messenger of His Presence: Messiah was the Messenger of the very Presence of God. This speaks to His identity.

Compassion: His mercy, His pity.

He raised them up and carried them all the days of old: Israel's existence through many generations until the last days is all due to God being at work. He had lifted them up and carried them in order that there might be a remnant that makes it to the end and this remnant, who makes it to the end, will look upon Messiah. They will recognize Him as One who came and was rejected. They'll see the wounds in his hands and side and they will recognise Him as Yeshua the Messiah. They will no longer reject Him but are going to receive Him.

Verse 10: *“But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; and He was overturned to them as an enemy, and He fought against them.”*

They rebelled: This was their previous condition. They had rejected God - the Word, commandments and prophecies of God.

Grieved: Made sad.

He fought against them: When we rebel against God, we grieve Him and cause Him to turn into our enemy. For the remnant of the people (ie the covenantal people) we need to remember that God fighting against, being an enemy of, is a temporal condition and not an eternal one.

Verse 11: *“Then He remembered the days of old, Moses and his people saying: ‘Where is the One who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of His flock? Where is the One who placed in their midst His Holy Spirit?’”*

He remembered the days of old: He remembered their history.

Moses: Moses is mentioned a couple of times in this passage because he is seen as a typology for the Redeemer (Deuteronomy 18:15-22) When Moses is mentioned in prophecy the context is mostly that of redemption.

His people: Referring to the people that Moses led through the wilderness.

The shepherd of His flock: Moses was the shepherd of the flock in the wilderness.

Holy Spirit: Whenever the Holy Spirit is mentioned, we need to think about redemption (Isaiah 59:20-21). The Spirit is given as the sign of redemption.

Verse 12: *“And leads them by the right hand of Moses, an arm of His splendour, the one who splits the water from before them, to make for Him an eternal name.”*

Right hand of Moses, an arm: The ‘arm’ is a sacrificial word which is related to Passover.

Moses did a work at the first Passover – instructing the people regarding God’s command in respect of the lamb and what they were to do with its blood (Exodus 12).

Note: What this verse seems to be suggesting is that through the work of Moses (who was a typology of Messiah – therefore we can see this as an example/foreshadowing of the work of Messiah) God’s name was made eternal. What we see in the activity of Moses, his faithfulness, is the same principles that we'll see for the Kingdom of God to become a reality (ie be established). The people had to submit to Moses’ instruction in order to position themselves to come out of Egypt. In the same way, we need to submit to Messiah’s instruction (the gospel message) to come out from our sin and be known as a new people, a Kingdom people.

Verse 13: *“He leads them in the deeps, as a horse in the wilderness does not stumble.”*

Deeps: Written in the plural and speaking of deep waters.

As a horse in the wilderness does not stumble (fail): Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit (how God led them) they did not stumble. Their failure had nothing to do with God’s leadership.

Verse 14: *“As an animal goes down to the valley the Spirit of the Lord gave him rest. Thus you shall lead Your people, to make for Yourself a name of splendour.”*

Him: Referring to the people. The Lord gave them rest.

Note: The people are going to get right with the Lord. They are going to be brought to faith – based upon the truth of the promises of God. However, God is going to have to bring them to this faith through tribulation – Jacob’s trouble (Jeremiah 30:7). Tribulation is going to cause the people to trust in God, to turn away from every other thing. They are going to realize that their disobedience, idolatry and faithlessness is empowering their enemy.

Verse 15: *“He looked down from heaven and saw Your holy habitation and Your splendour. Where is Your zeal and Your power, and the yearning of Your stomach? Your mercies unto me were restrained.”*

He looked down from heaven and saw: Messiah saw what God intended for the people. He saw that they were going to be delivered and saved. He saw that they were ultimately going to dwell in this holy habitation.

Holy habitation: A place that is exalted or raised up. This is a safe place. It is a place that is out of reach from harmful things.

Yearning: This is the word for ‘noise’.

The yearning of your stomach: This is poetic language speaking about the nervousness, excitement or desire that one feels which is manifest in a physical way in our stomachs (“butterflies in our stomach”). God is never nervous, but the image here is that of excitement, that of desiring something.

Your mercies unto me were restrained: God, for a purpose and for a season, restrained His mercy. He did this to bring about a change in the people.

Verse 16: *“For You are our Father; for Abraham did not know us, and Israel did not recognise us. For You, O Lord, are our Father, our Redeemer. Forever is Your name.”*

You are our Father: They are acknowledging that God is their Father.

Abraham: Abraham was considered the father of faith. Although he is a patriarch, he is not the Father of the Kingdom – God is. God is the One who is the provider.

Israel: Jacob. Abraham and Jacob, when they look at the people of God in the last days, will not see children of faith. They will see faithlessness and rebelliousness in the people before God brings about a change.

Our Redeemer: Only God can provide redemption for His children.

Forever is Your name: ‘Name’ is synonymous with character. God’s character doesn’t change. He is going to work to bring about a redemptive change, a Kingdom change, to His people.

Verse 17: *“Why have You led us astray, O Lord, from Your ways. You have hardened our hearts from fearing You. Return on account of Your servants, the tribes of Your inheritance.”*

Why have You led us astray, O Lord: The question is this: Did God lead them astray? Did He harden their hearts? And the answer is: Yes...but He did not do it in a vacuum. God’s will did not need to be fulfilled by Israel going astray or by them hardening their hearts. We always need to pay attention to context. In our previous verse we were told that the children of Israel were unrecognizable to Abraham and to Jacob (the patriarchs who were interested in the promises of God, demonstrating that interest by faithfulness to God). The patriarchs did not recognise their posterity because those who came after them were not living by faith but had rebelled (rejected the truth) and grieved the Spirit (Isaiah 63:10). This is a spiritual principle/law: when we behave faithlessly, when we reject the truth and live according to the principles of this world, we are led into deception. When we reject truth, we invite deception into our lives. God allowed the people to be led astray because they had acted faithlessly. When we are faithless our hearts are hardened, and we do not have the ability to fear (honour and reverence) God.

Return on account of Your servants: These people have demonstrated time and again that they are unable to change themselves. It is only God who can do the work to bring a change to the hearts of this people. God is going to return to His people, but His return is going to be through them having to go through difficult circumstances or persecution from their enemies. This affliction or trouble is going to cause their hearts to undergo a change.

Verse 18: *“For a little while Your holy people inherited, our enemies trampled Your sanctuary.”*

A little while: A short period of time.

For a little while Your holy people inherited: For a short time the children of Israel were recipients of their inheritance – the land of Israel.

Our enemies trampled Your sanctuary: Israel had the temple for only a short period of time in their history. In the end, their enemy came and trampled down those holy places.

Verse 19: *“We have become like those whom You never ruled, those who were never called by Your name.”*

We have become like those whom You never ruled: When we look at the history and the state of the people it is as though God never ruled over them. From the looks of things, it seems as if they were never the people of God.

Never called by Your name: The people did not, for any significant period of time, reflect the character of God, although they were a people who were called to reflect it. This is going to be remedied through the trouble, hardship and affliction that they are going to experience in the last days.

Note: In the Hebrew Bible, Isaiah 64:1 is the last verse of Isaiah 63 (ie: it should be Isaiah 63:20).

CHAPTER 64

Verse 1: *“If only You would tear the heavens! That You would come down! Before You the mountains shake.”*

If only: This is what is desired, the preferred situation. Instead of the trouble they are going to experience they would prefer God to tear open the heavens and come down.

Tear the heavens: Open up the heavens.

Come down: This is a call for Messiah to be sent to them (Matthew 23:39). From the perspective of Israel today they would see this as Messiah’s first coming, but from a Biblical perspective we know that this will be His second coming.

The mountains shake: Haggai 2:6-7. When Messiah comes again, He is going to shake the heavens and the earth. This means that they are going to be transformed, changed.

Mountains represent authority. When Messiah comes again, the powerful authorities of this world are going to be shaken and transformed.

Verse 2: *“As fire burns it melts away, as fire causes water to boil, Your name is made known among Your enemies, for before You nations will tremble.”*

Melts away: Fire causes things to dissolve. Some translations insert a phrase here that refers to vegetation/shrubs being burnt by fire. Fire burns, and as it burns it has an effect/influence on things.

Fire causes water to boil: This is a physical law. Once water reaches a certain temperature it begins to bubble. In the same way, spiritual laws also have an effect or influence – which often manifest in a physical way. When Messiah comes there is going to be an outcome – an effect – His name is going to be made known.

Name: Character.

Made known among Your enemies: God makes known His name among His enemies through His judgment or wrath. It is through His wrath that a Kingdom change is brought about. This is what Isaiah is desiring. We need to agree with Isaiah. We want God's judgment to come as it produces a transformation in authority. It shakes the governments and produces a new authority, a new government - Messiah's Kingdom.

Before You nations will tremble: The mountains will shake (the authorities of this world) but so will the nations shake with fear when Yeshua comes again.

Verse 3: *“When You have done awesome things which we did not expect, You came down, The mountains shook at Your presence.”*

Awesome things: Things which reveal the awesome power of God. Things that show the supremacy and sovereignty of God.

Things which we did not expect: This is literally a word for hope. Hope is related to expectation. The people did not have the right expectation (they did not recognise what God had done). Therefore they were not able to participate with God, which means that they were not able to respond faithfully to what God had done.

You came down: This is referring to God having come down in the person of Messiah.

The mountains shook at Your presence: Most scholars see this as referring to what took place at Mount Sinai (Exodus 20:18-21).

At Mount Sinai God was moving to bring about a wonderful change in the people. The people however did not want this change and nor did they want to participate in what God was doing. Instead they chose to stand afar off.

Verse 4: *“For since the beginning of the world men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, nor has the eye seen any God besides You, who acts for the one who waits for Him.”*

Men have not heard nor perceived: People, from the beginning, have not wanted to hear or perceive what God is up to. They have not wanted to listen to God. This is why they cannot respond correctly to what God is doing.

Note: They did not know that it was God who was acting in a certain way. They did not have an expectation about how God would reward those who were faithfully waiting for Him to act. Not hearing and not seeing was their problem.

Verse 5: *“You meet him who rejoices and does righteousness, who remembers You in Your ways. You are indeed angry, for we have sinned— In these ways we continue; and we need to be saved.”*

You meet: The implication here is that God meets or enters into a relationship with those who rejoice in righteousness, those who find God’s ways important.

Him who rejoices and does righteousness: The source of joy is found in doing righteousness.

Remembers You in Your ways: These people anticipate or expect that what God has said will be carried out. They understand the faithfulness of God to do what He has said He is going to do.

You are indeed angry, for we have sinned— In these ways we continue: The problem is that most people do not have an expectation of the faithfulness of God and so they continue on in their own ways. This attitude causes God to be angry with them.

We need to be saved: Salvation means being restored to the purposes of God (ie becoming the faithful people of God). God was willing to save His people. He did awesome things to bring about His salvation, but the people were not listening and nor did they see and so they did not respond appropriately. God did what they did not expect. Their incorrect response to God’s plan and workings for salvation led to them sinning - instead of receiving God’s workmanship they received His anger. The people did not experience what God wanted to bring about. Instead, they experienced uncleanness.

Verse 6: *“But we are all unclean, as filthy rags is all our righteousnesses; as a leaf that fades are all the people, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”*

We are all unclean: Instead of knowing God’s salvation, victory and restoration the people found themselves in this condition – unclean.

Filthy rags: Beggars wear filthy rags. These are garments which are revolting and rejected because of the defilement that is upon them.

A leaf that fades: The people are withering away. They are in a state of decay because of their spiritual defilement.

Taken us away: Their sins have led to them being easily moved, easily blown away. Instead of being positioned where they need to be, where God desires them to be, the consequence of sin has caused them to become weak, easily moved by the forces of this world.

Verse 7: *“And there is no one who calls on Your name, there is no one who stirs himself up to take hold of You; for You have hidden Your face from us, and have consumed us because of our iniquities.”*

No one...calls on Your name...no one...stirs himself up to take hold of You: There is no one who is truly interested in God. Each one has turned aside to their own ways.

Consumed us because of our iniquities: Our sin is causing us to be dissolved, to melt away, to be consumed in the way that fire eats up vegetation. There is nothing that is seen spiritually among the people that leads them to believe that there is any hope for them, any redeeming influence that's coming. This sets the stage for them to realise that its only by God's grace, mercy and faithfulness that they can be saved. Salvation is not dependant on people and their actions or lack of actions. Salvation can only come about through God who is faithful to His covenant commitment.

Verse 8: *“But now, O LORD, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You are the One who forms all of us; we are the work of Your hand.”*

You are the One who forms all of us: If the Potter does not form us we have no hope of becoming a useful vessel. Clay cannot form itself into something useful. By itself it remains unformed, unshaped and useless. Only the potter can give the clay value. This is what Isaiah is testifying to. We need to realize that it is only when we say 'yes' to God and respond to Him in faith that He will begin to work in our lives to change us into the people that He wants us to be.

Verse 9: *“Do not be furious, O LORD, nor remember iniquity forever; behold, look please — we all are Your people!”*

Do not be furious: God is angry because the people are not exercising faith. Isaiah is asking God to relent from His anger. If God is angry the people have no hope.

Nor remember iniquity forever: If God remembers our sin for eternity, then we have no hope (Jeremiah 31:34, Hebrews 8:12).

Behold: Isaiah is petitioning God.

Look please: He wants God to take notice of the condition of the people.

Verse 10: *“Your holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.”*

Wilderness: A place of emptiness. A wasteland.

Zion...Jerusalem a desolation: When Isaiah looks at things (from a Kingdom perspective – Zion – and from a physical perspective – Jeruslaem) he does not see either reflecting, or even close to fulfilling, the prophetic promises of God.

Verse 11: *“Our holy and splendid temple, where our fathers praised You, is burned up with fire; and all our desirous things are destroyed.”*

Burned up with fire: It has been destroyed.

Note: The things that Israel took comfort in were no more. They have nothing left except a covenantal hope. God is a covenant keeping God, even when the people do not deserve it.

God will respond. He is going to move, in and of Himself, because of who He is, to bring about a change. When we are faithless He remains faithful.

Verse 12: *“Will You restrain Yourself because of these things, O LORD? Will You hold Your peace, and afflict us very severely?”*

Restrain Yourself: Sit and do nothing.

These things: Referring to Israel being a wasteland, the temple being destroyed, the desirable things being no more.

Will You hold Your peace: Be silent.

Afflict us very severely: Isaiah does not want God to be silent. He does not want God to restrain Himself from helping them. Isaiah knows that Israel is going to be afflicted up until the point where Israel turns in faith to Him, but if God keeps silent that affliction will feel all the more severe.

Note: Israel is going to reach a point of desperation. Only then will they say: ‘Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord’ (a Messianic invitation – Matthew 23:39) God is going to be quiet, He is going to restrain Himself and will not move until this point of desperation and this call has been uttered by their lips. When they call out God is going to quickly respond. He is going to open up the heavens, and descend, shaking the mountains, the governments, the authority and the nations in order to establish a glorious Kingdom change.

CHAPTER 65

PART 1: Isaiah 65:1-12

The children of Israel, through Moses and the prophets, were given much revelation and instruction. They did not heed this revelation and fell into disobedience. Even though they had had the truth revealed to them, they pursued other gods. In this chapter Isaiah contrasts this to the nations. The nations were steeped in idolatry. They did not receive commandments or instructions from the prophets. Nevertheless, they responded to God's revelation – the general revelation of God which can be found in creation (Romans 1:20). In creation (whether in the heavens or on earth) we see the order of God. Nothing is random or produced by chance. Chaos cannot produce something ordered and beautiful – even over billions of years, as so many falsely teach (evolutionists etc).

Verse 1: *“I was sought by those who did not ask for Me; I was found by those who did not seek Me. I have said, ‘Behold I am, behold I am,’ to a nation that did not call upon My name.”*

Sought: People (the nations) inquired after God, they investigated Him. They understood that because of the order that they saw in creation that there must be a Creator.

Did not ask for Me: These are people who were not told to seek God, but nevertheless they responded – inquiring after and seeking Him.

I was found by those who did not seek Me: Their objective was not to worship the God of Israel, but nevertheless they found the God of Israel - they were able to discern who the One true God is.

Behold I am: Because of their inquiry and because they were seeking God, He revealed Himself to them.

A nation that did not call upon My name: They did not call upon God's name because they did not initially know His name.

Verse 2: *"I have stretched out My hands all day long to an utterly rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, according to their own thoughts."*

I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people: This is a verse in contrast to Isaiah 65:1. God did not hold out His hands to the nations, yet they responded to Him. He did hold out His hands to the children of Israel (He gave them the Torah and the prophets) but they rejected His revelation and rebelled against Him.

Rebellious: This same word is found in Deuteronomy 21:18-21 and speaks of a son who is utterly rebellious, a son who would not receive and submit to instruction. This is how God describes Israel – as a rebellious and unteachable people.

Walk: This is a word of lifestyle. Their behaviour is not good.

According to their own thoughts: They were given God's revelation (His thoughts) but they rejected God's thoughts and ways and chose to live instead according to their own thoughts and desires. Living in this disobedient way put them exactly where the enemy wanted them to be – in a place of spiritual weakness where they would be easy prey for the enemy.

Verse 3: *"A people who provoke Me to anger continually to My face; who sacrifice in gardens, and burn incense on altars of brick."*

A people: Still speaking about Israel.

Provoke Me to anger continually to My face: The people knew what God desired but despite knowing they cognitively and willfully desired to rebel against Him.

Continually: All day long. This is a word that shows consistency, and some say that it also shows an intent. They wanted their actions to make God angry.

Sacrifice in gardens, and burn incense on altars of brick: Most scholars agree that this means that instead of making sacrifices and burning incense in the way that God commanded them to, they sacrificed according to the style or methodology of the nations. They chose to worship in what they deemed a more "socially acceptable way" rather than hearing and obeying the instructions of worship that God had given to them.

Verse 4: *"Who sit among the graves, and spend the night in the tombs; who eat swine's flesh, and the broth of abominable things is in their vessels."*

Spend the night in the tombs: They keep watch over the dead bodies. This is a clear reference to the honouring of the dead (see Mark 12:27). We serve the God of the living. Those who embrace a covenantal relationship with God are alive – even if their bodies are dead.

The broth of abominable things: Their food or sustenance is filled with the foods that God had forbidden them to eat.

Verse 5: *“Who say, ‘Keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I have sanctified myself!’ These are smoke in My nostrils, a fire that burns all the day.”*

I have sanctified myself: They consider themselves to be in a holy state, more holy than other people. They pridefully consider themselves better than others.

A fire that burns all the day: God is continuously and consistently angry with those who set themselves up above others, those who believe that they are holier or better than others spiritually, those who consider themselves set apart. God has not called us to set ourselves apart from others. This is an attitude that goes against the call of doing ministry and being a blessing to others.

Verse 6: *“Behold, it is written before Me: I will not be still, but will repay— Even repay into their chest.”*

It is written before Me: Because of their attitude and behavior it is clear to God what He needs to do regarding them.

I will not be still, but will repay: We can understand this to be saying that God is going to bring the fullness of His anger. Those who are prideful are going to receive the outcome of God’s will.

Their chest: Their very center. They have become a target for God to pay out, in fullness, His punishment upon them.

Verse 7: *“Your iniquities and the iniquities of your fathers together,” says the LORD, “Who have burned incense on the mountains and blasphemed Me on the hills; therefore I will measure their former work into their chest.”*

Your iniquities and the iniquities of your fathers together: God sees their iniquities and the iniquities of their forefathers (those in earlier generations) as one and the same. They were all guilty of rebellion and of rejecting God’s commandments.

Verse 8: *“Thus said the LORD: “Just as the new wine is found in clusters, and he has said, ‘Do not destroy it, for a blessing is in it,’ thus will I do for My servants’ sake, that I may not destroy them all.”*

The new wine is found in the cluster: In the vineyards, when the grapes are ready to be harvested, the grapes are found clustered together on the vine.

Do not destroy it: Each cluster of grapes has the potential to produce wine.

A blessing is in it: There is a tradition in Israel where a cup of new wine (or a cup of grape juice) produced by the grapes can be used to sanctify the name of the Lord. This cup of wine symbolises fruitfulness. Isaiah is speaking symbolically of Israel here. Israel is seen as grapes, and, in the clusters, there is a potential for blessing.

Thus will I do: ‘Thus’ or ‘yes’ is a word of agreement. God is not going to destroy them all.

For My servants’ sake: In Israel there has always been a remnant who are faithful to God (1 Kings 19:18). God does not completely destroy Israel for the sake of His servants – the faithful remnant. God preserves a remnant so that He can fulfil His covenantal promises to Israel.

Verse 9: *“I will bring out from Jacob a seed, and from Judah an heir of My mountains; My elect shall inherit it, and My servants shall dwell there.”*

A seed: Offspring. The word used here is very significant. It is the same word that is used to refer to the seed of Abraham. It is a word that speaks of those who have a covenantal relationship with Messiah – those who are part of His Kingdom family (which we become a part of through faith – Genesis 15:6).

Judah: The tribe who were given the Messianic promise (Genesis 49:10). Judah is mentioned here as a way of emphasising the Messianic promise.

An heir: One who inherits. A remnant of Israel (the Jewish people) is going to inherit.

My mountains: Referring to the seat of God’s Kingdom, the place where His authority/government will sit – ie Jerusalem. Jerusalem is associated with worship.

My elect: Romans 11:5 tells us that there is an election, and this election is based on grace (the message of God's grace is found in the gospel). We are not elected into the family of God simply by God’s choosing. We are elected into it when God responds to us – as we respond to Him through the gospel message, His offering of grace.

Verse 10: *“Sharon shall be an oasis for the flock, and the Valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down, for My people who have sought Me.”*

Sharon: An area just north of Tel Aviv.

The flock: Referring to God’s people.

Valley of Achor: Also known as the Valley of Trouble or Disturbance (Joshua 7:24-26).

A place for herds to lie down: A place of rest. A place of safety.

Sought: Inquired of, pursued, investigated. God desires that His creation will seek Him, pursue Him, investigate Him (Matthew 6:33).

Verse 11: *“But you are those who forsake the LORD, who forget My holy mountain, who prepare a table for Gad, and who furnish a drink offering for Meni.”*

You are those who forsake the LORD: The remnant responded with faith to God's revelation, but many (the majority) people do not respond to Him.

Those who forsake: Those who have departed from, those who have left. They have not done this in innocence. They know what the truth of God is, but they refuse to submit to His truth, revelation or instruction.

Forget My holy mountain: They have ignored God or have forgotten about worshipping Him. We become a changed or transformed people when we worship God.

Gad: ‘Fortune’. A pagan deity.

Meni: ‘Destiny’. We should be more interested in fulfilling God’s will than concerned re our own destinies. The Israelites were looking for their destiny and their portion in the things of this world. This is the wrong place to be looking. These were the wrong tables to be eating and drinking at.

Verse 12: *“Therefore I will destine you for the sword, and you shall all bend the knee to the slaughter; because, when I called, you did not answer; when I spoke, you did not hear, but did evil before My eyes, and what I delight in you have not chosen.”*

Destine: There is a play on words here. They were looking for their own destinies, but God destined them or appointed them for something else.

Slaughter: Massacre.

I called: God is not the One who is lacking here. He did His part.

Did not answer...did not hear: They did not answer God or listen to Him because they were too intent on doing their own evil things, which, in their own eyes, appeared right to them.

What I delight in you have not chosen: What kinds of decisions are we making? Are we choosing the things that God is delighted with? Or are we neglecting God’s revelation (His Word) and choosing those things which are desirable to us, things which please our flesh?

CHAPTER 65

PART 2: Isaiah 65:13-25

Verse 13: *“Therefore thus said the Lord GOD: “Behold, My servants shall eat, but you shall be hungry; Behold, My servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty; Behold, My servants shall rejoice, but you shall be ashamed.”*

Note: In this verse God’s servants are contrasted with those who are not His servants. There is a difference between what the servants of God receive and experience and between what those who do not serve God receive and experience. This may not be evidenced in this life, but it will become very evident eternally.

My servants shall eat: The servants of God are going to be satisfied in the Kingdom of God. God is going to do great things for those who are His faithful people. Faith in God, believing in His Kingdom promises, causes us to be His obedient servants.

Verse 14: *“Behold, My servants shall shout for joy of heart, but you shall yell out from a heart of pain, and lament from a spirit that is broken.”*

Shout: The word used here is a word that shows great emotion – a great excitement that God is acting on behalf of His people.

Verse 15: *“Your name shall be set as an oath to My chosen; for the Lord GOD will kill you and call His servants by another name.”*

Your name shall be set as an oath: God is making a promise, He is taking an oath. Those who are not His servants are going to have their names set as a testimony before God’s elect re how not to do things.

Call His servants by another name: This could also be translated ‘they will call to God in another name’. They are not going to call God the God of Judgment, but He will be known as the God of faithfulness.

Verse 16: *“So that he who blesses himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he who swears in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; for the former troubles are forgotten, and they will be hidden from My eyes.”*

Truth: Literally the word ‘amen’. The word ‘truth’, ‘amen’ and ‘faithfulness’ are all derived from the same root. When someone says ‘amen’ what they are saying is that what has been said can be believed. It is a truth that needs to be received, by faith.

Swear: Take an oath.

The God of truth: The God of Amen (2 Corinthians 1:20). God is faithful. We need to recognise His authority and submit to it.

The former troubles: The things of this world. This world, and the things of this world, are going to come to an end. God promises that all the troubles we face in this world are going to be in the past, behind us.

They will be hidden from My eyes: God is not going to allow our former troubles to be present in His Kingdom. Our former troubles are going to be hidden from His eyes. This is an idiom that means that they will be things that no longer exist. God is going to bring about a new reality – an eternal reality.

Verse 17: *“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor shall they go up upon our heart.”*

Note: John, in Revelation 21:1-4, takes this verse, expands on it, giving it a new context and a fuller revelation.

New heavens and a new earth: These new heavens and new earth have a name: The New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:2). The New Jerusalem is the final and eternal state of the Kingdom of God. This is where we want to be for eternity. The current heaven (where people who die in faith currently go) is not our eternal habitation.

The former shall not be remembered: All pain, sorrow, things that cause tears and despair and sadness will be no more.

Nor shall they go up upon our heart: We will no longer think about them.

Verse 18: *“But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people for rejoicing.”*

Jerusalem: Referring to the New Jerusalem.

Rejoicing: Sadness and sorrow are going to be replaced with abundant joy.

Verse 19: *“I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people; the voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the sound of yelling out.”*

I will rejoice in Jerusalem: Not only are the city and the people going to rejoice but God Himself is also going to rejoice with them.

Verse 20: *“No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for the child shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.”*

No more shall an infant...live but a few days: The things which are common in this world (children dying young, or men dying before their time) will not be the new reality.

Child: Can also be the word for an ‘adolescent’.

Note: In the New Jerusalem there is going to be no death. Life is going to reign over death. In the New Jerusalem children are not going to die and the old men will live in fullness of life. Some scholars see this verse as referring to the Millennial kingdom and as not referring to the New Jerusalem – even though the language is that of the New Jerusalem (‘new heavens and new earth’).

The sinner: There will be no sinners in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 22:15). In this age we consider people who live to be 100 years old blessed. Isaiah is using poetic language here to emphasise the reversal that takes place in the New Jerusalem. Those who live only to 100 years old there (which is hypothetical and not the actual case) would be considered cursed. God’s Kingdom is going to be different to the kingdoms of this world.

Verse 21: *“They shall build houses and dwell in them; they shall plant vineyards and eat of their fruit.”*

Note: Justice is going to reign over injustice. The one who does the work receives the benefit from the work (This is rarely the case in this world – some benefit from the labour of many).

Verse 22: *“They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat of it; for as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, and My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.”*

The days of a tree: Trees tend to live for a long time. The people are going to experience an eternal longevity.

My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands: Their work is not going to wear out. They are going to rejoice over the work of their hands. Things are not going to be short lived. They are going to fulfil the will for which they were created.

Verse 23: *“They shall not labor in vain, nor give birth to that which terrifies; for the seed shall be the blessed ones of the LORD, and their offspring with them.”*

The seed shall be the blessed ones of the LORD: Those who are of the seed (of the Messiah/in Messiah – Galatians 3:16) shall be the ones who are blessed.

Their offspring with them: The offspring of believers (the seed) are also going to be blessed.

Verse 24: *“It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear.”*

Before they call, I will answer: God's going to know exactly what words they are going to speak.

He responds to them before they even have the need to finish speaking the words. What is emphasized here is perfect intimacy and perfect unity between God and His people.

Verse 25: *“The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent’s bread. They shall not do evil nor destroy in all My holy mountain,” said the LORD.”*

Note: This verse is similar to what we read in Isaiah 11:6-9.

Wolf and the lamb shall feed together: In this world wolves eat lambs. This is not what is going to happen in God’s Kingdom. In God’s Kingdom the wolves and the lambs are going to eat the same kind of food. In His Kingdom the lambs will no longer be afraid of the wolves. There will be a unity between these animals.

The lion shall eat straw like the ox: No longer will the animals have to shed blood in order to eat. In the Kingdom, one’s needs will not be met at the expense and the pain of others. God didn’t create this world in such a way that survival of one came through the suffering and death of other created things. This happened in the world as a consequence of sin.

Serpent: A reference to satan.

Dust shall be the serpent’s bread: He is going to be humiliated. He’s going to eat the dust.

Said the LORD: God is making all these wonderful promises for those who are His servants.

CHAPTER 66

This final chapter deals primarily with one theme: Kingdom change - all the things that God’s going to do to bring about Kingdom change. This is what we should be longing for, passionate about and living for. Are we people who are expecting God to move mightily and powerfully in these last days?

Note: When Isaiah speaks about the Kingdom, he uses a phrase ‘the new heavens and the new earth.’ John uses this same phrase in Revelation to speak of the New Jerusalem – the Kingdom in its final state. However, before the New Jerusalem there is the millennial Kingdom. For the most part, this is the Kingdom that Isaiah is referring to. The reason we know this is because:

1. Isaiah still places an emphasis on the Torah – the written word and commandments of God (ie the Law). Although the Torah has absolute significance and relevance in this dispensation, as it will have in the Millennial Kingdom, it is not eternal (Matthew 5:18, 2 Corinthians 3:7-11, Hebrews 8:7-13). The rabbi’s teach that in the millennial Kingdom the Torah is going to be seen as if it is new. The people are going to see it through God’s eyes and understand it from His perspective. They are no longer going to view it through the limitations of man.
2. In the New Jerusalem there is no temple and no sacrifices. It is a Kingdom of perfection and because it is perfect it can be eternal. The millennial Kingdom is not eternal. It is only one thousand years in length. There is a functioning temple in the millennial Kingdom. Sin and death are still present. These are some of the differences between the millennial Kingdom and the New Jerusalem. When we know what these differences are it is easy to see that Isaiah is emphasizing the millennial Kingdom rather than the New Jerusalem.

Verse 1: *“Thus said the LORD: ‘Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you have built for Me? And where is the place of My rest?’”*

Thus said the LORD: This is written in the past tense. Although we are dealing with future events the past tense is used to show us and give us assurance that these things are going to happen – in God’s eyes they are seen as already completed.

Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool: There is a connection between heaven and earth. God is connected to both aspects of His creation. His throne and rule is set in the heavens. However, currently there is a limited connection between God and this creation – the world/earth. God wants this to change. He wants to ultimately dwell with His people (Revelation 21:3) and not be distant from them.

House: Temple.

Rest: A word which is related to the Sabbath (and ‘Sabbath’ is a Kingdom word).

Note: One of the things that Judaism teaches, based upon this chapter, is that God wants a dwelling place in this world - where humanity is. God wants to dwell intimately with us. That is why He wants a house, a place for His rest. He wants to be with us, and He’s going to bring about His desire when He establishes His Kingdom.

Verse 2: *“For all these things My hand has made, and all these things were,’ declares the LORD. ‘But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My Word.’”*

These things: The heavens and the earth (ie creation).

All these things were: God is the architect and the creator for everything that exists. All things exist because of His power and authority (Colossians 1:16).

Look: This is not the normal word for looking or for seeing. It is a word which means to gaze with intent at something or someone. It is a word of scrutinizing – looking at in a very serious way.

A contrite spirit: The word used here is the word for a disability – a disabled spirit. It is probably speaking about a man who is not at peace with the world. He is not functioning well in the world and not comfortable in it. We were created to live with God, to be in His Kingdom (the garden of Eden). We should not be comfortable with this world and the things which are passing away within it.

Trembles at My Word: This means those who take God’s Word seriously. They hear revelation from God’s Word and they shake – they give it priority and importance.

Verse 3: *“He who kills an ox is as if he slays a man; He who sacrifices a lamb, as if he breaks a dog’s neck; he who offers a grain offering, as if he offers swine’s blood; he who offers up incense, as if he blesses wickedness. They have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations.”*

Note: In this verse we see a major change or shift happening in mindset. God is going to emphasise obedience above sacrifice (1 Samuel 15:22).

Kills an ox: A ritualistic killing of a bull for sacrifice in the temple, upon the altar. The ox/bull was seen as the greatest or most precious sacrifice a person could give. A time is coming when this slaughtering of an animal for sacrifice will be seen in the same light as killing a man.

Sacrifices: Referring to a temple offering.

As if he breaks a dog's neck: There are two ways that dogs are viewed Scripturally. A dog can be seen as an animal that hangs out in a pack, eats rubbish, is unclean and threatening and should be avoided. The second way is a domesticated dog who lives among us and is part of the family. The domesticated dog, much loved pet, is what this verse is alluding to here.

Incense: Associated with prayers (Revelation 8:3).

Wickedness: This is not a word that refers to idols but is a word used for 'wickedness'.

Abominations: What God sees as unrighteous, unholy and repulsive.

Verse 4: *"So will I choose their delusions, and bring their fears on them; because, when I called, no one answered, when I spoke they did not hear; but they did evil before My eyes, and chose that which I do not desire."*

Delusions: Deceit. They have been deluded and are walking in a deceitful way. There are going to be consequences for this.

No one answered: They did not respond to God in a positive way. Instead, they repented negatively – doing evil and those things which God did not delight in.

Verse 5: *"Hear the word of the LORD, you who tremble at His Word: "Your brethren who hated you, who cast you out for My name's sake, said, 'Let the LORD be glorified, that We may see your gladness,' but they shall be ashamed."*

Your brethren: Referring to fellow Jews. Although nations (Gentiles) are going to be spoken about, the emphasis in this verse is Israel – God moving back for that remnant of Israel, the lost sheep of the house of Judah.

Note: Romans 11:25 reveals to us that there is a time coming when the time of the Gentiles (when the Gentiles have come into the Kingdom in their fullness) is going to come to an end. God has been working mightily in the nations over the past 2000 years, but a day is coming when this is going to end and God is going to once again begin to turn back His attention to bring redemption to a 1/3rd remnant of the Jewish people.

My name's sake: Possibly referring to Yeshua. There are those among the Jewish people who have been hated and outcast because of the name of Messiah Yeshua.

Let the LORD be glorified: The Lord God is going to put His sanction, His approval, on the name of His Son – Yeshua ('Salvation').

We: Possibly referring to God or to those in the heavens.

Your gladness: Those who have been hated in this world because of their faith in Messiah (those who have feared Him and have given His Word priority) are going to be those who rejoice.

They shall be ashamed: Those who stand against God's glory (specifically Messiah's glory) are going to be ashamed.

Verse 6: *"The sound of noise from the city! A voice from the temple! The voice of the LORD, who fully repays His enemies!"*

The sound of noise from the city: People pay attention to this noise. Its a sound that captures everyone's attention.

Fully repays: To bring to completion. God is making His will complete.

His enemies: Those who do not want to glorify Yeshua's name, those who do not want to glorify God, are His enemies.

Verse 7: *“Before she travails, she will give birth; before pain came upon her, she bore a male child.”*

Note: This verse is talking about a new birth – a supernatural birth.

Male child: The Hebrew word used here (זָבָר) is a word that is used prophetically in regard to Messiah. This event is also spoken of in Revelation 12:13 in regard to Israel being the nation who gave birth to the male child – Messiah.

Verse 8: *“Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to travail in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion was in labour, she gave birth to her offspring.”*

Travail: This is a word associated with giving birth (labour pains). This verse speaks of the birth and establishment of the Kingdom of God.

At once: Abruptly. Very quickly. For generations people have been praying for God’s Kingdom to come. One of these days it is going to come suddenly, quickly, abruptly.

Zion: A Kingdom word.

Offspring: Sons and daughters.

Verse 9: *“Am I One that causes to be broken the waters and then do not allow birth?’ says the LORD. “Shall I who cause delivery shut up the womb?” says your God.”*

Broken the waters: The breaking of the waters of a woman’s womb is usually one of the final stages of the birthing process.

Shall I who cause delivery shut up the womb?: The answer to these questions is ‘No’. God will not hinder or stop the birthing of His Kingdom. He is going to bring it to its conclusion or fulfilment.

Verse 10: *“Rejoice with Jerusalem, and rejoice in her, all you who love her; rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her.”*

Rejoice: Written in the plural. This is speaking to Kingdom people – believers.

Rejoice in her, all you who love her: Throughout Scripture, Jerusalem is upheld to us. We are frequently admonished to see Jerusalem as a special place (Psalm 137:5-6). God is not yet finished with the Jerusalem that we can see with our natural eyes (Psalm 122:6-9).

Rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her: In Jerusalem’s current condition (in her current natural state) things are not going to get better. Prophetically, Jerusalem in the last day is called Sodom and Egypt (Revelation 11:8). We are grieved today over the state that Jerusalem is in. Unrighteousness is present in that city, and this will only worsen as the last days approaches. The antichrist is going to use Jerusalem for his purposes. Although we are currently grieving or mourning over her spiritual condition, we know that a change is coming. A time is coming when we are going to rejoice over Jerusalem.

Verse 11: *“That you may nurse and shall be satisfied from the breasts of her that comforts, that you may suck and be delighted with the moving of her glory.”*

Nurse and shall be satisfied from the breasts of her that comforts: The image used here is one of a mother nursing her child. God is going to comfort. He is going to give nourishment (hope) to His Kingdom.

The moving: This is not the word for ‘abundance’. The establishment of the Kingdom and the Kingdom nourishment (provision) being given to the people is an outcome of the glory of God moving. God's glory (which is currently dwelling in the heavens – Isaiah 66:1) is going to move into this world (Isaiah 6:3).

Verse 12: *“For thus said the LORD: “Behold, I will extend peace unto you as a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream. They will nurse you; upon the side shall you be carried, and be dandled on her knees.”*

Peace: What we experience as an outcome of the fulfilment of God’s will. His promises and purposes are going to be fulfilled.

The glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: A change is going to happen in the nations – the Gentiles are going to come into their fullness.

Dandled: Played with. It is a term of amusement, joy and happiness.

Verse 13: *“As one whom his mother comforts, So I will comfort you; And you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.”*

Comforts: This word is repeated and so is therefore emphasised. It is the same word the name ‘Capernaum’ comes from in the New Testament – Village of Comfort. This word is related to Messiah and to His work. This passage has powerful Messianic undertones.

Verse 14: *“When you see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like a green field; the hand of the LORD shall be known with His servants, and His wrath with His enemies.”*

Bones: The very essence of who they are.

The hand of the LORD shall be known with His servants: The power of God is going to be in us.

Verse 15: *“For behold, the LORD will come with fire and with His chariots as a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire.”*

Come with fire: Speaking of God’s judgment/wrath.

Whirlwind: Like a tornado or hurricane. A storm.

To render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire: This is God’s answer or response to the wickedness and injustice in this world.

Verse 16: *“For with fire the LORD will be judged and with His sword all flesh will be judged; And the slain of the LORD shall be multiplied.”*

For with fire the LORD will be judged: This is the literal interpretation of this first part of this verse in Hebrew. It is written in the passive voice. Although the Lord will judge with fire this is not what this verse is alluding to. The Lord is going to manifest who He is to us (His identity) through His judgment, through His fire. When His fire begins to fall, we are going to recognise that it is Him. Through the fire of the Lord, He is going to be understood.

The slain of the LORD shall be multiplied: Many, many people are going to be killed when God pours out His wrath in the last days.

Verse 17: *“Those who sanctify themselves and purify themselves by going to the gardens after an idol in the midst, eating swine’s flesh and the abomination and the mouse, shall be consumed together,” says the LORD.”*

Note: The people respond to what God is doing, but not according to His thoughts. They respond according to their own thoughts and ways.

Sanctify themselves and purify themselves by going to the gardens: They attempt to purify themselves, but they do it by going to the wrong place (they go to the place where they want to be rather than to God. Messiah is the only one who can sanctify and make us pure).

After an idol in the midst, eating swine’s flesh and the abomination and the mouse: They continue in their rebellion and worship inappropriately.

Eating swine’s flesh: This verse is set within a last day’s context – the time when God comes to establish His Kingdom on earth. Within this context God speaks against those who eat pork.

Verse 18: *“For I know their deeds and their thoughts. It shall be that I am coming to gather up all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory.”*

Tongues: Languages.

My glory: God’s glory is going to be seen in His judgment. His judgment is glorious.

Verse 19: *“I will set among them a sign; and those among them who escape I will send to the nations: to Tarshish and Pul and Lud, who draw the bow, and Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles.”*

Sign: Something miraculous. Many scholars agree that this could be a Messianic sign.

Them who escape: Refugees

I will send to the nations: This verse shows us the graciousness of God. Although the time of the Gentiles has reached its fullness God is giving the Gentiles a last opportunity to turn to Him. A remnant of the nations will turn to God even during this time of His wrath – the wrath of the Lamb (Revelation 6:16).

Javan: Greece or Europe.

They shall declare My glory among the Gentiles: Yeshua has returned and revealed Himself to the Jewish people (a ‘sign’). The 1/3rd remnant that are left have believed in Him (Zechariah 12:10-14).

This Jewish remnant is then allowed to fulfil the call that God called the Jewish people for – to be a blessing to the nations (Genesis 12:3). God is allowing a final revelation of Himself to the Gentiles in this epoch. A remnant of the nations will be saved during this time of wrath.

Verse 20: *“Then they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the LORD out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem,” says the LORD, “as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD.”*

Your brethren: The emphasis of this text is not the nations but is on Israel. God does what He does among the nations at this time so that those Jews who are still in exile can be brought back.

My holy mountain Jerusalem: At the time of the end God still sees Jerusalem as His holy mountain – the place/seat of His authority. Jerusalem is going to go through a time of abundant corruption but nevertheless God is going to purify, sanctify and transform her. For 1000 years Messiah’s Kingdom reign shall be out of Jerusalem.

Bring an offering: The response of the nations and of the Jewish people at this time is going to be a desire to worship. People are going to travel to Jerusalem and bring gifts into her (Zechariah 14:16-21).

Clean: Pure

Verse 21: *“And I will also take some of them for priests and Levites,” says the LORD.”*

Them: Some of the Jewish people who had been in exile.

Note: This is another verse that clues us in to the fact that this is speaking of the Millennial Kingdom and not the New Jerusalem. In the Millennial Kingdom there will be a Levitical priesthood. In the New Jerusalem there is no temple and therefore no need for a priesthood.

Verse 22: *“For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me,” says the LORD, “So shall your seed and your name remain.”*

The new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me: There is permanency.

So shall your seed and your name remain: Permanency. Eternal salvation.

Name: Character.

Verse 23: *“And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to bow down before Me,” says the LORD.”*

Note: This verse speaks about millennial worship.

One New Moon to another: Month to month.

One Sabbath to another: Week by week

Verse 24: *“And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, and their fire will not be extinguished. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.”*

Note: This verse tells us what is going to happen to those who are born in the millennial kingdom who refuse to submit to the Rulership and Lordship of Messiah. These people did not respond to the Word of God. They did not want a Kingdom experience but sought to establish things according to their own thoughts and ways.

They shall go forth and look: Those who go up to Jerusalem week by week and month by month to worship are going to have a visual reminder of what happens to those who do not submit to Messiah.

Their worm does not die: There is eternal punishment for those who transgress or reject the Word of God.

Fire: Torment.