

parallel to the book of Hosea. (See notes on Hosea.) Because of the shortness of the book, it will suffice to review the book all at once rather than provide an introduction, chapter analysis, and then a conclusion. The message of the book is manifested through a series of both monologues and dialogues in which the bride-to-be and the groom-to-be exchange their expressions of devotions one with another. The meaning of the story is noted in the following remarks by J.B. Tidwell [The Bible Book By Book, p.107-108]:

"MEANING OF THE STORY. (1) To the Jews of that time it was a call to purity of life, for a return to those relations which God had ordained between man and woman. It was a protest against polygamy which had become almost universal. Indeed, they regarded it as setting forth the whole history of Israel. They had often gone away from God to whom they were pledged as this girl was tempted to turn from her lover. (2) To the Christian it sets forth in allegory Christ and His church as Bridegroom and Bride and the fullness of love which unites the believer and his Savior. The Christian must not yield to the temptations of the world and be untrue to Jesus. Thus the attitude of the girl illustrates the true Christian attitude. (3) To all the world there is shown the purity and constancy of a woman's love and devotion to her ideals. It furnishes an ideal which, if properly held up, would cast out of human society all those monstrous practices that come from unworthy ideals. It would purify the relation of the sexes and save us from the ruin of the social sin."

[For a summary of various interpretations of the book see Dickson, p.796ff.]

ISAIAH

The books of the Old Testament are divided into four separate groups: 1) Law [This group is composed of the books of Gen.-Deut.]; 2) History [This group is made up of the books Joshua-II Chronicles.]; 3) Poetry [This group consists of Job-Song of Solomon.]; and 4) Prophecy [This group contains the books of Isaiah-Malachi.] Though we have spent some time in the preceding 5 books of poetry/wisdom, we must realize that no time has transpired between the close of Chronicles and the opening of Isaiah and the rest of the prophets. The books of Chronicles represent the record of the latest period of time in the Old Testament. All of the prophets lived prior to or during that time. Isaiah, the current prophet under discussion, was contemporary with many of the kings which we have already noted in Kings and Chronicles. You may want to review those two groups of books in order to understand the setting for the book of Isaiah. Isaiah was a prophet to the southern kingdom of Judah. The messages which he delivered to the people told of the wickedness of their times and of the consequence which would be sure to follow if the people did not change their ways. [NOTE: The first books of prophecy; Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel (Jeremiah-Lamentations are generally considered as being written by the same author), are often referred to as the major prophets while the remaining twelve books are often referred to as the minor prophets. This designation has nothing whatsoever to do with the relative importance of each of the men or the messages proclaimed by the men. It is simply a distinction made with reference to the size of the books which were written by the respective men. The initial four are simply larger (hence the title major) in volume than the others.]

CHAPTER ONE

1. In the opening verses of the chapter the book is identified as being that of a vision revealed unto Isaiah. The time frame (consult Kings and Chronicles) is given by naming several of the kings which ruled during the days of Isaiah's prophecies (vs.1).
2. Immediately after the introduction the subject/theme of the book is set forth. Israel, like a child, has wandered away from the paths of God. Animals are well aware of where they receive their sustenance, but the people of God have rebelled against their provider. Note that the nation is referred to as a body which is eaten with sores and bruises; it without soundness. The only reason that it continued to exist was because the Lord had left a remnant, a small portion of faithful followers. Without these few remaining faithful, Israel would have gone the way of Sodom and Gomorrah. [Note: The Lord not only has knowledge of actualities; he also has knowledge of contingencies. cf. Mt.11:20ff and David hiding from Saul.]

3. In the largest and last section of this chapter (vs.10-31), the people of Israel are urged to repent of their sins. Their general condition is depicted in the opening verses of the chapter as being a body that was covered with sores, but now the prophet specifically identifies some of their sins. They were abusing the sacrifices in that they began to offer them without truly having the proper frame of mind and heart that God required. As a result, God informs them that he does not require sacrifices, at least, however, not in the manner which they offered them. They had become vain oblations, not because God's system of worship was ineffective, but because the children of Israel were offering numerous sacrifices and sacrifices upon sacrifices as if they could buy God simply through the sheer number of sacrifices which were offered. [See Amos 5:21.] This sort of practice, that of appeasing the one whom they were to worship, was a practice that was common among the pagans. They would simply offer more sacrifices to the rain god if it did not rain regularly, or more sacrifices to the god of harvest when the crops were few in number. The Jews, in imitating this sort of false worship, brought the wrath of God upon them. The last part of the chapter also informs us that the Jews could be restored in favor with God if they would repent of these sacrificial errors. The passage is replete with requests by God through the prophet Isaiah for the Jews to repent of this wickedness. [NOTE: The book of Isaiah is very plainly identified as being the word of the Lord. Note ch.1:2,3,4,9,10, et al. Many of the prophet's books will begin with a statement such as: "The word of the Lord that came to....". This sort of language emphasizes that the words recorded were the words of God as he spoke through that specific prophet.]

CHAPTER TWO

1. The opening verses of this chapter (vs.1-4) are prophecies that are ultimately fulfilled in the coming of the kingdom of God, that is the church. Just as there are numerous prophecies in the Old Testament about the Messiah, his birth, his birthplace, his life, his reception among the Jews, his judgment, his crucifixion, his burial, and his resurrection; there are numerous prophecies about the kingdom which he would establish... and this is just one of many. Note that the kingdom would be: 1) established in the last days (cf. Joel 2:28ff, Acts 2:14ff), 2) that the thing to be established was referred to as the mountain of the Lord's house, the mountain of the Lord, and the house of the God of Jacob (cf. I Tim.3:15), 3) that all nations would flow unto it (many people), 4) that the purpose would be of learning of the ways of Jehovah and walking in his paths, and 5) that this would occur in Zion (Jerusalem). None of these elements had specific reference to the present form of worship practices among the Jews. The temple and the system of sacrifices was in effect since the days of the children of Israel under Moses. (At that time the tabernacle, not the temple, was used.) The reference, therefore, was not made to the present system of worship, but to some new system which was to come (cf. Joel 2:28ff, Daniel 2, Micah 4:1-2, Acts 2). This reference to some new form (Though we understand it due to our place in the process of time, we must remember that the Jews did not have the total revelation of God as we now have it.) is very striking indeed when we note that God had just expressed through the prophet Isaiah that the Jews were corrupting their present form of worship. Though the system of worship and sacrifices under the law of Moses was only intended for a temporary period of time (i.e. not to be practiced forever), it was still to be kept in the manner prescribed by God. But that manner, though it might be kept by the Jews as God commanded, would be one day superceded by a far better form of worship. This is not to say, however, that the present system of worship for the Jews was in any way less than perfect. It was perfect for the purpose intended (Rom. 10:4, Gal. 3:24, etc.), but the purpose was to lead to the next dispensation in which man would worship God "in spirit and in truth" (Jn.4:20ff).
2. The remainder of the second chapter depicts the judgment that will be brought upon the proud, those who do not surrender their own wills to the will of God. Note again the abundance of sin in Israel. In vs.8 their land is described to be "full of idols". This practice was, of course, abomination in the sight of God. It was for this reason that judgment would be brought upon them.

CHAPTER THREE

1. The first section of this chapter is a further description of the judgment which is to come upon the Jews (vs.1-15). Again, note that these prophecies are made with regard to Judah (the southern kingdom) and Jerusalem. The southern kingdom was generally considered as more righteous than the kingdom of Israel to the north, but they too, would be judged due to their wickedness. The Lord said that he would take away from Judah their stay and their staff, their bread and their water. He would take away all of their necessities and their possessions, and would in fact, cease to provide for them as he had until they repented. [Note that Christ is referred to as the bread of life and the water of life in John 4 and John 6. When this bread and water is removed from us we are without hope. (Eph.2)].
2. The second portion of chapter three (vs.16-26) continues the pronouncement of judgment upon the Jews, more specifically upon the daughters of Zion. This was due to their wantonness and their evil ways. The items described in this passage are articles of clothing which were worn and by which they were identified as wicked women. The Bible makes frequent mention of the clothing of women as it relates to their righteousness or lack of it. (I Tim.2, I Pet.3, Heb. 11, et al.)

CHAPTER FOUR

This brief chapter continues the discussion of the judgment that is to take place in the land of Judah and the city of Jerusalem. Note that the righteous, those who remain in Zion, will be rewarded for their faithfulness.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. The opening verses of this chapter contain a parable which is a story of judgment. The parable talks about a vineyard which is quite plainly identified as being the house of Israel (vs.7). The Lord did everything he could so that this vineyard might bare fruit, but it did not bare as the Lord expected. Rather than bringing forth judgment, there was oppression; rather than baring righteousness, behold there was a cry. The parable teaches that there could not be one more thing done to the vineyard in order to help it in its purpose, all had been done. Because it had not done as expected, the vineyard lost its protection. It was no longer cultivated and pruned...it was laid to waste.
2. The last part of the chapter is a further description of the judgment that is to come upon the faithless in the land of Judah. The reason for this judgment is aptly stated in vs.12f: "they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands. Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge:..." The Bible quite frequently focuses upon the destruction that comes upon the people of God due to a lack of knowledge (cf. Hos.4:6). Many times the apostle Paul would write unto a certain group of Christians saying "I would not have you ignorant...", thus signifying that their problems were at least in part due to a lack of knowledge. The attainment of the wisdom of God cannot be over-emphasized, but that knowledge must be put into practice in order to bring about the proper results that God desires (Ezra 7:10). Notice vs.20 of this chapter. This sort of situation is rampant today. A great majority of the world is mistaken in its understanding of what is right and wrong. As children of God, we have the responsibility to teach what the truth is on this matter. God's word is truth (Jn.17:17) and it must always be relied upon for a guide in discerning wrong from right. No other standard will suffice.

CHAPTER SIX

This brief chapter contains much valuable information. In it we notice: 1) Isaiah had a vision of God, 2) he had a vision of himself, and 3) he had a vision regarding those around him. With regard to the first part of this vision, it must be noted that though there was a change in the leadership of the nation of Judah (vs.1), God always inhabits his throne. This same theme is depicted in Revelation 4. God is always in control, even though the events of this world may seem to indicate otherwise. Following this vision of God, Isaiah views himself in a very different perspective. When the greatness and the holiness of God is contemplated its initial consequence is that we view ourselves in a

different way. We realize that next to God we are lost and undone. This is the sort of response that Isaiah had (vs.5: "Woe is me! for I am undone; I am a man of unclean lips.."). Following this response, we note also that Isaiah realized that he was not the only one in this condition; all men were in the same position as Isaiah was. This sort of realization ought to provoke each of us to realize that though we are weak and therefore dependent upon God, we are not the only ones like that. Every last person has a soul as we have souls. Every person sins as we sin. Everyone is, therefore, in need of salvation as you and I are in need of salvation. Though we sometimes balk at the outrageous wickedness of the people who are lost, we must remember that sinners have souls. As Isaiah viewed this vision he was symbolically cleansed by the hot coal which touched his lips. He was now prepared to deliver the message of the Lord to the people of Judah. When the Lord sought for someone to send, Isaiah was ready. "Here am I, send me." That same sort of willingness ought to characterize every Christian today. Without it, the world will never be evangelized as fully as God intends it to be. [Remember the illustration of the vineyard in ch.5. God had given it all the necessary requirements to bring forth fruit. Likewise, God has given us all that we need for life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3-4). We should be bringing forth the fruit that God expects. The last part of the chapter contains language that indicates that some of the people that Isaiah would be addressing with God's message would not hear. It would not be because they were physically deaf, but rather because they were spiritually deaf. Christ often used this sort of illustration during his own ministry.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. The initial part of this chapter depicts the message which Isaiah brought to King Ahaz concerning Syria and Ephraim. It was told Ahaz that he should not fear such threats that were being made by Syria and Ephraim, because they would not come to pass (vs.7).
2. In the latter portion of the chapter Isaiah asked Ahaz to seek a sign from the Lord, but when Ahaz would not, one was provided. The sign given is one with which we are all familiar. In vs. 14 of this chapter a prophetic sign is given that is to be fulfilled in the coming of the Christ. It is he that is to be born of a virgin. It is he that is to be conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). Ahaz is told that before this sign appears that both of the kings of the land (i.e. the king of Judah and the king of Israel) would be gone. He was also told of the coming invasion of the Assyrians that would afflict the land of Israel and Judah.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. This chapter continues the picture of impending judgment to be brought upon Israel. The name of the son born to Isaiah, Mahershalahashbaz, was a name given to hint of the coming destruction. Before the child would be able to cry "mother and father", the invasion of Assyria would come. It would come because the people had refused the Lord their God.
2. Numerous warnings are given with regard to associations or confederacies. Though the people might seek refuge in them, they would still be defeated. Only in God were they to fear (respect).
3. Verse 14 is a prophetic reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. Not only was he the cornerstone upon which the church was builded, but he was also the stone which caused the Jews to stumble (I Cor.1:23). They stumbled because they did not accept the Christ, but rather rejected him.
4. The chapter closes by picturing quite a gloomy and dim setting, but that is to change.

CHAPTER NINE

1. The opening section of chapter nine (vs.1-7) speaks about a better day that will be coming, but as we notice in the concluding section of the chapter, it will be preceded by the time of judgment that has previously been spoken about. A light is said to shine in the land, and that light will ultimately be fulfilled in the Christ. John refers to Jesus as the Light (Jn.1:7ff). It was this light, this son, who would have the government upon his shoulder. Note that this does not refer to the fact that the earthly governments during the time of the Lord would be eating out of his hand, but it does refer to the spiritual kingdom which would be established (Dan.2:44, Mt.16:18).

2. Note the names that are given to the Christ: 1) Wonderful, 2) Counselor, 3) the mighty God, 4) the everlasting Father, and 5) the Prince of Peace. These titles and descriptions richly portray the glory and the role of Christ in the scheme of redemption. Note also that his government (i.e. the kingdom; the church) would have no end (cf. Dan.2:44).
3. Though the first section of the chapter gave a glimpse of the light at the end of the tunnel, the last part of the chapter returns to the dark recesses of the tunnel itself. Before the light is reached, the wrath of the Lord will be released against Israel because of her sin. When we read through the books of Kings and Chronicles we noticed with increasing frequency the number of kings whose wickedness not only affected those near to them, but which also affected the whole land as well. In this chapter we see the results of that wickedness in the lives of some of the kings; destruction was the result (vs.16).

CHAPTER TEN

1. The first few verses of chapter ten (vs.1-4) declare the unrighteous judgments that some were declaring in Judah. The needy, the poor, the widows, and the fatherless were overlooked. As a result of this sort of judgment, the people would be punished. Note that the phrase: "For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still." is used several times in Isaiah (cf. ch.9:12,17,21 et al.). This simply means that the wrath of God will be fulfilled as he said. Note also the use of the phrases "day of the Lord", "day of visitation", and like phrases. These do not necessarily indicate the day of the judgment in which all people will stand before the Lord, but they sometimes indicate the following: 1) the Lord's first coming [This usage is used in both testaments.]; 2) the coming of the Lord in Act's 2 on the day of Pentecost [Used in both testaments.]; 3) his coming in human experiences [Used in both testaments.]; 4) his final coming [Used in both testaments, but primarily in the New Testament.]; and 5) his coming in judgment upon a certain country or city (e.g. Jerusalem, Assyria) [Used in both testaments.].
2. The following section of the chapter (vs.5-19) teaches that Assyria, though she would be used by the Lord to bring judgment upon Israel, would be destroyed herself. Verses 8-11 portray the language that the rulers of Assyria were using. Note the use of the words "I" and "my" in these verses. Compare such usage to Luke 12:16ff. The Lord properly says that because of such pride and haughtiness, Assyria would be humbled. It (i.e. Assyria) was merely the instrument through which judgment upon Israel was delivered by the Lord (vs.15ff).
3. The third section of this chapter informs us of the remnant which would be saved in Israel. An interesting study for you to make would be one concerning the remnant. God has always maintained a faithful few. It is/would be these few who continue to do the will of the Lord. Though God promised a nation that would be in number as the sand along the shores and as the stars in the sky, only a few would remain faithful to him (vs.22).
4. The final section of chapter ten declares the judgment to be brought against Assyria and the eventual release of those Jews held captive. It shows a promise of deliverance to the children of Israel.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

This chapter deals quite extensively with the Christ and the kingdom which he would establish. The reference to the "rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:..." is a direct reference to Christ. Revelation 5:5 refers to Jesus as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David,...". David was the youngest son of Jesse, and was, therefore, of the root of Jesse. Christ, by being the descendant of David, was also the descendant of Jesse. The character and the nature of Christ is discussed in some detail in this passage. He is shown to have 1) the spirit of the Lord, 2) wisdom and understanding, 3) counsel and might, 4) knowledge and the fear of the Lord, 5) righteous judgment, 6) authority, and 7) faithfulness. The time addressed would be the time of the kingdom of God's dear son, the church. Note that there would be "an ensign" for the Gentiles to seek. It was through the church, the body of Christ, that the middle wall of partition was fully removed. This was effected through the blood of the Christ (Eph.2).

Note that the remnant would be recovered for the second time (vs.11) from nations that were scattered abroad. This theme is further discussed in the book of Romans and in chapter 11. It was the righteous of Israel, the faithful remnant, that accepted the Christ as the Messiah. Note that on the day of Pentecost that Jews were gathered together from every nation under heaven. Those righteous Jews, who would have traveled the required distance to attend the Passover in Jerusalem and to remain in Jerusalem for the feast of the Pentecost, formed the audience that Peter addressed through the working of the Holy Spirit on that grand day. It was out of this audience that the "about 3000" responded to the preaching of the gospel. The image of the scattered tribes of Israel is carried over into the New Testament. Peter wrote one of his epistles to the "strangers" which were scattered abroad. [Again, the theme of the "remnant" is an oft recurring theme in the Bible. Study it yourself by consulting any concordance and tracing the usage of the word.]

CHAPTER TWELVE

This short chapter gives thanksgivings unto the Lord for his mercies which were described in the previous chapter. Note that water is to be drawn from the "wells of salvation". It is this living water (John 4) that Christ spoke of to the Samaritan woman at the well. It is this water which will enable us to live an everlasting life.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1. The first few verses of this chapter predict the fall of Babylon. Remember that it was Babylon that would take the southern kingdom of Judah into captivity. Assyria took the northern kingdom of Israel into captivity.
2. The last section of the chapter (vs.6-22) details the destruction of the land of Babylon. They would be destroyed by the Medes (vs.17ff). In Daniel chapter 2 we note the explanation of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar's image. The parts of the image depicted the four kingdoms that would exist between that time and the time of the Christ. The first of these kingdoms was the Babylonian. It was that kingdom that had overtaken Israel and which held many people captive, including Daniel and his friends, while the image was being interpreted. The kingdom which came after the Babylonian kingdom was that of the Medes and the Persians (Medo-Persian). This is the same kingdom that is shown here to be triumphing over the Babylonians. [Again, note that the phrase "day of the Lord" (vs.6 & 9) does not refer to the day of final judgment, but rather to the judgment brought against Babylon for her iniquities.]

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1. Though judgment would be brought against Babylon, Israel would be preserved and would return to their land. Remember that the prophet Isaiah lived prior to the time of the Babylonian captivity. He is here speaking of the time following that captivity. Many of the prophets lived during the time of the captivity, and yet others lived during the time of the restoration. It would be of great help to remember which of the prophets lived prior to the captivity, which lived during the captivity, and which lived following the captivity and during the period of restoration.
2. The second portion of chapter 14 (vs.3-23) details the destruction of Babylon a bit further. In vs. 12ff a reference is made to Lucifer, a name that we commonly apply to Satan. We must remember that this passage is not specifically intended to describe for us the origin and the demise of Satan, but rather to describe the fall of Babylon. Babylon had exalted itself above all nations and had triumphed over many of them. It was from this high estate (which the word "heaven" may allude to) that she fell. Note that the passage could refer to Satan in a secondary sense because of the pride and consequent destruction which Babylon fell into was likened unto the pride of Satan. (cf. I Tim.3:6)
3. The last part of the chapter speaks of the fall of Assyria. This was previously mentioned in ch.10.
4. Note also the reference in vs. 29-32 to Palestina. Some might mistakenly think that this refers to Palestine when it really refers to Philistia, or the land of the Philistines.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

This chapter describes the judgment which is to come upon the people of Moab, the Moabites,

who were frequent oppressors of the children of Israel. Not only does the book of Isaiah prophesy of the judgment which is to come upon the children of Israel, but as previously seen in the examples of Assyria and Babylon, prophecies are often made regarding the wicked nations around Israel. Such is the case with Moab. Moab was the name of one of the children born to Lot (Gen.19:33ff). It was later referred to as a country (Deut.1:5) and it had several dealings with the nation of Israel. It 1) refused to let Israel pass through its land (Judges 11:17ff), 2) joined Midian to curse Israel (Num.22:4), and 3) was excluded from fellowship with Israel (Deut.23:3-6). There were other times in which Moab befriended Israel (e.g. Ruth 1:4,26) and in which Moab paid tribute to Israel (2 Ki.3:4). Here we note the judgment of Moab.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

This chapter is a continuation of the troubles and woes which would befall the nation of the Moabites. Note the wickedness of the Moabites as shown in vs.6. Vs. 14 informs us that within three years Moab would be "contemned" (despised).

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

This chapter continues the woes that are pronounced upon other nations. In this case the land of Damascus is addressed. Remember that God not only judges his people; he judges all people. We noted previously that Damascus (Syria) joined in an alliance with the nation of Israel to war against Judah. The prophet informed king Ahaz in ch. 6 that such would not come to pass. Here we note further details concerning the judgment upon Damascus (Syria). Again, the theme of the remnant occurs here (vs.6ff).

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

This chapter details the woes of the nation of Ethiopia. Note the illustration given with reference to the harvest (vs.5ff). This sort of analogy is frequently used in the book of Isaiah and the rest of the Bible.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Egypt is the subject of this chapter. Like the countries previously mentioned, Egypt will receive punishment. Prior to the time of the Assyrian invasion, Israel (Judah) was influenced by two factors: 1) Assyrian to the North, and 2) Egypt to the South and West. At one point Judah sought to form an alliance with both of these nations, hence a reference to the fact that Egypt and Assyria and Israel were involved in a three-way alliance (vs.22ff). As with the other nations mentioned before, so would Egypt be judge.

CHAPTER TWENTY

This brief chapter informs us of the conquest of Egypt and Ethiopia by the Assyrians. Egypt received this severe chastening because she had promised to serve as the deliverer of Israel and made promises which she could not keep. (Wycliffe, p.624) [NOTE: The reference in vs. 3 to Isaiah walking naked does not mean that he walked around without clothes of any sort. One commentator said that he wore the clothes of a prisoner and another said that he was at least partially clothed. The word "naked" in Hebrew does not convey the same thought that it does in English.]

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

1. The first ten verses of this chapter refer to the destruction of Babylon by the armies of the Medes and the Persians. The reference to "Elam" in verse 2 concerns Persia, better known by Elam during the time of Isaiah. "Media" is, of course, a reference to the Medes.
2. Verses 11-12 refer to the defeat of Dumah (i.e. Edom) and the victory of Israel.
3. Verses 13-17 depicts the destruction of Arabia. During the reign of Jehoram these northern Arabs plundered Jerusalem. They were later defeated by Uzziah and are here seen to be destroyed by the Assyrians.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

1. The first part of this chapter refers to the destruction of the city of Jerusalem. That city, which was built upon several hills, is here referred to as the valley of vision. Note that in several places Isaiah identifies visions which he had concerning Judah and Jerusalem (ch.1:1, 2:1, etc.). Jerusalem would be attacked and in the midst of

the attack would be revelling in sin. They would, once realizing the gravity of the situation, even destroy their homes in an effort to protect the walls of the city.(v.10) [Wcyliffe, p.625]. This account is probably a reference to the invasion of Sennacherib (cf. 2 Kings 18 & 19).

2. The last portion of the chapter refers to the replacement of unrighteous Shebna by Eliakim, a righteous man. He was to be the key to the house of David. Verse 22 is an obvious reference to the Christ (Rev.3:7). It was the role of this person (e.g. Eliakim) to screen those persons who wished to speak to the king. In this role he typified the Christ, for it is only through Christ do we enter the kingdom. He has the power to open and to close entrance into the kingdom: "he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;..."

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

1. This is the last chapter which details the fall of other nations. It speaks of the fall of Tyre. She was to be laid to waste (vs.1), but after a period of 70 years she would revive and would dedicate her merchandise to the Lord (vs.18).
2. The following sums up the previous chapters of destruction:

- "(1) That Babylon falls because of arrogancy and pride, whereas Israel is redeemed through Jehovah's gracious compassion (13:11; 14:1-2).
- (2) That Moab bases her appeal to Zion for shelter on the permanent character of the Davidic dynasty, as expressed in the Messianic hope current in Israel, namely, that a "throne shall be established in loving kindness: (16:4-5).
- (3) That the Philistines are not allowed to ally themselves with Judah against Assyria, because Jerusalem is already inviolable through faith in Jehovah (14:32), and that the allied forces of Damascus and Israel had failed in the Syro-Ephraimitic war because they forsook the God of their salvation for idols (17:10).
- (4) That Ethiopia is converted to Jehovah through seeing God's hand in history (18:7), and that Egypt is won to Jehovah's worship through divine discipline (19:22).
- (5) That Edom's fickle cry for light in the night (21:11-12) is not deep or sincere enough to secure her from rejoicing over Judah's calamities, and therefore not sufficient to avert her deserved doom (34:10).
- (6) That careless, godless abandon on the part of people in imminent peril of siege is an unpardonable sin and foreign to the spirit of the theocracy (22:14); and that a man's pride, even of one who is a high officer of state, "shall bring him low" (22:16,19).
- (7) And lastly, that the profits derived from merchandise are no better morally than the hire of a harlot unless consecrated to the service of Jehovah (23:18). In short, that the heathen, as well as Israel, are responsible to God, and may share if they wish in his mercy and grace." [The Book Of Isaiah/George L. Robinson, p.95-95]

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

This chapter proclaims that judgment will come upon all the earth. As with the book of Romans so does this book follow the pattern of speaking specifically about the judgment and the sins of certain nations and then of the judgment and the sins of all. Romans 1 addresses itself to the sins of the Gentiles, Romans 2 to the sins of the Jews, but then in Romans 3 all are concluded to be under the dominion of sin. Here in Isaiah, we have noted the judgment that is to come upon numerous nations (ch.13-23) and now we see that judgment is to come upon all the earth.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Though all of the destruction previously mentioned in the book of Isaiah has yet to take place (i.e. from the standpoint of Isaiah's present position in ch.25), Isaiah is now projecting himself past the time when these events will have transpired and speaking as if they had already occurred. From this perspective he is giving praise unto the Lord for doing what he (i.e. the Lord) said he would do. The confidence that is depicted in vs.8ff ought to be the sort of confidence that all of us as Christians have.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

1. This entire chapter constitutes a hymn of praise unto the Lord.
2. Some of the subjects discussed are: 1) salvation, 2) peace, 3) trusting in the Lord, 4) justice, 5) righteousness, 6) chastening, 7) punishment, 8) judgment, et al.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

This chapter portrays a hope of assurance for the nation of Israel. Even though they have been afflicted and punished for their sins, the Lord will not continue endlessly to chastise them. "He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit." (vs.6) The pruning was over; they would now return to their homeland, but things would be different. According to vs. 9 the sins of Israel ("iniquity of Jacob") would be considered forgiven when they destroyed foreign and pagan altars and groves of worship. Even after doing all of that, their land, once destroyed by the onslaught of foreign invaders, would have to be rebuilt... but the Lord is here assuring them that such rebuilding would be able to take place.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

1. The previous chapters (24-27) must be understood in the following light. As a prophet, Isaiah often spoke of different times within his prophecies. For example, he might be addressing the coming restoration of Israel after the period of captivity (as in ch.27), and then he might revert back to things nearer at hand like the period of destruction (as in this chapter). The prophet, therefore, spoke of coming events, but not necessarily in chronological order. This is an important element to remember as one studies Isaiah and the remainder of the prophets.
2. Beginning with chapter 28 we note a series of woes that are being pronounced upon the nation of Ephraim and others. The first of these woes deals with those who are drunken and scoffing politicians.
3. This chapter is rich in poetic language as Isaiah depicts the destiny of these souls. Note such vs. as 1-13, 16-20, and 24-29. In these passages Isaiah uses the professions of building and farming as well as the imagery of the fading flower to show what Israel is presently like. Note closely how these images are designed to show the specific sins of the leaders of the day (e.g. "err in vision, stumble in judgment"-vs.7).
4. Because of such sins in the leaders of the nation, the Lord, through the prophet Isaiah, warns the people (vs.14ff.) In this warning the illustration of measuring for judgment is used. (see Revelation, Daniel, et al.)
5. The closing section of the chapter also depicts the coming judgment, but this time it is shown through the imagery of the farmer and his work.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

1. The woes in this chapter are initially addressed to Ariel, the city where David dwelt. This name was the city of Jerusalem and it appears in this sense only in this passage.
2. Jerusalem was the center of religious worship for the Jews, but many things in the name of religion had been corrupted by them. In verse 13 we note their condition: "Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:...". Jesus quoted this passage and applied it to the Jewish traditionalists and formalists of his own day in the same manner that Isaiah the prophet applied it to the same sort of Jews during his time.
3. In another woe pronounced upon Israel, that of the woe upon those who seek to hide their counsels from God, we note that God would judge them too.
4. The last section of the chapter (vs.17ff) shows that even after the woes would come, there would still be deliverance for Israel. In that day the Jews would not be so formal in their traditions that they would accept their own rites but not the truths of the Lord. They would properly worship God as the Holy One of Israel once again.

CHAPTER THIRTY

1. In this section of the pronouncement of woes, the prophet turns to the subject of Egypt. During this period of Jewish history many of the Jews were content to rely upon the nation of Egypt to defend them in the event of war. This was not what God

had in mind. Rather than trusting in Egypt, God wanted them to trust in him. Trusting in Egypt would do the Jews no good (vs.7)

2. The children of Israel are here described as being a rebellious people (vs.9ff), a people that would not hear the law of the Lord. We must be aware of the fact that the word "hear" carries not only the meaning of an auditory register of the word of God, but that it also includes obedience to the word of the Lord. Rather than relying upon the true words of the Lord, the children of Israel desired things that would be soothing for them (cf. II Tim.4). Because of such sins, Israel would receive judgment (vs.12ff).
3. In the following section of the chapter (vs.15-26) the Lord encourages Israel to turn back to him, for in the Lord they would obtain blessings. Many of those blessings are enumerated in this section.
4. The last portion of chapter 30 details the coming destruction of the people of Assyria (vs.31). They would be sifted with the "sieve of vanity".

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

In this brief chapter Isaiah repeats the thoughts of the previous chapter in that he condemns those who trust in horses and chariots rather than in God. Because of the misplaced trust, both the helper and the helped would be defeated. The Lord would not only destroy their plans, but also the plans of the Assyrians. Only God will help Israel.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

1. The prophet refers to a future time when the nation will not be ruled by the slothful and unrighteous political and religious leaders that once ruled, but will be ruled by the righteous. (vs.1-8)
2. The women of Jerusalem are warned that things will not continue in the future as they have been in the past. Things will change. Only the righteous will remain. It is therefore of the utmost necessity that they be righteous in order to remain.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

1. Ultimate salvation is in God. It is not in the strength of Egypt or the multitude of horses and chariots. Only God can deliver Israel. This theme is amply portrayed in this chapter (vs.2, 5ff, et al.).
2. Assyria, the spoiler, would be spoiled. When she was through spoiling and dealing treacherously, she would be spoiled and dealt with in a treacherous manner (or in a way that would appear so).
3. God was going to be exalted. Though Assyria had triumphed over the nation of Israel, it was only because God used Assyria to bring judgment upon his people. The true strength to judge and to defeat was not with Assyria but with God. When judgment against Assyria was completed, all the world would know of the strength and might of the God of Israel. Even the sinners in Zion would stand amazed. (vs.14)
4. The chapter closes by discussing the life-style of the righteous. (cf.GLR, p.115f)

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

In this chapter the wrath of Jehovah is declared against all nations, and especially against Idumea (i.e. Edom). We must remember that God retains the right to rule at any place and at any time. In the sixth chapter of the book we note that even though there was a change in the kings of Judah (the physical throne of Judah), God still continued to reign upon the throne in heaven. This same though is depicted in Revelation 4. The Roman empire with its emperors seemed to be in control of the world, but God was still sitting upon his throne, the eternal throne. God has always reserved the right to involve himself with the rule of any nation. Such is the case during this period of time spoken of by Isaiah. God's rule and wrath is depicted as being even greater for Edom. Remember Edom was another name for Esau, and the Edomites were his descendants. Their wickedness had often brought judgment upon them.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

This chapter depicts the restoration of the people of Israel and their land. Note that the change in place corresponded to a change in the character of the people.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

This chapter parallels the accounts given in II Kings 18 and II Chronicles 32. See pages 103 and 119 of your notes for an account of this chapter.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

1. The contents of this chapter are also explained in the chapters following the ones mentioned. Check the indicated pages for further explanation of this passage.
2. To re-emphasize the thrust of this chapter, it will be necessary to briefly review the situation. Sennacherib came against Judah during the time of King Hezekiah. He threatened the city of Jerusalem and chided the Holy God of Israel. He claimed victory over many other nations who worshipped many different gods. He could not see how this God was any different than the other gods, and he, therefore, said that he would triumph over Jerusalem as he did over the rest of the nations.
3. In this chapter (cf. II Kings 19) Hezekiah depends upon the prophet Isaiah for help. Isaiah informed Hezekiah that he (i.e. Hezekiah) should not be afraid of the vain and idle threats of Sennacherib. They would not come to pass. Following the reception of this information, Hezekiah prayed to the Lord for deliverance. Isaiah came and informed Hezekiah that his prayer had been answered and that surely nothing would happen to the city of Jerusalem, and, as a matter of fact, Sennacherib would meet with destruction. The details of this are mentioned in the concluding verses.
4. Again, we are made aware of the power of the Lord to intervene in the historical events of men. God is always in control.

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

1. The events of this chapter have already been studied in II Kings and II Chronicles. See the corresponding notes of those chapters for further information.
2. As Hezekiah was ill and about to die he was granted an additional 15 years of life. He prayed unto the Lord saying how he (i.e. Hezekiah) was righteous during his life. Consequently the Lord through Isaiah informed him that he would live longer.
3. He further promised that Assyria would not come upon the city of Jerusalem, at least not during the life of Hezekiah.
4. Note the sign that was given unto Hezekiah. The sun returned 10 degrees from going down.
5. The last part of the chapter contains the writing of Hezekiah as he recorded these events that related to the lengthening of his life.

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

Following the period during which Hezekiah was sick, Hezekiah received visitors from the country of Babylon. When Isaiah heard of their visit and what Hezekiah showed unto them, he informed Hezekiah that one day the children of Israel would be held captive by this country. (cf. II Kings 20 and II Chronicles 32)

CHAPTER FORTY

1. In this section of the book of Isaiah we get into a new theme, that of deliverance. Though this subject has been previously touched upon by the prophet, we shall note that it constitutes the major thrust of this section.
2. The chapter opens by declaring that there is comfort in trusting the Lord. Why? Because the Lord is eternal. His word shall always endure; it is not like the grass nor the flowers. It is age-lasting and everlasting.
3. Note also the reference in vs. 3ff to the passages that are quoted in Matthew 3:1ff and there applied to the ministry of John the Baptist. He was the prophet who prepared the way for the work of Jesus the Christ.
4. Verses 10-11 seem to be quite Messianic in nature. Christ is the lamb of God (Rev. 13:8, et al.) and the leader of the sheep.
5. The following section of the chapter (vs. 12-31) declares the majesty of the Lord. In this section of the chapter we note that God is majestic because: 1) he alone has set the course and created the universe, 2) he is able to control the destiny of nations (political), 3) he can not be likened unto another, 4) he is everlasting, and 5) he gives strength to those who wait upon him. [NOTE: The theme of waiting and patience is quite frequently seen in the Bible. Here the expression does not mean simply to wait for God to do something, but it means that we are to serve God.

The man who works in a restaurant and who brings your food and removes the dishes is called the "waiter" not because he waits for you, but because he waits on you. So many Christians are waiting for God to do something special to them or for them, but they are not waiting upon God in the sense of serving God.

CHAPTER FORTY-ONE

1. The initial section of this chapter speaks of the restoration of Israel. It would be a time during which the Lord will provide for all of the needs of all of the people. This would be done for Israel, Jacob, the seed of Abraham. Because the Lord would provide for them they were told to fear not.
2. In the latter portion of the chapter the children of Israel are informed that apart from the Lord, there is no hope. Who among them could tell what was going to happen in the future? Who could declare the hereafter? Only the Lord could do this; only the Lord could deliver them.

CHAPTER FORTY-TWO

1. The opening verses of this chapter refer to a servant of God. To many in the Old and New Testament times, the servant was a lowly person, but to God a servant is exalted. The identity of the servant in this passage is not given, but we shall notice in further passages in the book of Isaiah that the theme of the servant and especially the suffering servant is an oft recurring one. In Isaiah 53, the obvious reference is to the Christ (Acts 8). Some have contended for other interpretations (e.g. Cyrus, the nation of Israel, etc.), but Christ alone fully satisfies the passages under consideration.
2. We note in the following verses (vs.5-16) that this servant would come to declare the ways of the Lord. He would be a "light of the Gentiles", an obvious reference to the Christ, his work, and his church.
3. The last verses of the chapter (17ff) inform Israel that the suffering which they shall endure comes upon them for their sins (vs.24-25).

CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

1. In this chapter Israel is told that only God can redeem. He will ransom them from their captors. He alone is their Saviour. Because Israel was precious in the sight of the Lord God would continue to be with them and protect them. No one else could do that.
2. As God delivered Israel, he would also bring judgment upon the enemies of Israel. Babylon, the nation that came against the southern kingdom of Judah would be brought down, but only after Israel served their time for sinning against the Lord. Their sins are set forth in the last few verses of this chapter. Note that the abuses which they committed concerning the sacrifices as Isaiah mentioned in the very first chapter of the book are pointed out here again.

CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR

1. The first verses of this chapter (vs.1-5) depict the blessings that God will give to Israel for their righteousness.
2. The second section of this chapter (vs.6-20) speaks of the folly of idolatry. Only the Lord God could have created heavens and earth. Only He could tell the future from the past. Those who build idols and images are shown to be living in utter folly. Imagine worshipping an image that cannot hear, see, understand, or do anything for you. Surely this is utter folly. (cf. Acts 17:16ff)
3. In the closing verses of the chapter the Lord is referred to as the Redeemer of Israel. He created Israel, he forgave Israel of her sins, and he always sought to protect Israel. God confirms the word of his servants, and if the servants of God (prophets) spoke of the restoration of Israel, then Israel would be restored. The last few verses speak of the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem. Note the reference to Cyrus. He was the ruler that let the children of Israel return to their homeland and commissioned the rebuilding of the temple. Isaiah never knew him and did not live to see that day, but through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he (i.e. Isaiah) even called the ruler who would be instrumental in the deliverance of Israel from their captivity by his name, Cyrus.

CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE

1. In the closing part of the last chapter we noted that Isaiah made a reference to Cyrus. Here, in the opening verses of this chapter, we again notice such a reference. Cyrus would be the leader of the Medes and the Persians (cf. Dan.2) who would not only conquer the Babylonians, but who would also free the children of Israel from their captivity. Even before his reign (i.e. Cyrus' reign) Isaiah spoke of him by name.
2. The reference to the creation of evil in verse 7 does not mean that God made something or someone to be evil per se. (e.g. pantheism, panentheism) This is simply a reference to the origin of light and darkness, war and peace. It does not refer to the creation or origin of Satan.
3. In the following section of this chapter God is exalted because he is the creator of the universe. Nothing in God's creation can question the works and the ways of God. As a result, God's creation depends upon God. Man, as a part of that creation, is, therefore, dependent upon God. God will direct the ways of man if man would only consult God.
4. The following section deals with the salvation that God has promised to and will provide for Israel. Only God can do this. "But Israel shall be saved IN the Lord with an everlasting salvation:..." (vs.17).

CHAPTER FORTY-SIX

This chapter deals with the superiority of God over the multitude of idols that mankind worshipped. God is able to help men; idols are not able to do so. They will be defeated in the minds of men. God is not only able to help men, but he is able to provide continual aid for the needs of men, even to the time of their death. Who is like God? Of course the answer is that no one is likened unto God. He alone can tell the end from the beginning. It is important to note the emphasis given in Isaiah to predictive prophecy. By this method God is assuring the children of Israel and all nations that he is truly the one God. No other creature can do this...God is, therefore, not a creature, but the Creator.

CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN

This chapter speaks about the destruction to come upon the nation of Babylon. She would be brought low after she seemed to be self-exalted. Because of her sins she would become a widow and lose her children. She would no longer be considered as the lady of the kingdoms forever. Her sins are listed in this chapter: 1) trusting in wickedness, 2) engaging in enchantments, sorceries, astrology, fortune telling, etc. All of these things would be brought to nought.

CHAPTER FORTY-EIGHT

This chapter serves as a summary for chapters 40-47. Note the following remarks by George L. Robinson [The Book of Isaiah, p.138-139] which are highlights of the chapters:

- (1) Jehovah's unique power to predict. Let the house of Jacob know and understand that Jehovah's method of predicting future events and fulfilling his predictions has been vindicated by history over and over again, some predictions having been announced long in advance, others on the eve of their accomplishment; yea, and that his new prediction concerning the redemption of Israel will also be vindicated, for he will surely bring it to pass. Idols are nonentities. (48:1-8)
- (2) That salvation is of grace. Let the house of Jacob know also and understand that Israel's redemption is not for their sake but for Jehovah's; "For mine own sake, for mine own sake, will I do it" (48:9-11).
- (3) That Cyrus, as Jehovah's agent, will faithfully perform all his pleasure on Babylon. His advent will be the crowning proof of Jehovah's abiding presence among his people. In order that the evidence may be perfectly clear, Jehovah makes bold to call him openly, "not in secret", and in advance of his advent, even "from the beginning," in order that men may be obliged to confess that God has done it, by his Spirit (48:12-16).
- (4) That God's chastisements upon the nation were intended to be disciplinary. For had Israel only learned the lessons which God was all along trying to teach them through their afflictions and sufferings, then had their peace been like a river, and their righteousness, as the waves of the sea (49:17-19).

- (5) But even now, the prophet exhorts them to accept of Jehovah's proffered salvation; and he closes with a jubilant summons addressed to the believing exiles, bidding them to depart from Babylon and publish to all the world the story of their redemption. Alas! that there is no peace or salvation for the godless (48:20-22).

CHAPTER FORTY-NINE

1. The introductory verses of this passage constitute the second "servant song" in the book of Isaiah (cf. ch.42). The servant (fulfilled in the Messiah) is said to be using the sharp sword of the Lord, to bring glory to the Lord, to be strength for the Lord, and to be a light to the Gentiles.
2. The remainder of the passage (vs.8-46) speaks about Israel's return to Zion. Though Israel may have thought that the Lord had forgotten her, we learn that such was not the case (vs.14ff). She would be returned to her homeland and those who served as her oppressors would be judged. In so doing the Lord said that the world would know that he was the Lord, the Saviour, and the Redeemer of Israel.

CHAPTER FIFTY

This chapter is the third of the four so-called "servant songs" of the book of Isaiah. In this chapter the servant is seen to be a prophet that listens to what the Lord says and speaks as the Lord says to speak. He is pictured as being persecuted by his peers and ridiculed by his adversaries. In the midst of all of this he turned to God whom, as he affirmed, would help him. To those who did not walk in light, but rather in darkness, he admonishes them to trust in the name of the Lord. Those who do not will lie down in sorrow.

CHAPTER FIFTY-ONE

1. In the opening verses of the chapter the exiles in Babylon are addressed. They are called to courage in light of the fact that they will be returned to the land of Palestine.
2. Isaiah beseeches the Lord to intervene in behalf of the children of Israel in captivity in Babylon to perform as he did when Israel was in bondage in the land of Egypt.
3. In the closing verses Isaiah informs the captives (prophetically) that they should not fear mortal men because God was with them and was able to comfort them. When they contemplated the creation of God and the great and magnificent works which he performed they would see that the fury of the oppression that they were under was less. Though their situation seemed endless, God would soon help them.

CHAPTER FIFTY-TWO

1. In the opening verses the Jews (called Zion, Jerusalem) are pictured as a woman sitting in the dust and mourning. She (they) is called to arise and get dressed in beautiful garments for the time of mourning is passed. God has let it be known that they would leave the land of their exile and return to their homeland.
2. God did not take anything from the captors when his people were taken so he did not give them anything when he took them back. It was through the workings of God that Assyria, Egypt, and Babylon had taken Israel captive during the respective time periods.
3. The prophet Isaiah speaks of messengers who go throughout the land of exile and inform the people of their deliverance. This same passage is quoted by the apostle Paul in Romans 10 and applied to the beauty of preaching the gospel. This good news freed the children of Israel from the captivity to the Babylonians; the gospel freed men from the bondage of sin (Romans 6:17ff; John 8:32ff).
4. The last few verses of the chapter (vs.13-15) begin the last of the four "servant song" passages in the book of Isaiah. The servant was not only to be extolled and exalted, but at the same time he was to be humiliated and ridiculed.

CHAPTER FIFTY-THREE

This entire chapter is a continuation of the "servant song" which began in the closing verses of the last chapter. Every verse of the chapter refers to the coming Messiah, the Christ. In the chapter we learn that" 1) he had no form or comeliness that we should desire him simply for the sake of his physical appearance, 2) he was despised and rejected of men (the opposite view of what the Jews expected in a Messiah), 3) he was not esteemed by his own people, 4) he bore griefs and sorrows of man, 5) he was afflicted by man,

6) he was wounded for the transgressions of men, 7) in the midst of such wounds and afflictions he was siletn, 8) he was a perpetrator of no violence or deceit, 9) he was buried with the rich, 10) he died for the purpose of redeeming man from sin, 11) he shall serve to justify many, and 12) he will receive a portion among the great. [cf. Robinson, Isaiah, p. 146, #6 : "Henceforth we hear no more of "the Servant of Jehovah", but of "the servants of Jehovah" (54:17, 56:6; 63:17; 65:8,9,13,14,15; 66:14; cf. however 61:1-3)."] All of these facets of the Christ are fulfilled in the New Testament.

CHAPTER FIFTY-FOUR

1. In the opening verses Israel is seen to be a barren woman without children, but that would soon change. Paul quotes this passage in Galatians 4:27 and applies it to the church. Through those who returned home from the exile (i.e. the remnant), the kingdom would one day sprout.
2. The kingdom would encompass more than Judaism encompassed, hence the tents are to be enlarged. In verse 3 we note that the seed of Israel would inherit the Gentiles. Though that may appear to mean that the Gentiles would be servants of the Jews, such was not the way that such came to be fulfilled. Christ came to save all men, including the Gentiles. The church came, Christ having effectively taken down the middle wall of partition, to consolidate all things together, Jew and Gentile.
3. The covenant which is spoke of in this chapter would be just as binding as that which the Lord made with Noah concerning the destruction of the world by flood. Just as the Lord kept that covenant, so would he keep his new one referred to here.
4. Note that the last verse teaches that this (i.e. the kingdom) is the heritage of the servants of the Lord. It was God's ultimate will that mankind would be saved eternally, and such is the promise of God (I John 2:25) that all who believe, trust, and obey the Christ will be heirs of that promise (Galatians 3:26-4:6). [Note vs.13]

CHAPTER FIFTY-FIVE

This chapter details the open mercies of God which are free to all. The concept of the grace and mercy of God has often been misunderstood. Since man cannot earn salvation, many come to the conclusion that salvation is given by the grace of God. That is true, but such must be properly understood. There are conditions attached to the grace of God. Does that mean that the salvation is no longer by the grace of God but now by works (i.e. by condition)? No, that is not the case. Consider the following illustration. A man with a lot of money offers \$1,000,000 to a friend. The friend, having need of the money, is interested of course. The man with the money asks his friend to go to the store and buy him a loaf of bread and a gallon of milk and he would then receive the money. The friend obeys and ultimately receives the money. Did he earn the money? No, such is not the case. No person would contend that he "earned" (i.e. performed services equal in worth to the money received) that one million dollars. Did he receive the money freely? Yes, because he did not earn the money the money was given to him by the grace of the rich man. In this same way, the subject of salvation understood. Though we do not earn the salvation, God, who freely gives salvation, does want us to meet his conditions. The meeting of those conditions can never amount in value to the gift which God gives. The gift, therefore, is obtained by the grace of God. The chapter has ultimate reference to that salvation which shall be obtained through the Christ. Though man may not understand the thoughts and ways of God totally, man can understand that God will accomplish what he purposes to accomplish. His word is sure. The Jews, therefore, could rest assured that this promise of God (which they did not fully understand) would be carried out. [Note the reference to the feast in vs.1ff, Montgomery, p.71]

CHAPTER FIFTY-SIX

1. This chapter returns to a scene more current in Israel. Unlike the previous chapters which dealt heavily with the promises to be obtained in the future, this chapter discusses the situation that was current with the exiles. [Remember that Isaiah is projecting himself into the future through the means of inspiration and addressing the people of this era.]
2. This chapter places a strong emphasis on the keeping of the Sabbath, a law which was commonly ignored in prior times.

3. Also within this chapter we note a different outlook toward the non-Jews.

"When the captives returned from exile they should encourage people to become proselytes to the religion of God. The foreigner and the eunuch who "kept God's Sabbaths" should be treated equally with all Jews. A transitional period between strict Rabbinic Judaism and the Messianic age seems to be described here. That such a period did exist can be seen by a reading of the book of Acts in the New Testament. In almost every synagogue in the Roman empire, there were a number of "devout Greeks", or "God-fearers", who were usually first to accept the gospel message (Acts 10:2; 13:43; 14:1; 17:4,12). Those who would become worshippers of God would receive a name "better than sons or daughters"." [Montgomery, Isaiah Vol.II, p.74]

4. The last few verses refer to the corruption that existed in the political and more specifically the religious circles of Isaiah's day. Those who claimed to be leaders needed to be lead themselves for they lead the people into sin.

CHAPTER FIFTY-SEVEN

1. In the opening verses it is said that the righteous who die are better off having died rather than enduring the evil (hardships) of life.
2. In vs.3-10 Isaiah addresses those who worshipped idols and condemns their evil ways.
3. In the following section those who rely upon something other than God for strength are condemned.
4. The last section (vs.14ff) is a call for all men to be humble and contrite (repentant). Those who were of such a nature were delivered from the troubles of life.

CHAPTER FIFTY-EIGHT

1. In the opening verses of the chapter the prophet is told to show the sins of the children of Israel. This might seem to be confusing, because the people who are to be shown their sins are those who, according to verse 2ff, are seeking the Lord daily. They were "regular" in their worship of Jehovah, but as we shall see their worship was all outward, nothing inward. They were performing the external observances of worship, but according to vs.3, they were doing such things for their own pleasure. Hence, they were not accomplishing what God intended for them to accomplish. They kept outward actions but were not taking care of those things which really demanded their attention such as taking care of the hungry, helping the poor, and clothing the naked. When they truly began to worship, God would honor them. [This aspect of corrupt worship is a common theme in Isaiah and other books. Too often people are involved with what they think is right, but in reality it is all form and no content.]
2. The last few verses (10-14) encourages the people to seek the right attitude about worship to God.

CHAPTER FIFTY-NINE

1. The problems that Israel was enduring did not come because was too weak to save them. The very first verse of this chapter assures us of that. The real problem came because of the sins, the iniquities, of Israel. The opening verses depict Israel as being completely sinful. Just as earlier passages in Isaiah (ch.1) showed Israel to be a body with sores and wounds from head to toe, so does this passage depict sin in all aspect of the body. The hands are defiled with blood, the fingers with iniquity, the lips with lies, the tongue with perverseness. The body is fully sinful. Their feet ran to evil, they make haste to shed innocent blood, their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity (Gen.6, II Pet.2). They groped about like blind men and walked in darkness.
2. Though the first part of the passage paints a dismal picture, the latter part of the chapter shows that God will redeem them if they heal their sores. They were to put on spiritual clothing (vs.17, cf. Eph.6) and change their lifestyles accordingly. As a result, they would be delivered (vs.20-21).

CHAPTER SIXTY

1. This chapter takes us back to the scene of the captives yet in exile. Previous images have shown Israel to be in the midst of utter despair, but in this chapter the light of hope is dawning (cf. 59:9ff). Not only would Israel see this light,

but other nations would bear witness of it as well. When Israel was returned to their own land, the world would take notice, and when the church was opened to all the light of God's presence (in the most holy place) went out through the world.

2. Many of the verses in this chapter depict the everlasting nature of the kingdom which is spoken of. (cf. 15,19,20,21)
3. Note once again the reference to the entrance of the Gentiles into this kingdom (cf. vs.5).

CHAPTER SIXTY-ONE

1. The first three verses were read by Jesus and are recorded in Luke 4:16-21. After reading these verses Jesus said: "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." The passage, therefore, is an obvious reference to the Christ himself, but it also applies to the new hope that would be given to the Jews as they returned from the place of exile to their homeland. This typified the coming application of the passage to the Christ. The liberty (freedom) was from bondage and from sin.
2. The second section of this chapter (vs.4-11) refers to the land to which they would return. Note that they would all be known as priests and ministers of God (cf. I Pet. 2:1-9).

CHAPTER SIXTY-TWO

1. The time for the return is drawing nigh. The years of captivity have been fulfilled and the children of Israel are about to return to their homeland. With reference to the first two verses note the following:

"God had long been silent in respect to the captive people, but he would not hold his peace forever. It was his purpose to bring righteousness (cf. Rom.1:17; 3:21-26) and salvation through the Jewish nation (Rom.9:4-5; 15:26-27). This righteousness would be observe by the nations (Gentiles) and they would 'be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name." Just exactly what this "new name" is remains a matter of conjecture. Some have taken it to be the name "Christian" which is the only name God's people in the New Testament are called by that they weren't called by in the Old Testament. This author is inclined to take this position, but we cannot be too dogmatic here. Others have said the name is Hephzibah and Beula (cf. vs.4). In Jer.33:16 the new name given to God's people in Messianic times is "Jehovah our righteousness". In Isaiah 62:12 the prophet says they will be called "the Holy people, the redeemed of Jehovah." Those who overcome are promised "the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and mine own new name" (Rev.3:12). Whatever the "new name" of Isa.62:2 is, it is for the purpose of signifying a new people...a new people who would be God's own possession and would be faithful and true to him (cf. Isa.1:26; 56:5; 58:12; 60:14, 18) (I Pet.2:9-10). [Montgomery, Isaiah Vol.II, p. 83]

2. The restored land would be a thing of beauty and would bring much rejoicing from the Lord (vs.5).
3. The watchmen would continually seek to alert the people of troubles in Israel (vs.6ff).
4. In the final few verses a highway is seen prepared as the people begin to leave the land of captivity and head homeward (vs.10ff).

CHAPTER SIXTY-THREE

1. In the initial verses of the chapter (vs.1-6) the Lord is about to bring his vengeance on the oppressors of the nation of Israel. No one else is able to deliver them save the Lord.
2. Because of God's love for the children of Israel he would deliver them from their captivity, just as he delivered the children of Israel from the land of Egypt during the time of Moses.
3. Though they had often rebelled against the Lord, they had now repented of their sins. Isaiah is seen beseeching the Lord to have mercy upon them and he prays for their deliverance from captivity. He recognizes that God is the only one that can possibly deliver them from their situation.

CHAPTER SIXTY-FOUR

1. This chapter presents another prayer to the Lord for deliverance from captivity. It is most likely the case that this chapter is a continuation of the prayer initiated in chapter 63.
2. The first verses of the chapter (and the prayer) form a request for the Lord to intervene in the situation of the children of Israel. "Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down...". The expression is, of course, figurative, but the thought it provokes is most vivid. One could almost imagine the children of Israel hoping that God would just swoop down and carry them off to their homeland in an instant.
3. Not only would God's intervention help Israel, but it would also make his name great to the surrounding nations. This theme is a common one in the Old Testament. God is not only concerned about what the nations will think about Israel, but he is also concerned what the other nations will think about him. For that reason God often manifested his greatness through Israel. [e.g. deliverance from Egypt, defended Israel in the wilderness, the conquest of Canaan, et al.]
4. The prophet then acknowledges that Israel sinned. "...for we have sinned" (vs.5) "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." (vs.6)
5. The Lord is called upon to help them like the potter molds the clay (v.8). The land of Palestine is no longer what it used to be; it is burned with fire and laid to waste. God is again beseeched that he might return Israel to their homeland.

CHAPTER SIXTY-FIVE

1. The opening two verses are quoted by Paul in Romans 10:20-21 and there applied to the calling of both Jews and Gentiles. Remember that during the days of the children of Israel at the end of their period of exile they were called upon numerous times to be a "light to the Gentiles". At this period of time many more prophecies were given that would have included the Gentiles in their fulfillment. (cf. Is.53ff)
2. God, in his response, informs Israel of their sins and the consequences which came upon them as a result. Those who thus sinned would be punished, but God would preserve "a seed out of Jacob", another reference to the remnant that has so often been alluded to.
3. In the latter half of the chapter the Lord speaks of a time when things would be different. The phrase "new heavens and a new earth" (vs.17) have been the subject of much speculation. Remember that some phrases are used at different periods of time and in different contexts to indicated different things. For example, the phrase "the day of the Lord" (or "the coming of the Lord") is used to designate 1) God's coming in judgment upon Israel in the O.T.; 2) the coming of the Messiah at birth, 3) the coming of the destruction of Jerusalem, 4) the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, 5) the final, the second coming of Christ at the end of time, and 6) the coming of the Lord in the judgment brought upon individuals and nations, i.e. chastisement and punishment. Likewise, the phrase "new heavens and a new earth" refers to 1) the resettlement of the land of Canaan by the Jews after the period of captivity, 2) the period of the church in which the greatest glory of God's plan of redemption would be in effect, and 3) the final state after the destruction of the world at the end of time. (cf. II Pet.3) The period does not refer to any sort of unusual and drastic changes in the physical conditions of the world during the period of the millenium. It is most likely that the phrase has immediate reference in this context to the deliverance from captivity and the return to Canaan. The imagery is quite clear. We sing of the land of cloudless day and we think of heaven. The Jews, in the midst of captivity, were in a land of clouded day. They were not in their own land. They were in bondage. Things did not look so good. But that scene changed just as if the Lord rolled away the clouds and brought in a new heaven and a new earth. The impact of the phrase is to emphasize a change in situations and not a change in the physical conditions of the earth. Elsewhere the phrase has immediate reference to other situations. (See Barnes, Clark, DeHoff on this passage et al.)

4. The last verses of the chapter (vs.24-25) do not indicate a physical change in the world the result of which is that animals which were formerly preying upon others would immediately begin to live at peace with their prey. The import of the passage is simply to indicate a change that would take place. The figurative language simply serves to illustrate the degree of the change, not the nature of it.

CHAPTER SIXTY-SIX

1. In the opening verses of chapter 66 the Lord states that heaven is his throne and that earth is his footstool. This thought is repeated in John 4 and Acts 17 as well as several other places. The emphasis is that God, though not confined in any building, is to be worshipped in the way that he prescribes. That emphasis is further seen in verse 2 where God says he will look to the man who is poor and of a contrite spirit. That same thought is brought out in Matthew 5:3 "blessed are the poor in spirit", that is those who are humble and subservient to the will of God as opposed to those who are haughty and rebellious.
2. The Lord then speaks about abuses of the system of sacrifices and the consequent punishment that would come upon those who are guilty of such infractions.
3. In verses 7ff the image of a woman about to give birth to a child is used to describe Israel as they are anticipating their delivery from captivity. The Lord tells them that he has not brought them up to this point to turn away from them, but rather that he would carry out the deliverance from captivity. They would then be nurtured by the Lord just as a mother nurses a newborn child and cares for it. Those who love the woman (Israel) would rejoice with her and those who were her enemies would be warned and ultimately punished.
4. All nations are spoken of as being gathered together in order to see the glory of God (vs.18ff). Even to the Gentiles would God's glory go.
5. The phrase "new heavens and new earth" is used again in this chapter, but here the emphasis seems to be on the coming of the new kingdom. Israel is pictured as already having given birth to the child of expectation. Now the seed and name of Israel would remain (cf. Gal.6:16; I Pet.2:1-9; Rom.2:20ff, et al.).
6. With reference to verse 23 note the following:

"The memorial [Is.56:5, JLA], concerning, which Isaiah spoke was instituted by none other than the Christ himself. The synoptic writers recorded how that at the passover supper, "Jesus took bread, and when he had blessed it, he brake it, and gave to them and said; Take ye: this is my body. And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: And they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Verily I say unto you, I shall no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God" (Mark 14:22-25; Matt.26:26-29; Luke 22:14-20). Isaiah also saw that there would be a weekly observance of that memorial. He wrote: "And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another (THAT IS, ONCE EACH WEEK OR BETWEEN ONE SABBATH AND ANOTHER), all flesh (JEW AND GENTILE), shall come to worship before me, saith Jehovah" (Isa.66:23). Thus the memorial of which Isaiah spoke is observed by faithful Christians on every Lord's day." [Rex A. Turner, "The Church As Seen By The Old Testament Prophets", in THE CHURCH-THE BEAUTIFUL BRIDE OF CHRIST, p.14]

ISAIAH: A REVIEW

Beginning with the book of Isaiah we enter into a different aspect of Bible study. As mentioned before, the bulk of Old Testament history is complete after the book of II Chronicles, but we now resume a study of the period between I Samuel and II Chronicles when we begin to study the prophets. Isaiah, the first of these in the Bible, was not necessarily the first prophet of the period. Many scholars consider Joel to be a little bit earlier than Isaiah. The prophets spoke about Israel from a different standpoint than did the historians of Samuel, Kings, and the priest of Chronicles. It was the duty of the prophets to call the children of Israel back to God, to warn them of their sins, to speak about future punishment that would come if repentance would not, and to speak of future glory should they be obedient. That they are the spokesmen of God is evidenced

by the number of times we note the phrase "the word of the Lord as spoken by _____". The prophecies of these men of God were therefore God's prophecies and not men's. The children of Israel were warned that their sins were the cause of the coming doom and destruction. Isaiah, in chapter 6 of the book, emphasizes the sins of the people in relationship to the holiness of God. Throughout the book the sins of the people are pointed out. More often than not, the sins centered around abuses of God's prescribed system of worship. The book begins by describing Israel as a body full of sores, a body which offered vain oblations to the Lord. Throughout the book, Isaiah again and again points to their vain worship, outward actions without the inward devotion that God required. A fact important in a proper understanding of the prophets is the time of their labors in the land. All of them are describe in relation to the exile or captivity. 1) The Pre-exilic prophets (those who prophesied prior to the period of captivity): a) Jonah, Amos and Hosea, prophets of Israel (the northern kingdom) and b) Obadiah, Joel, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Jeremiah, prophets of Judah (the southern kingdom); 2) The Exilic prophets (those who prophesied during the period of captivity): Ezekiel and Daniel; and 3) The Post-exilic prophets (those who prophesied during the period immediately following the time of captivity): Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. From this listing it can be seen that Isaiah was a prophet who worked in Judah, the southern kingdom, prior to the time of the Babylonian captivity. We must remember that Isaiah often projected into the future and spoke of events and individuals that were in captivity, had come out of captivity, and even spoke of events and individuals several hundred years into the future. Some of the topics addressed in Isaiah are: 1) the sinfulness of the children of Israel, 2) the coming captivity, 3) the return from the captivity, 4) the future glory of the Gentiles, 5) the coming kingdom, the church, 6) the Messiah: his life, his death, his burial, his afflictions, his glory, his kingdom, etc., 7) God, the sole hope of Israel, 8) the necessity of repentance, 9) the majesty of God, 10) the preservation of the remnant in Israel, etc. "The contents of the book of Isaiah have been said to include: (1) Warnings and threats against his own people because of their sins. (2) Sketches of the history of his times. (3) Prophecies of the return of Israel from captivity. (4) Prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah. (5) Predictions of the judgment of God on other nations. (6) Discourses that urge upon Israel moral and religious reformation. (7) Visions of the future glory and prosperity of the church. (8) Expressions of thanksgiving and praise." [J.B. Tidwell, The Bible Book By Book, p. 114] Because of the nature of the work of the prophets, they were sometimes not too welcome in Israel. Many of the people would rather have heard "smooth things" (Is.30:10ff) than to have heard the accusations that Isaiah and others brought against them. For many, the role of the prophet was not safe. Remember during the time of Elijah that Ahab would persecute the prophets. As a result many of them went into a period of hiding. Jesus spoke of such a persecution in Matthew 23:29-36.

JEREMIAH

Jeremiah, like Isaiah, was a prophet to the southern kingdom of Judah. Isaiah, however, labored in Judah before Jeremiah and would have been dead for quite some time when Jeremiah began his work. It is the considered judgment of many scholars that Isaiah was put to death sometime during the reign of the wicked king Manasseh. Jeremiah did not begin his work as a prophet in Judah until the days of King Josiah who reigned several years later than Manasseh. The work of the prophet Jeremiah was in substance the same as that of Isaiah, that is to call the children of Israel back to the right ways of the Lord. Jeremiah was a prophet prior to the exile and may have been in Judah at the time of the beginning of the captivity. He, however, did not go into captivity but went into the land of Egypt where he probably spent the remaining years of his life. [For a listing of the kings of Israel and Judah consult PELOUBET'S BIBLE DICTIONARY, p. 770ff]

CHAPTER ONE

1. The opening verses of this chapter set the stage for the work of Jeremiah. He was a prophet in Judah during the reign of Josiah, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah and up until the time of the captivity.
2. Verses 4-19 of chapter one depict the calling of Jeremiah. Compare this account to