

# **Issiah Commentary**

**By**

**H.A Ironside**

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## Foreword To The First Edition

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(Written by Mrs. H. A. Ironside)

In December 1949 Dr. Ironside gave lectures on the book of Isaiah at Dallas Theological Seminary. One of the students, Ray C. Stedman, made wire recordings of the classroom lectures. Mr. Stedman also did a great deal of secretarial work for Dr. Ironside during his stay at the seminary. He was so efficient and helpful that my husband asked him if he would be willing to travel with us during the summer and help with the writing of his exposition of the book of Isaiah, which had long been delayed on account of his failing sight.

Mr. Stedman joined us in June 1950 after his graduation from the seminary and for two months served as chauffeur, secretary, and companion. As a “brother beloved” he was so helpful in all the varied activities of the itinerant ministry that we came to love him as a son. Without his help and cooperation the publication of Dr. Ironside’s *Isaiah* would have been impossible.

Traveling constantly, Dr. Ironside carried with him a reference library consisting of W. E. Vine’s *Isaiah—Prophecies, Promises, and Warnings*; F. C. Jennings’ *Isaiah*; a one-volume Bible encyclopedia; and J. N. Darby’s *New Translation of the Holy Scriptures*. As Dr. Ironside was unable to read at all during this time, except with the aid of a powerful magnifying glass, his method of working under this handicap may be of interest. Mr. Stedman wrote:

In general our procedure was as follows: I would read to him the portion chosen for comment, out of the Authorized

Version—a portion which had previously been read to him and over which he had been meditating. He would take a moment or two to gather his thoughts and then would begin dictating, seldom pausing for rephrasing or changes. I would then read the next section and he would dictate on that until an entire chapter had been covered. After that I would read through the next chapter, usually from Darby's "New Translation" and also the corresponding portion from Jennings and Vine. This would form the basis for his meditation in preparation for the next day's dictation.

Occasionally we would discuss interesting sections of the chapters together and he would ask me to look up certain words in a one-volume Bible encyclopedia he carried. I was always amazed at the way he kept his comments from simply being a "rehash" of Vine and Jennings, but always managed to bring out some interesting sidelight which the others had overlooked.

When Mr. Stedman left us to go to the pastorate of the Peninsula Bible Fellowship at Palo Alto, California, the first thirty-five chapters of Isaiah were completed and typed.

After the operation on Dr. Ironside's eyes in September 1950, which entirely restored his sight, he edited the manuscript and left it with Loizeaux Brothers before our departure for New Zealand. Chapters 35-39 were written by Dr. Ironside in his characteristic scrawl during December 1950 and I copied them in longhand, for I was his only secretary on the trip.

When he went to be with the Lord from Rotorua, New Zealand, on January 15, 1951, he had only completed chapter 39. As to chapters 40-66, Ray Stedman wrote:

I had taken them on wire recordings at the time of his lectures in Dallas. Unfortunately, I did not have enough wire to take the whole series. I did record the early chapters, too,

but had to wipe them off and use that same wire for the later chapters, which I saved. Upon the request of one of the students, I copied off on Soundsciber discs the entire series from chapter 40 on. It was these discs which were sent Loizeaux Brothers for transcription...It certainly was the hand of the Lord that I should have retained the lectures beginning with the very one where Dr. Ironside left off and that they should be on Soundsciber discs, ready for immediate transcription. The wire originals are a precious heritage to me, and have already proven of wide blessing wherever they have been played.

Chapters 40-66, after having been transcribed from the Soundsciber discs, have been edited by Miss Emily Farmer, who edited in the past most of Dr. Ironside's manuscripts when his works were being prepared for publication. We are most grateful for her careful and efficient work as unto the Lord. (She edited *Isaiah* while she was confined to bed.)

It has been a joy to each of us to have a part in the publication of this book. May God continue to bless the written ministry of "H.A.I.," who, being dead, yet speaketh.

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## **Author's Introduction**

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### **Isaiah**

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The book of Isaiah is a portion of God's Holy Word in which spiritually minded believers find much to exercise their hearts and encourage their glad anticipation of the coming day when Immanuel will take His great power and reign.

Longer than any other prophetic book, Isaiah contains the fullest Messianic predictions to be found in the Old Testament, testifying in no uncertain way to "the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (**1 Peter 1:11**).

Like all other books of the Bible, Isaiah has suffered much at the hands of unbelieving and haughty critics who have done their best to undermine the faith of the simple in the integrity and unity of the Bible. But for those who have faith, all doubts are settled by the Lord Jesus, who when here on earth placed the seal of His divine approval on the prophecy in its entirety. After the ascension of the Savior, the apostles drew from this book again and again in their ministry, all by the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit, thus giving the prophecy a place of unquestionable authority as the very word of Jehovah.

According to Jewish tradition, Isaiah was a man of wealth, rank, and learning. He is supposed to be the one referred to in **Hebrews 11:37** as having been "sawn asunder" by the enraged rejecters of his prophetic ministry. If this be so, the execution occurred at the close of a long and honored life, for his public service extended over at least half a century. As he told us in his opening verse, he prophesied "in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah." In all likelihood he did not appear in the prophetic office until the last year of Uzziah's long reign (**Isaiah 6:1**).

Chapter 6 records his divine commission, and it is questionable that he had written the previous chapters before he had the vision "in the year that King Uzziah died"—not necessarily after Uzziah died, but in the same year as

that solemn event. We know Isaiah continued to proclaim the word of the Lord after the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign, for it was then that the prophet was commissioned to make known to the stricken monarch that fifteen years were to be added to his life.

Isaiah was therefore contemporary with Hosea and possibly for a very brief season with Amos. However, it is more likely that the herdsman-prophet had passed off the scene before Isaiah began to make known the mind of God. Micah also held the prophetic office during the reigns of the last three kings mentioned. So Isaiah would have been the chief among a goodly little company to whom the secrets of the Lord were revealed in a day when formalism and hypocrisy largely prevailed.

That there was but one Isaiah, not two, is evident from the testimony given by the inspired writer of the Gospel of Luke. He told us that on the occasion of the Lord's first public visit to the synagogue at Nazareth "there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias [Isaiah]" and from it He preached His gospel of "deliverance to the captives" and "the acceptable year of the Lord" (**Luke 4:17-19**). Thus the Lord cited the glorious predictions of **Isaiah 61:1-2** as inspired Scripture written by Isaiah, not as the writing of an unknown poet of the Maccabean or later period.

The book of Isaiah as it stands bears every evidence of having been preserved in its divinely arranged order. Only unbelieving ignorance coupled with amazing egotism could lead anyone to want to rearrange it and dissect it in the manner of "modern" critics such as George Adam Smith. His *Isaiah* in The Expositor's Bible Series is the most commonly known specimen of virtual denial of inspiration. Smith's book is a biased attempt to destroy the true prophetic character of the Messianic portions of this magnificent prophecy.

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Unbelief finds difficulties where faith bows with adoring reverence. As I write not for skeptics, but for those who truly know the Christ whose sufferings and glories Isaiah foretold, I will pay but slight attention to the objections of those unbelieving natural men, albeit distinguished in the world of letters and in the Christless religious circles of the day.

Many professing Christians pay little or no attention to the prophetic word, but in neglecting that which forms so large a part of the Holy Scriptures, they wrong their own souls and dishonor Him who gave His Word for our edification and comfort. The real value of prophecy is that it occupies us with a person, not merely with events. That person is our Lord Jesus Christ, who came once to suffer and is coming again to reign. Isaiah wrote of both these advents, and in a way more plain and full than that of any of the other Old Testament seers.

Prophecy is not simply the foretelling of future events; it is also the *forth-telling* of the mind of God for the moment. When both the priesthood and the monarchy had failed completely in Israel and Judah, God continued to minister to His people through the prophets. These were men to whom special insight was given into holy things, and who were sent by God to call an erring people to repentance. It was the responsibility of the prophets not only to inform the people of the coming glories of Messiah's day, but also to impress upon them the necessity of preparing the way of the Lord. The people could prepare the way by turning from sin to righteousness, and by turning from their idolatrous vanities to the living God, who had so wonderfully manifested His power on their behalf throughout Israel's history.

There are many things in the writings of Isaiah that are perhaps beyond our present comprehension, even as they were beyond the comprehension of the writer himself. Like the other prophets, Isaiah wrote at the command of the Lord

and searched the Scriptures then available when he testified beforehand concerning the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. The portions of Isaiah that deal with the sufferings of Christ at the time of His first advent have become amazingly clear in the light of the New Testament Gospels. The portions that have to do with the glories that will follow at His second advent, while linked with all prophecy concerning that glorious advent, will never be fully understood until the day of fulfillment arrives. Even though at times we may seem to see through a glass darkly as we study this book, we may be assured of real blessing as we weigh carefully before God that which He commissioned Isaiah to proclaim.

Those who are interested in the curious things of Scripture have noticed that the book of Isaiah in one sense comprises a miniature Bible. The Bible consists of sixty-six books; Isaiah has sixty-six chapters. The Bible is divided into two Testaments, Old and New; Isaiah is divided into two parts, the first having to do largely with Israel's past condition and the promise of Messiah's coming, and the second dealing particularly with their future deliverance. The Old Testament has thirty-nine books; the first part of Isaiah has thirty-nine chapters. The New Testament has twenty-seven books; the second part of Isaiah has twenty-seven chapters. This of course is a mere coincidence because it was not the Spirit of God, but human editors who divided the book in this way. Nevertheless it is interesting and quite suggestive when we realize that Isaiah deals in a very definite way with that which is the outstanding theme of all the Scriptures: God's salvation as revealed in His blessed Son.

The first part of Isaiah can be divided into two sections, the first consisting of chapters 1-35 and the second consisting of chapters 36-39. If, for the purpose of structural analysis, we make each of these sections a separate part, we can think of



the prophecy as being divided into three parts: (1) chapters 1-35; (2) chapters 36-39; (3) chapters 40-66.

The first of these three parts is an orderly, connected series of messages evidently uttered by Isaiah before the illness of Hezekiah. The messages minister chiefly to the consciences of Israel and Judah. The people are warned of suffering under God's hand of judgment, and they are promised blessing in connection with Messiah's coming.

The second part, though of a prophetical and typical character, is historical, showing how all blessing for Judah is bound up with a Son of David who will go down to death but be raised up by omnipotent power. **Isaiah 36-39** is almost identical to **2 Kings 18:13—20:19** and the main points of **2 Chronicles 32**. Isaiah himself doubtless was the recorder of the portion of the book of Kings written during his ministry, and by divine direction he introduced the passage specified into the book bearing his name.

The third part of Isaiah concludes the prophecy by setting forth the utter failure of the first man and the arrival of the Second, the Lord from Heaven. Israel, shown to be unfaithful in every particular as a servant of God, is set aside so that the true Servant, the Elect of Jehovah, may be manifested.

Prophecy does not go beyond this earth; its scope is only "as long as the sun and moon endure" (**Psalms 72:5**). But we know from later revelation that the eternal Son of the Father will be the One in whom all the fullness of the godhead will be displayed forever. Through the true Servant, all God's counsels will stand and God's glory will be established.

With these preliminary thoughts before us, let us turn to the consideration of the book itself, assured that we will find it, like all other Scriptures, profitable for teaching, reproof,

correction, and instruction in righteousness (**2 Timothy 3:16**).

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**Isaiah 1 The Call To Hear**

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**Henry Allen Ironside**

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### Isaiah 1:1-6

Abruptly the voice of the Lord broke in upon the ears of men who prided themselves on their religiousness and trusted in their formal observance of the legal ritual: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me." There is something sublime in the very simplicity of this challenge to obedience. Heaven and earth, ever subject to His will, were called to witness the base ingratitude of Jehovah's people. The objects of His solicitous care from their childhood in Egypt, they had never as a nation given Him the loving obedience that was His due. Individual faithfulness there was; but nationally, as later in the case of the church viewed as a collective body, failure had come in almost at the very beginning and there had never been recovery.

"The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib" because of his care for them, but Israel did not know their Master. May we not well challenge our hearts as to how far *we* really know our Owner? To what extent do we sanctify Christ as Lord? Other lords have had dominion over us, but He is our Owner now. Only by Him will we now make mention of the ineffable name. The kingdom of God for us is that of the Son of His love. To the crucified One we owe unswerving allegiance.

Our Master's crib is the Word of God, a part of which we now have before us. Do we really *know* it? Does hunger ever drive us to it? Or are we often found foolishly sniffing the desert air, following the wind like the wild ass? Have we turned our backs on God's well-filled storehouse, vainly seeking a satisfactory portion in the world we have

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professed to repudiate? These are solemn questions, not to be evaded or ignored. They are to be faced in the presence of the Lord lest a day come when of us too He will have to say, “Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.”

There is no breach of relationship suggested here. Judah was still owned by God, but her moral state demanded discipline. Yet she had despised that discipline until it seemed useless to chasten her further. The sore seemed too deep to be healed; the whole head was sick and the heart faint. Everywhere the evidences of inward corruption were obvious. There was no soundness in Judah. Their hearts had not turned to God so that He who had smitten might bind them up in His grace and longsuffering.

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### **Isaiah 1:7-20**

Prophetically, Isaiah beheld the sad result of all this coldhearted indifference to the message he brought. The country was soon to be desolate and the fair cities of Judah were to be destroyed by conflagration. Strangers would dwell in their land and only a feeble remnant would be left—like a workman’s hut in a vineyard or a keeper’s lodge in a cucumber field. The prophet spoke in the present tense of things not yet seen, for faith’s eye can see all that God has declared as though it has already been fulfilled.

Isaiah prophesied, “Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.” Those significant words were quoted by the apostle Paul in **Romans 9:29**. Only that remnant could be acknowledged

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people. We will observe that throughout the balance of the book of Isaiah, the remnant is given the place of the nation.

The rest of the people were already rejected as “children in whom is no pleasure.” In **Isaiah 1:10-20** it is this evil majority who were addressed by God, but He did not acknowledge any relationship with them. Comparing them to Sodom and Gomorrah, He called them to repentance. Rulers and people alike were evil and in their unholy state they had no right to approach Him. For such unregenerate people to offer sacrifices was to mock and insult His holiness. God found no delight in their offerings, nor could He complacently behold them treading His courts.

What a scathing rebuke of anyone who professes to draw near to God by sacramental observances while not born of His Spirit and while not broken before Him! Ritualism is an offense; religious exercises are filthy in His sight if the participants have not recognized their guilt and their need of the atonement whereby iniquity may be purged. From all Judah’s solemn feasts and sacred seasons, Jehovah turned away in disgust. He said He would hide His face and close His ears to their prayers, for the proof of their defiled condition was in their hands.

What was needed? The application of the Word of God to heart and conscience. Such obedience would be evidence of genuine faith and would result in purged ways and clean lives. “Wash you, make you clean,” He cried. “Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord.”

Observe the order here. There is no promise of gospel

contingent on works, nor is salvation dependent on human effort or advancement in righteousness, but God has no blessing in either time or eternity for the man who persists in sin and refuses to judge himself in the light of His revealed Word. Where faith is truly present, there will be contrition for sin, and amendment of conduct will follow inevitably.

It is to the self-judged therefore that the glorious Word comes in power: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." No more blessed proclamation of full amnesty is found in the Bible. In this verse is the offer of full judicial cleansing for every repentant soul, no matter how grievous his record may have been. Well may Isaiah be called the evangelical prophet. A wondrous gospel pervades all his pages, though warnings of judgment are constant.

Once cleansed and forgiven, the delivered soul is called to tread the path of obedience and subjection to the One who has justified him from all things. Dispensationally, justification had to await the revelation of the glorious gospel announced in New Testament times, but every soul in every age who heard the Word in faith was cleared of every charge.

The obedience and reward here indicated were of a decidedly legal character, befitting the age of law: "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land." In this age of grace there is a land unknown to sight, but seen and enjoyed by faith; through the Spirit's gracious ministry, each subject soul eats the good fruits of that land in abundance.

refused, and in place of contrition and brokenness a rebellious spirit is displayed, the sword must devour the gainsayer. In Isaiah the sword is that of a human enemy; in the New Testament the instrument of destruction is more clearly identified as the sword of divine judgment.

**Isaiah 1:7-20** is a deeply instructive passage; every reader should weigh it carefully in the light of eternity, “for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” As **Ecclesiastes 12:14** says, “God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”

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### **Isaiah 1:21-31**

This passage has in view Jerusalem, once “the faithful city,” but now corrupt and adulterous. Isaiah saw the city as the exemplification of all the evils that afflicted the land, and in dirge-like measure he bewailed its fallen state. But the Spirit of grace still distinguished a remnant, so the prophet sang of both mercy and judgment.

The city in whose devotedness Jehovah had once found such delight, the city that had once borne the name of the holy, had become a harlot, following after other lovers who could not save. Once full of discretion and the home of righteousness, Jerusalem had become a lodging place for murderers. Her silver (which spoke of atonement—see **Exodus 30:11-16**) had been replaced by the dross of complacent self-sufficiency. Her wine of joy had been diluted with the foul water of earth’s broken cisterns. The leaders of the people, who should have set an example of subjection to the Word of God, were now rebellious bribe-lovers. Righteous judgment was forgotten in the wake of the base desire for gain.

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Because of all this, the Lord Himself would awake to

judgment and would pour out His vengeance on those who, though posing as His friends, were in reality at enmity with Him. But unmixed judgment it could not be, for the rebels in Judah were His covenant people still and He would correct in measure. His discipline would have the effect of removing the unjust and unholy. After purging the nation from its dross, sin, and all that was base and displeasing to God, He would restore their judges and counselors. Then, “redeemed with judgment,” Zion would once more be called “the city of righteousness, the faithful city.” Other Scripture passages show us that this will be their final blessing after the long years of dispersion and the bitterness of the last great tribulation have come to an end.

Isaiah foresaw that the suffering would continue until the unrepentant transgressors and willful sinners were utterly destroyed. Those that remained—a weak but faithful remnant—would loathe themselves for their past sins and be ashamed of the many false gods who had allured them as a nation away from the God of their fathers. We see this spirit beautifully exemplified in **Ezra 9**, **Nehemiah 9**, and **Daniel 9** (three ninth chapters in three “remnant” books), where faithful men confess their people’s sin as their own sin, but from it turn with abhorrence to seek the Lord with all their hearts.

Isaiah warned that all who did not repent would be consumed together by the fierce anger of Jehovah. They would be like a withered oak, a waterless garden, and tow that would burn when the Lord applied a spark.

**Isaiah 1:21-31** was not written for the Jew alone. The passage was also written for our admonition in this age. The failure of the professing church has been even greater



greater light. Soon the Holy and the True, disgusted with such corruption, will vomit out of His mouth all that is unreal and opposed to His Word. But He stands knocking at the door, and whenever there is reality and a heart devoted to Himself, He will come in and dine there in hallowed, blest communion, though the doom of guilty Christendom is so near (**Revelation 3:20**).

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**Isaiah 2 Zion's Future Glory**

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**Isaiah**

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**Isaiah 2-5** is a connected discourse, a soul-stirring message addressed to Judah and Jerusalem at a time unspecified. The parable of the vineyard in chapter 5 is a lovely yet solemn epitome of it all and is really the prophet's text. That which precedes the parable is introductory and that which follows is a fitting conclusion, pronouncing the woes of the Lord upon the vine that only brought forth wild grapes.

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### **Isaiah 2:1-5**

**Isaiah 2:2-4** is almost identical to **Micah 4:1-3**. There is no need to suppose plagiarism or a scribe's blunder in transferring the words of one prophet to the book of another. Rather the similarity is a blessed evidence that the same Spirit inspired both speakers or writers. The double testimony is added assurance that the thing spoken cannot fail.

These verses tell in language too plain to be misunderstood that in the last days God will restore His ancient people Israel to their land and make Jerusalem His throne-city, from which His laws will go forth to the ends of the earth. Isaiah foresaw "that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills." Mountains are a common prophetic symbol signifying governments and throne-cities, and the mountain in **Isaiah 2:2** is the city of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem will be "the city of the great King" (**Psalms 48:2**) and "all nations shall flow unto it." This will be fulfilled literally in the coming age after God's present work of grace has come to an end. He is now, as James pointed out in **Acts 15:14**, visiting the Gentiles "to take out of them a people for his name." But when this special work is

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completed, He will “build again the tabernacle of David” (**Acts 15:16**) and through restored Israel bless all the nations.

Then will be the time spoken of by Isaiah, when “many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” In that day of His power He will rule all the nations with equity and put down every opposing thing.

It is not in this dispensation that Israel will thus be saved and, through them, the nations brought under Immanuel’s sway. Therefore those who expect to see all wars ended and righteousness everywhere established in this age are doomed to bitter disappointment. It is not now while the King is sitting as the earth’s rejected One upon His Father’s throne that the nations “shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks.” But when He returns to this world and takes the throne of His father David, then “nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

It was in view of this glorious fulfillment of Israel’s Messianic hopes that the exhortation of verse 5 was delivered: “O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord.” The house of Jacob, so long blinded because of their rejection of Christ when He came the first time, will then have their eyes opened to see the light that has been hidden from them.

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### **Isaiah 2:6-22**

It is very evident that the verses we have just been considering (2:1-5) are parenthetical, for there is no

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apparent connection between 2:1-5 and 2:6. But if read immediately after 1:31, 2:6 fits perfectly.

Wealth and luxury will not avail to avert the wretchedness that is to be the portion of all who forsake the Lord and turn aside to false gods. Such gods are powerless to deliver those who put their trust in them.

In 2:10-22 the prophet spoke of the day of the Lord, when God will arise in His might and indignation to deal with wickedness and corruption wherever they are found. As in the judgment of the sixth seal, men will seek to hide themselves “in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains” (**Revelation 6:15**). But their hope of escaping the fierce anger of the Lord will be in vain, for “the lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.”

The day of the Lord is in contrast to the day of man, which is this present evil age when God is permitting men to take their own way, try out their own plans, and be independent of His authority. In the coming day of the Lord, high and low, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, all alike will be “brought low” before the God they have defied or forgotten.

That judgment will be like a tremendous storm or forest fire sweeping over the mountains of Lebanon, devouring the great cedars and oaks as well as the lesser trees, then reaching down the mountain slopes and consuming farmhouses and villages, and even spreading across the plains to the shipping ports, where all the ships of Tarshish and all objects of art would be destroyed. Judgment will come, for God has decreed that “the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone

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shall be exalted in that day.” All that men have put in the place of God will be abolished. In their terror men will “go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth,” hoping to find shelter from the wrath of an offended God.

Casting away all in which they have futilely trusted, men will find themselves bereft of all confidence. They will seek refuge in vain in the most inaccessible places as they endeavor to flee from the majestic glory of Jehovah “when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.” Such will be the end of man’s boasted civilization, the end of his effort to make this world a place of rest and security while ignoring the claims of Him who created all things for His own glory. And so the passage closes with a solemn admonition: “Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?”

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### **Isaiah 3 Judah's Fallen Condition**

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#### **Isaiah**

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## Isaiah 3:1-15

**Isaiah 3** continues along the same line as **Isaiah 2** and makes it very definitely clear that it is Jerusalem and Judah which God has in view above all others when He speaks of coming desolation and unsparing judgment. The covenant people and the one-time holy city had strayed so far from the path of obedience that God Himself prepared them for the vengeance decreed by weakening their means of defense. “Children” were their princes and “babes” ruled over them. Their leaders, in other words, were like infants unable to control themselves, much less guide others aright. So disorder and confusion prevailed in place of orderly government. When God is dethroned, anarchy always results.

In their desperation, men were ready to follow anyone who might seem to be able to point out a way of escape from the present misery and might promise to bring order out of the chaotic conditions prevailing. But those to whom men turned for guidance were in utter bewilderment themselves and so refused to take the responsibility of seeking to rectify the abuses that were affecting the nation so adversely.

The root cause of all the trouble is indicated in 3:8: “Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his glory.” The people had brought down judgment on their own heads and therefore solemn woes were pronounced against them: two in **Isaiah 3** (3:9,11) and six in **Isaiah 5** (5:8, 11, 18, 20, 21, 22).

In 3:9 we read, “Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves,” and in 3:11, “Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him.” As for the righteous remnant, God will care for them and protect them in the day of storm and stress.

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Alas, the great majority of the people were oblivious to their danger and were content to go on with children as their oppressors and women ruling over them. Such weak and powerless leadership could not lift them above the existing confusion.

The psalmist had prayed, “Enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified” (**Psalms 143:2**), but now there was no one to plead for the guilty leaders in Judah. Instead the Lord Himself stood up to plead against them and to judge them. Because of the way they had misled His people and abused their confidence, He would hold them accountable for all their waywardness.

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### **Isaiah 3:16-26**

The vain women who had given themselves to folly were also sternly rebuked. In their pride and empty-headedness, their one great concern had been personal adornment. They sought to add to their beauty by using every device known to women of fashion, but God was about to smite them with sore diseases that would so disfigure them that they would be loathed by their former admirers.

If it seems strange to us that God took note of all the ornaments and apparel that the women relied on to make themselves attractive, we need to remember that in the New Testament careful instruction is given to women regarding their “adorning” (**1 Peter 3:3-4**). It is to be not “that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel,” but the adorning of the heart with “the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.” Christian women would do well to pay close attention to that which the Bible says is becoming to women professing godliness. Pride and vanity—in men or women—are hateful to God and in due time must be dealt with by Him in judgment if there is no repentance.

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**Isaiah 4 When The Lord Returns To Zion**

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**Henry Allen Ironside**

**Isaiah**

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**Isaiah 4**, though very brief, depicts conditions that were to prevail not only in the days following the threatened Babylonian captivity, but also in the dark days of the great tribulation, for Isaiah looked far beyond his own age to days yet to come. Often in times of prolonged warfare, women far outnumber the men, and Isaiah prophesied that “in that day seven women shall take hold of one man” and seek to claim him as their husband in order to take away their reproach. Such polygamous solutions to the problem of the shortage of men were suggested by some people following both world wars.

Isaiah also foresaw that when times were darkened, deliverance would come through the Branch of the Lord, the promised Messiah of Israel, the loveliest of the sons of men. Those left in Zion and remaining in Jerusalem would be the special objects of His favor and would be set apart to the Lord. He would wash away their filth in His own blood and cleanse their hearts with “the spirit of burning” in accordance with the promises made through many other prophets.

Then mount Zion and Jerusalem would become a center of blessing to the whole earth. The glory of the Lord that once was seen over the sanctuary would be as a cloudy pillar over all the homes of the redeemed city. The pillar would be for defense as well as glory. “And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.” Thus like Israel in the wilderness so long ago, the restored nation would be under Jehovah’s gracious care when He had cleansed them from their iniquities and turned their hearts back to Himself.

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## **Isaiah 5 The Parable Of The Vineyard**

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**Henry Allen Ironside**

**Isaiah**

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**Isaiah 5** completes the prophet's address that began in chapter 2. As noted before, the parable of the vineyard is the epitome of that message.

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### **Isaiah 5:1-7**

In the parable God rehearsed His ways with Israel and emphasized their lack of response to His love and patience. This "song of the vineyard" links intimately with our Lord's parable concerning the same subject, which He presented to the scribes and Pharisees shortly before His arrest and crucifixion.

We might well refer to **Isaiah 5:1-7** as the vineyard poem because the words of the prophet's song are graphic and touching. God of course was the real speaker. When He said, "My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill," He was speaking of His own blessed Son, who is the Messiah of Israel as well as the Savior of the world.

The vineyard represents Israel as God viewed them at the beginning of their Palestinian history. Having brought them out of Egypt, He planted them in the land of promise and there cared for them and protected them from the ravages of their enemies. He "fenced [His vineyard], and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein." But the vineyard produced no fruit suitable to His holy desires. "He looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes." Instead of bearing fruit for God, Israel brought forth that which grieved His heart and dishonored His holy name.

And so, addressing Himself directly to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the men of Judah, He asked, "Judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?"

wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?” After all the care He had lavished upon Israel—His loving provision for their needs, His gracious forgiveness extended to them over and over again when they failed—how could it be possible that there would be no suitable fruit for Him? Why should they produce only that which was worthless and useless? Their fruit was unsatisfactory because their hearts had departed from the living God.

After giving His people one opportunity after another to repent and judge themselves in His sight, He finally decided to give them up. He said, “I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.”

That we are not mistaken in the interpretation of the parable is clear from 5:7, where we are definitely told, “The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.” This is confirmed in **Psalms 80-81** and also in **Hosea 10:1**.

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### **Isaiah 5:8-25**

Here we have the six woes to which reference has already been made. In 5:8 the Lord pronounced a woe upon them “that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!” In other words, He pronounced judgment on those who selfishly seek to accumulate houses and lands for themselves, showing no consideration for the poor and the needy. Such selfish people will eventually be desolate and

their holdings destroyed; their fields will fail to bear crops, and their hope of gain will be disappointed.

In 5:11 the Lord pronounced a woe upon those who give themselves over to voluptuousness and sensual pleasure, who “rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!” Reading on through 5:17 we learn that they seek to delight themselves with beautiful music and other worldly pleasures, “but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands.” Because of this they will go into captivity. They have acted as those who are without knowledge; and the leaders among them, who should have been honorable men, have proven themselves to be fools. So “hell hath enlarged herself.” That is, the unseen world has “opened her mouth without measure” and they and all that they have delighted in will go down into the pit. “The mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled: But the Lord of hosts [whom they have despised] shall be exalted in judgment.” God, the infinitely holy One, “shall be sanctified in righteousness” when He visits with judgment those who have grievously offended.

The third woe (5:18) is upon those who “draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope.” They openly defy the God of Israel and brazenly insist on taking their own way in opposition to His Holy Word. They ridicule the message of His prophet and spurn His commands.

The fourth woe (5:20) is upon those who fail to distinguish between good and evil, righteousness and unrighteousness. They “put darkness for light, and light for darkness”; they “put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” In other words, they make no distinction between that which honors God and that which dishonors Him. Like Laodicea in a later day,

they are neither cold nor hot; they are utterly indifferent to divine truth.

The fifth woe (5:21) is upon those who are “wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!” Pride, so natural to the human heart, is hateful to God, and if persisted in will eventually bring destruction. As **Proverbs 16:18** puts it, “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.”

The sixth woe (5:22-23) is for those who, inflamed by wine, lose all sense of righteousness in judgment. They “justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!”

Having pronounced the six woes, the Lord declared, “Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel. Therefore is the anger of the Lord kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them: and the hills did tremble.”

In spite of warnings, the people persisted in their iniquity, their hearts unmoved by all God’s dealings with them; therefore more severe judgments were yet to come.

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### **Isaiah 5:26-30**

The Lord had summoned the nations of the East to overrun the land of Israel. Already the northern kingdom of Israel had felt the power of Assyria and had been carried away. Soon the southern kingdom of Judah would be destroyed by the might of Babylon. No effort on Judah’s part would enable them to turn back the power of the enemy when the

appointed hour had come for the destruction so long predicted. Like a roaring lioness with a litter of young lions, the eastern nations would rush upon their prey and carry it away triumphantly. In that hour of distress, the people of Judah would cry to the Lord in vain, for “darkness and sorrow” were destined to be their portion. The light would be darkened in the heavens above them.

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## **Isaiah 6 The Prophet's Cleansing And Commission**

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### **Isaiah**

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Here Isaiah goes back over the years and tells us how he

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was brought into the knowledge of cleansing from sin and how he heard and responded to the call of God to be His messenger to a rebellious and gainsaying people.

It is always interesting to hear a personal and intimate account of the revelation of God to a human soul. In **Isaiah 6** the prophet tells us the secret of his wonderful power and how he was equipped for service. He takes us into the sanctuary, shows us how the Lord was revealed to him, and lets us know the circumstances of his call to the prophetic office. This was the real starting point of his effective ministry.

We know from 1:1 that Isaiah began to witness for God in the days of King Uzziah. Since the experience recorded in **Isaiah 6** took place in the year Uzziah died, it may be that that experience was subsequent to the prophetic testimony recorded in chapters 1-5. But, as suggested before, there seems to be no proof of this. Isaiah may have begun his ministry during the last year of Uzziah's life and it may be that in chapter 6 he told us of his original call to the prophetic office.

Yet, many servants of God have preached to others before having a clear, definite experience with the Lord for themselves. John Wesley is a case in point. He told us in his journal that while in Georgia he learned that he who had come to America to convert the Indians had never been converted himself. In later years he doubted whether he had diagnosed his own case correctly, but he certainly preached to others for several years before he had that heartwarming experience in London when he definitely knew that he was born of God. D. L. Moody is another who began to preach before having a clear understanding of salvation by grace and the enduement of the Holy Spirit.



stirring prophecy of chapters 1-5 was proclaimed before Isaiah received the revelation recorded in chapter 6. However, it seems more probable that after he had written the preceding chapters, he then decided to tell the story of his own meeting with God and his divine commission as God's messenger to the people of his day.

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### **Isaiah 6:1-7**

This revelation of the holiness of God and the corruption of his own heart was not, as some would say, Isaiah's "second blessing." It was rather a part of God's dealings with him in order that he might be prepared—by encountering the reality of God for himself—to give out the Word to others.

Isaiah told us, "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple." That word "also" is significant. Was it a sight of God that brought the leprosy out on Uzziah's forehead? The same God revealed Himself to Isaiah while he was attending a service in the temple at Jerusalem; however, it was not in judgment, but in grace that He showed Himself as the infinitely holy One.

Others may have thronged the temple courts at this time, but only Isaiah saw the glorious vision. In an ecstatic state he became blind to all about him; his awakened intelligence was fully occupied with the glory that had been revealed to him.

Above the throne he saw the seraphim, an order of angels apparently, each with six wings. We may drop the s from the word "seraphims" as the *im* is the Hebrew plural. These glorious beings seem to be messengers of grace, as distinguished from the cherubim, who speak rather of righteousness and judgment.

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The seraphim cried one to another, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.” Their words are an ascription of praise and adoration to the triune God, whose glory is displayed in all creation. As the song of worship resounded, the very posts of the doors were moved and the temple was filled with the fragrant smoke of burning incense. Strange that inanimate pillars should be moved while the hearts of men remained obdurate and motionless! But there was one man who did respond—and in a very definite way.

Isaiah cried, “Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.” The effect of beholding God is to make one realize one’s own un-worthiness. Isaiah realized the corruption of his own heart when he saw himself in the light of Jehovah’s infinite holiness. Such is the case whenever man is brought consciously into the presence of God. When Job saw the Lord, he cried, “I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (**Job 42:6**). When Simon Peter recognized in Jesus the Creator of the fish of the sea, he fell at His feet and cried, “Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord” (**Luke 5:8**). Likewise when our prophet saw himself in the light of the holiness of God, he at once acknowledged his own sinfulness. Moreover he recognized the fact that he was surrounded by men who, like himself, were “of unclean lips,” for “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh” (**Matthew 12:34**).

Isaiah wrote that after his confession, “then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand.” The creature had taken the live coal “with the tongs from off the altar.” It was the altar of sacrifice, which prefigured the cross. That live coal symbolized the fire of judgment that had burned itself out on the offering. The seraphim,

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representatives of the grace of God to needy men, flew swiftly to tell of His saving favor based on the atoning sacrifice. With two of their wings the seraphim hid their faces as they worshipped the infinitely holy One. With two they covered their beautiful feet, and with two they hurried to do loving service.

As previously mentioned, the cherubim seem to speak of judgment. (The “living creatures” of **Ezekiel 1** are identified as the “cherubim” in **Ezekiel 10**). They are said to have four wings. May not the six wings of the seraphim then tell us how “mercy rejoiceth against judgment” (**James 2:13**)?

As the coal touched his lips, Isaiah heard the comforting words, “Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.” The divinely-sent messenger proclaimed to Isaiah the good news of redemption and purification from sin through Him whose one offering was pictured in the sacrifice of the altar.

I would re-emphasize the fact that the coal was taken from the altar of burnt offering, not from the golden altar, where only incense was burned. That live coal represented the fire, ever burning, that was never to go out (**Leviticus 6:13**). It constantly foreshadowed the work of the cross. Through that sacrifice alone could iniquity be purged and sin be put away (**Hebrews 9:13-14**).

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### **Isaiah 6:8-13**

Following the assurance of forgiveness and cleansing came the call for service. Isaiah heard the voice of the Lord crying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” In response Isaiah exclaimed, “Here am I; send me.”

Who will go? It has pleased God to commit the declaration

of His truth to men rather than to angels. He is still calling for consecrated men and women to carry the offer of salvation and the warning of judgment to a lost world. Such messengers must know for themselves the cleansing power of the blood of Christ if they are to give effective testimony to those who are still in their sins.

The prophet was commissioned to “go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.” Even though the Word seemed to have no other effect than to harden them in their sins and rebellion, Isaiah was to proclaim the message faithfully.

The servant of God is responsible to God. Having received his commission, he is to go forth in the name of the One who sends him, declaring the message committed to him. The results must be left with God. Whether men hear or whether they refuse to listen, he who has proclaimed the Word faithfully has delivered his own soul (**Ezekiel 2:3-5; 3:19-21**). The apostle Paul said, “We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish” (**2 Corinthians 2:15**). God is honored when His truth is preached, no matter what attitude the hearers take toward it. His Word will not return to Him void; it will accomplish the divine purpose (**Isaiah 55:11**).

Faced with the solemn responsibility of proclaiming an unpopular message, Isaiah cried, “Lord, how long?” (6:11) It takes special faith and obedience to continue to preach to an unheeding people who are only hardened by the Word instead of being softened by it. The Lord’s answer

one left to hear it.

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## **Isaiah 7 The Virgin's Son**

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### **Isaiah**

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**Isaiah 7** has been the subject of endless controversy throughout the Christian centuries. However, the Holy Spirit makes this portion of Scripture clear to those who are ready to receive His testimony because of the way it is used in connection with the birth of our blessed Lord.

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### **Isaiah 7:1-9**

During the reign of King Ahaz (the grandson of Uzziah) war broke out between Judah and Israel. Pekah, the son of King Remaliah of Israel, entered into a confederacy with King Rezin of Syria; and they went together to besiege Jerusalem. Though the siege lasted for some time, they were unable to subjugate the holy city.

When Ahaz learned of the confederacy against him, his heart and the heart of his people were moved with fear, for Ahaz had walked in the ways of the kings of Israel rather than in those of the house of David. He had therefore little or no reason to expect divine help against his foes. But God's heart was inclined to help the people of Judah, for the time had not yet come to deliver them up to their enemies. There had been quite a measure of return to the Lord during the days of Jotham, the father of Ahaz.

God heard the prayers of His almost distracted people and sent the prophet Isaiah to meet Ahaz and give him a word of encouragement. Isaiah took with him his son Shear-jashub, whose name meant "the remnant shall return." All of Isaiah's children seem to have been named prophetically in order that they might be signs to the people of Judah.

The message that Isaiah brought to Ahaz was one of trust and comfort: "Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted." In the sight of God the kings who had united their forces against Ahaz were like two smoking firebrands soon to be extinguished. Their wickedness and ungodliness

were such that the Lord was about to deal with them in judgment and therefore would not permit them to overcome Judah or subdue Jerusalem. It was in vain that they took counsel together against Ahaz and his people and sought to make a breach in the defenses of Jerusalem.

Regarding the scheme of Pekah and Rezin, the Lord God declared, "It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass...Within threescore and five years shall Ephraim [Israel] be broken, that it be not a people." Syria would be unable to help them against the king of Assyria, who in God's own time was to carry the northern kingdom into captivity.

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### **Isaiah 7:10-16**

At the time when Isaiah was sent to encourage Ahaz, God confirmed through the prophet the gospel message that had been given in the garden of Eden. There God had declared that the Seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head. *The Seed of the woman* is a most significant expression because it refers to the virgin birth of the Messiah. All others born into the world are definitely of the seed of the man, but the great Deliverer was to come only through the woman.

Isaiah told Ahaz to ask the Lord for a sign that would confirm the word the prophet had spoken. Ahaz refused, saying, "I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord." His words sounded pious enough, but actually they came from an unbelieving heart; he was afraid to ask for a sign lest it should not come to pass. The pretended humility of Ahaz was hateful to God. Isaiah declared, "Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?" He who is all-powerful might have given any sign that could have been asked.

Isaiah went on to say, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign [and of such a character that men would think it

was impossible for it to come to pass]; “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” *Immanuel*, as we know, means “God with us.” The virgin’s Son was to be God manifested in the flesh. (Fuller details are given in **Isaiah 9**.)

Only unbelief could cause anyone to try to nullify the force of this passage by reading “a young woman” in place of “a virgin,” and by saying that the young woman was the wife of the prophet and the son was their son. It is perfectly true that the word rendered “virgin” might also be rendered “maiden,” but every maiden is presumably a virgin—if not, something is radically wrong. So the prophecy here clearly and definitely declared that an unmarried virgin would become a mother and the child would be named “God with us.” I am not saying, as Rome does, that the virgin Mary is the mother of God. She became the mother of the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, but He who was born of her was God manifested in the flesh.

This sign would come to pass, but it was not to be fulfilled during the days of Ahaz. The fulfillment would come some time afterward, for the prophet immediately added, “Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.” Before this child would come on the scene and grow to maturity, not only the king of Israel but also the king of Judah would have ceased to reign; the land would have been left without a son of David sitting on the throne of Judah, or any representative sitting on the throne of Israel.

The expression “butter and honey shall he eat” is very striking, for it indicates the true humanity of the child to be born of the virgin. Although He was to be supernaturally conceived, he would have a real physical body, which would



be sustained by proper food. Butter (curds) is the quintessence of animal food, and honey the quintessence of vegetable food. With such fare therefore the holy Child was to be nourished that He might grow from infancy to manhood in a normal way. When we turn to the New Testament records, we do not read of some remarkably precocious child whose early activities were different from those of other little ones. **Luke 2:52** says that He “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.” Feeding on the food provided, He grew from childhood to youth and from youth to manhood.

In the Apocryphal gospels many curious and weird legends are connected with the boy Jesus. From the very first He is pictured as acting in a supernatural way, even at His birth taking three steps forward to the amazement of those attending His mother. It is said that when playing with other boys He would work strange miracles that amazed them; on the other hand, if they failed to appreciate Him, He would visit judgment upon them. But this is not the Christ of God; the person thus portrayed is a creature of man’s unholy imagination.

As a babe, as a growing child, as a youth, and as a man, the humanity of our Lord was exactly like that of other people, except that He did not sin. He was made in all things like His brethren (**Hebrews 2:17**) that He might properly represent us before God as our kinsman-redeemer.

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### **Isaiah 7:17-25**

To Ahaz and his people and his father’s house, God would bring distress and trouble by means of the king of Assyria’s coming into the land. In fact Judah was to be the bone of contention between two great powers: Assyria on the east and Egypt on the west. As Judah contemplated the increasing might of Assyria, they turned desperately to Egypt,

hoping to find in that people an ally who would help protect them from the eastern power. But Judah learned in the end that Egypt was a broken reed. Instead of becoming helpful she would herself turn against them.

As a result of the conflict that would ensue, the day was not far distant when famine and pestilence would sweep through the land. The great cities of Judah would fall. Out in the country, those who remained would exist on the produce of the soil; but even this would be available in limited quantities, for thorns and briers would soon cover large districts where industries, plantations, and vineyards had once flourished. Nevertheless God would still intervene to protect the poor of the flock and those who waited on Him; in response to their toil the land would once more bear fruit instead of thorns and briers, and oxen and sheep would again be raised in sufficient numbers to meet the needs of the people.

To some it might seem strange that the prophecy of the virgin's Son would be given in such an unexpected place, but we need to remember that God always had Christ before Him, and that every king of Judah was the anointed of the Lord in his time. Our word *Messiah* simply means "the anointed" and therefore each of these kings was supposed to prefigure God's own blessed Son, who was to come into the world as the Son of David. In the fullness of time God would present His Son to the chosen nation as the anointed One in whom alone deliverance was to be found. Many of these kings failed utterly to typify the Lord. Their behavior showed that they were far removed in spirit from what God had in mind for them. Ahaz had shown himself forgetful of the law of the Lord, and so in the hour of his distress he did not have the courage to count on God or to expect help from Him. How natural then that under the circumstances God should speak of another King, a Son of David, who would be born

into the world supernaturally, and who in His own time would show who was the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords.

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**Isaiah 8 Maher-Shalal-Hashbaz**

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## Henry Allen Ironside

### Isaiah

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#### Isaiah 8:1-4

We have already met Isaiah's son Shear-jashub and noted the meaning of his name: "the remnant shall return." Now we are introduced to Maher-shalal-hashbaz, another of the prophet's sons. His name, which was given as a sign to Judah, means "in making speed to the spoil he hastens the prey."

Some critics have insisted that Maher-shalal-hashbaz was the son of the maiden referred to in **Isaiah 7** and that she was the prophet's wife. But there is no possibility of identifying Immanuel (7:14) with Maher-shalal-hashbaz. The significance of the name *Immanuel* was that God would dwell among men in the person of His Son (and this is confirmed in **Isaiah 9**), but the young lad with the long outlandish name was so called in view of something altogether different.

The name *Maher-shalal-hashbaz* was given and recorded in the temple before the child was born. Its significance was this: Damascus,"the Syrian capital that had been at enmity with Judah and confederate with Israel, was about to be spoiled by the Assyrians; and at the same time Israel was to fall prey to that great and mighty power. These events would transpire before the child was grown.

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#### Isaiah 8:5-8

The allied peoples of Syria and Israel (the northern kingdom), refusing to recognize the value of association with Judah, had spurned the peaceful waters of Shiloah.

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Remaliah's son Pekah (the upstart king of Israel) in order to destroy Judah. Therefore the Lord was bringing against them the armies of the king of Assyria. The Assyrians would flow over Syria and Israel like a great river and would even reach into Judah, thus overspreading Immanuel's land—the land promised by covenant to Abraham and his seed, which seed is Christ.

As Christians we delight to use the expression *Immanuel's land* in a spiritual sense, and we are justified in doing this. But in 8:8 the words “thy land, O Emmanuel” actually refer to the land of Palestine. It was the land Jehovah had claimed as His own when He had declared, “The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine” (**Leviticus 25:23**).

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### **Isaiah 8:9-15**

To ward off this danger from his land, Ahaz sought an alliance with Egypt, but no such association would avail to avert the threatened judgment.

Instinctively in times of stress and danger men think of confederacies as the best means of preserving the traditions and conditions that they hold dear. It was so in Judah; it is so in Christendom today. Individuals and churches join various leagues that their organizers hope will prove to be bulwarks against the onrushing tide of evil. But again and again it has been demonstrated that all such federations tend to deteriorate as time goes by. Afterward the children of those who formed these associations revert to the evils against which their fathers protested.

The only real recourse in a day of evil is to cleave to the Lord. No matter what happens, He remains unchanged and unchangeable. So the prophet exhorted the people,

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“Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.”

When the Lord is given His rightful place, He will be as a sanctuary to those who put their trust in Him. But to those who reject Him, He will be “a stone of stumbling” and “a rock of offense,” as He was when He appeared in human form to both the houses of Israel. These words were applied to our blessed Lord in the New Testament (**1 Peter 2:8**). When He, the long-looked-for Messiah came in lowly grace, the nation stumbled over Him and so was broken and scattered, as predicted in **Isaiah 8:15**.

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### **Isaiah 8:16-22**

God’s Word is a dependable resource for His obedient people. To those who are willing to be taught of God, the Word becomes increasingly precious as the days grow darker. Hence Paul, after predicting the coming apostasy in the Ephesian church, said to the elders, “I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace” (**Acts 20:32**). In the same vein Isaiah, speaking on God’s behalf, exclaimed, “Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.”

In 8:17 we hear the voice of him who takes the place of dependence on God: “I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.” The Lord may seem to be indifferent to the trials His people are passing through, but actually He is not. His face may be hidden, but His heart is always aware of them.

Isaiah and his family were called to be a testimony to all Israel. “Behold,” he said, “I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion” (8:18). Part of this verse is quoted in **Hebrews 2:13**, where

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it is applied to the Lord Jesus and those who receive life through believing in His name.

**Isaiah 8:19-22** gives us a solemn warning against what is now known as spiritualism and against any form of necromancy. When we are urged to seek light and help from spirit-mediums, we should say, “Should not a people seek unto their God?” The living should not ask the dead for help. All attempts to get into contact with the spirits of the dead are forbidden in Scripture. (See **Deuteronomy 18:9-12** and **Leviticus 20:27**.) It is a grievous offense in the eyes of God for anyone to turn from His revealed Word to those who profess to have power to summon the spirits of the departed. Either the mediums are charlatans, deceiving those who go to them, or they are possessed by impersonating demons, misleading all who follow them.

God’s sure Word abides. Those who speak contrary to it are in darkness themselves and there is no morning for them. When the day dawns for the eternal blessing of the redeemed, there will be outer darkness for those who have spurned the light of truth, only to be misled by falsehood. Such individuals will be exposed at last for what they really are: blind leaders of the blind. They will look in vain for help when those who have obeyed the Word of God find light and blessing. Spiritualism is a Satanic cult that can only disappoint those who follow the will-o’-the-wisp of its direction. They will at last be driven into the darkness.

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## **Isaiah 9 The Promised Deliverer**

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**Henry Allen Ironside**

### **Isaiah**

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As we study **Isaiah 9** we will notice how definitely it links with the promise given to Ahaz in chapter 7, for we will read once more of the One who is the fulfillment of all God's ways with men. This One is the man of God's counsel who came in grace to reveal the Father and to establish everlasting righteousness.

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### **Isaiah 9:1-5**

The opening verses of **Isaiah 9** continue the prophecy of darkness begun in chapter 8. There would be dimness in the future, but Isaiah foresaw that when darkness was spreading over the land of Palestine and men were groping for the light, Christ would come in infinite grace to be the Light of the world. He would come "by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations."

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Isaiah seemed to see Him moving about among men, declaring the counsel of God, and showing His grace toward those that walked in darkness. Writing prophetically, he stated, “They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.” Isaiah wrote as if he could look down through the ages and see the Lord Jesus, full of grace and truth, making known the wonders of God’s redeeming love to those who heard Him gladly and found Him to be the Light of life.

**Isaiah 9:1-2** is the passage quoted in **Matthew 4:15-16**. The differences in rendering are due to the fact that in the New Testament the quotation is taken from the Septuagint instead of the Hebrew.

In **Isaiah 9:3** the prophet passed over Christ’s rejection and the long years to follow during which the people of Israel themselves would be rejected. For the moment he looked ahead to the day when the nation would once more be recognized by God as being in a covenant relationship with Himself. Note that it is Israel that is in question in this verse and not the Gentiles. It seems evident that in the King James version the translation is faulty in that the word “not” should have been omitted. Really the prophet was saying, “Thou hast multiplied the nation, and increased the joy.” Most spiritually-minded scholars agree with this rendering, for the passage looks forward to the future blessing of the favored nation when they will be restored to the Lord and to their land. By then they will have recognized Jesus as their Messiah, as the One whom their fathers rejected but in whom all blessing is to be found.

**Isaiah 9:4-5** contemplates the conditions that would prevail in the world through the long centuries of the dispersion of Israel. Although these verses had a local

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application to the destruction of the Assyrian army, which was besieging Jerusalem, there will be a complete fulfillment when Christ returns to deliver the people from all their enemies.

Undoubtedly when the prophet wrote, “Every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood,” he was describing the sad conditions destined to be the portion of the nations until Christ comes again to bring peace. This agrees with the words of our Lord Jesus as recorded in **Matthew 24:6-7**: “Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.” Such conditions have prevailed through the centuries since Christ was rejected. He who was once offered to the world as the Prince of Peace was rejected by both Israel and the Gentile nations. Therefore He said before He left this earth, “Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division” (**Luke 12:51**).

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### **Isaiah 9:6-7**

This passage is one of the most complete prophecies concerning our Lord to be found in the Old Testament. Isaiah began this prophecy with two expressions that reveal the humanity and the deity of our Savior: “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.” The “child.. .born” refers to His humanity. As we have already seen, He was to come into the world as the virgin’s Son. As such He was a true Man—spirit, soul, and body. The “son...given” refers to the Savior’s deity. He was born of Mary, but without a human father. The eternal Son of the Father, Christ came from the glory that He had with the Father throughout all

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the past eternity. The Son was given in grace for our redemption. He linked His deity with our humanity (except for its sins) and thus was God and man in one blessed adorable person.

The Son is destined to exercise supreme rule over all the universe. As Isaiah said, “The government shall be upon his shoulder.” It has often been noticed that the government of the entire world will rest on His shoulder (singular), but when the Good Shepherd finds a lost sheep, He puts it on His shoulders (plural; see **Luke 15:5**). Surely there is a beautiful suggestion in this plural of the security of those who have put their trust in Him.

“His name,” Isaiah prophesied, “shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor...” Under the name “Wonderful” He appeared to the parents of Samson (**Judges 13:18**, revised version; King James version has “secret”). It may be that we should link together the two words “Wonderful” and “Counsellor,” but if we separate them, we may see in the first word a suggestion of the mystery of His sonship. This mystery no man can fathom, as He told us in **Matthew 11:27** and as we learn from **Revelation 19:12**. Only the Father understands “the mystery of godliness” (**1 Timothy 3:16**). It is beyond human comprehension. Nevertheless as we read the divinely inspired records of Christ’s lowly birth, sinless life, vicarious death, and glorious resurrection, we find our hearts exclaiming again and again, “He is wonderful!” He stands supreme, above all the sons of men. He is the blessed, adorable Son of God, yet His heart is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (**Hebrews 4:15**). His grace is made evident in a thousand ways; His lovingkindness reaches down to the utterly lost and depraved. His name is “Wonderful” because He Himself is wonderful and the work He accomplished is wonderful.

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He is called “Counsellor” because He comes to us as the revealer of the Father’s will. That is what is implied in His divine title, *the Word*. It is by the Word that God has made known His mind. The Lord Jesus, who was with the Father from the beginning (that is, when everything that ever had a beginning began), came into this world to make God known. So in Him the Father has spoken out all that is in His heart. Christ’s words make known to us the path of life and show us the only safe way for a pilgrim people to travel through a world of sin. As the eternal Word He is the revealer of the mind and heart of God. The Son came to earth not only to show us the way to the Father, but also to empower us to walk in a manner well-pleasing to the One who has redeemed us.

Notice that the Son is also called “The mighty God.” Some people seek to tone this down in order to make Him less than the words imply, but He is also called “God” in **Romans 9:5** and **1 John 5:20**. Even when here on earth, He was just as truly God as He was man, and as truly man as He was God. He could not have made atonement for sin otherwise. He had to be who He was in order to do what He did.

Isaiah continued, “His name shall be called...The everlasting Father.” A better rendering would be “the Father of eternity” or “the Father of the coming age.” The Son is not to be confused with the Father, though He and the Father are one (**John 10:30**). But the Son is the One in whom all the ages meet and therefore He is rightfully designated, “the Father of the ages” or “the Father of eternity.”

He was presented to the world and heralded by angels as “The Prince of Peace” (see **Luke 2:14**). But because of His rejection there can be no lasting peace for Israel or the

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other nations until He comes again. Then He will speak peace to all peoples (**Isaiah 32:1-18**). In the meantime, “having made peace through the blood of his cross” (**Colossians 1:20**), all who put their trust in Him have peace with God. As we learn to commit to God in prayer all that would naturally trouble or distress us, peace fills our hearts and controls our lives.

**Isaiah 9:7** refers to the covenant God made with David that his Son would sit on his throne and reign in righteousness forever. This has not yet been fulfilled. When the forerunner of our Lord was born, his father Zacharias declared that God had “raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David” (**Luke 1:69**). Such prophetic declarations make clear that David’s throne was to be established forever, and that he would never be without an heir to sit on that throne. Our Lord, on His mother’s side, was from the line of David and because of her marriage to Joseph, who was heir to the throne, the throne-rights passed to Jesus.

But He has not yet taken His seat on’ the throne of David; this awaits His second coming. At that time, as He declared through His servant John, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne (**Revelation 3:21**). Now He is sitting at “the right hand of the Majesty on high” on the throne of deity (**Hebrews 1:3**). Soon He will return in glory, take His own throne, which is really the throne of David, and reign in righteousness over all the earth. **Isaiah 9:7** will be fulfilled literally, for “the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”

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### **Isaiah 9:8-12**

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Inhabitants of the northern kingdom were vaunting themselves, saying that in spite of the calamities that were befalling them, they would rise above them and once more become a strong and secure people. But the Lord declared that He would raise up adversaries from among the Syrians, who had been their allies, and the Philistines, who were the ancient enemies of His people, and that these adversaries would “devour Israel with open mouth.” The Lord’s anger was “not turned away” from Israel and His hand was “stretched out” in judgment because of their sins. There had been no return to Him even when affliction had come.

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### **Isaiah 9:13-17**

In the Epistle to the Hebrews we are told that “no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.” But on Israel’s part there had been no exercise because of the chastening hand of God upon them. Rather there was resentful pride. They dared to boast and to resist God and His servants who came to instruct them in His truth. The leaders of Israel were terribly guilty in that instead of urging those who were subject to them to repent, they had misled them and caused them to err. Israel was on the brink of destruction because of their unrepentant condition. The Lord could not find His joy in them; His compassion was not free to flow out toward them. Their continual waywardness called for further judgment.

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### **Isaiah 9:18-21**

Men may think lightly of sin and pay little or no attention to the solemn warnings that God gives concerning its evil

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effects, but if they persist in rebellion against God, they will find that “wickedness burneth as the fire” and that those who refuse to turn to God in repentance will have to endure the judgment that they have brought on themselves. God’s holy nature does not permit Him to condone iniquity, so Isaiah prophesied that “through the wrath of the Lord of hosts is the land darkened, and the people shall be as the fuel of the fire.”

Famine and pestilence would be added to Israel’s wretchedness and misery, yet instead of turning to Him and confessing their sin and seeking forgiveness, they would blame one another for their troubles. Manasseh would turn on Ephraim, Ephraim would turn on Manasseh, and both together would turn on Judah. All this would be the sad result of forsaking the way of the Lord.

**Isaiah 9** closes with the solemn refrain repeated for the third time, “For all this his anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still.”

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## **Isaiah 10 The Assyrian And His Doom**

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**Henry Allen Ironside**

**Isaiah**

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It is a well-known principle of Scripture interpretation to recognize that often prophecies have double applications or fulfillments. Many of the conditions through which Israel and the Gentile nations have already passed depict circumstances that will be faced in the future. Some of those conditions prefigure the days of the great tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble, when divine wrath will be poured out on guilty and apostate Christendom and Judaism alike.

We see an example of a double application in **Isaiah 10**, which deals primarily with Judah and Assyria in the days of King Hezekiah, but also looks forward to the endtimes. Then the last great Assyrian, the haughty enemy of the Jews in the time of the end, will be destroyed in Immanuel's land before he can wreak his vengeance on the remnant nation who will be gathered back to God and to their land. Only as we keep these two fulfillments of the prophetic word in mind, can we understand this chapter correctly.

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### **Isaiah 10:1-4**

In the opening verses we see Judah's sad internal condition calling for judgment on the part of the God whom they professed to serve, but so grievously dishonored. Another solemn woe is pronounced on those who in their pride and selfishness issued unrighteous decrees in order to legalize their oppression of the poor

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and enriched themselves at the expense of the fatherless.

Monopolies are not a recent expression of the selfishness of the human heart. In Judah, as in civilized lands today, there were those who considered it good business to take advantage of others in adverse circumstances and to profit from the ruin of their less fortunate fellow men. All this was hateful to the God of judgment who weighs men's actions.

Any economic system that is built on a disregard of the rights of the poor will inevitably be destroyed. Then what will become of the men who have ignored the Word of the Lord and gloried in their success while trampling on their competitors and forcing them to yield to their demands or go down in ruin? "What," the prophet asked the people, "will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far? to whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your glory?"

God has decreed, "Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed" (**1 Samuel 2:30**). He permits men and nations to go just so far in their own willful way; then He deals with them in His indignation, sweeping away their ill-gotten wealth and causing them to bewail the luxuries that they can no longer retain. What can men say when this happens? Where can they turn to save themselves from even greater disaster?

In Judah's case the overrunning of the land by the armies of Sennacherib was the cause of much of their suffering, but it was permitted by God as chastening for their sins. Without His deliverance they were helpless to defend themselves, and so would be taken as prisoners or slain by the cruel foe.

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## **Isaiah 10:5-12**

In this passage God addressed the Assyrian directly and in a way that shows He had far more than the invasion of Sennacherib in view. He also had in mind the final enemy in the last days. Notice that it is “when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem” that the Assyrian will be punished. This needs to be kept in mind as the passage is read and studied.

When King Ahaz was threatened with utter ruin by the kings of Israel and Syria, he asked the king of Assyria for help, only to find out later that this covetous ruler aspired to complete ascendancy over all the lands to the west, including Judah. Indeed Sennacherib would descend on the land like a mighty torrent, until his army was destroyed by pestilence in one night as he besieged Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah. This terrible ruthless enemy from Assyria became the type of the godless foe that in the last days will attempt to bring Palestine under its control, only to be destroyed by omnipotent power on the mountains of Israel.

As the rod of Jehovah’s anger, Assyria was used, as other nations have been used before and since, to chasten the people of God because of their turning away from Him. But in the day of their repentance He destroyed the enemy that had brought disaster upon Judah.

When Isaiah wrote this passage, the haughty destroyer did not yet realize that he was just an instrument in the hand of Jehovah, the God whose name he despised. But he was to learn by bitter experience that after he had been used to punish “an hypocritical nation,” he himself was doomed to utter destruction. To the Assyrian, Jerusalem was just another city to be overthrown as so many others had been

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overthrown; but he was to learn that the God whose temple was in that city was supreme above all the so-called gods that had been powerless to deliver pagan cities out of his hands.

Jehovah's "whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem" includes the return of His people to Himself. In the days that He takes them up again as a nation, He will deal with the Assyrian and with all who have afflicted them.

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### **Isaiah 10:13-19**

Not understanding the use that God was making of him, the Assyrian vaunted himself as though he accomplished everything and won all his victories because of his own wisdom and prudence. So he ruthlessly and heartlessly robbed and oppressed the nations, including Israel and Judah. To him all other people were, like abandoned birds' eggs, to be despoiled—and other armies were as helpless as mother birds when their nests are rifled.

Not knowing that he was only an ax in the hand of Him who hewed down the trees of the forest, the Assyrian boasted as though the power and might were all his own. He magnified himself against the One who designed to use him to chasten the nations because of their wickedness and corruption. Therefore in the reckoning day that was coming, God would deal as sternly with him as he had dealt with others. Just as he had sown hatred and cruelty, so he would reap indignation and wretchedness.

In the day of Jehovah's triumph He will vindicate the remnant in Israel who have put their trust in Him, and they will be as a flame to devour the nations that have sought their destruction. As in the days of Ahasuerus and

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have plotted to destroy them and root them out of the earth. Fulfilled will be the Word of God with its promise that while He would punish His people in measure for their sins, He would never break His covenant with them—a covenant made first to Abraham and then confirmed to David.

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### **Isaiah 10:20-23**

Although many of the nations that have afflicted Israel will be completely destroyed, Israel will not. When the judgments of God are being poured out on the earth in the dark days of the great tribulation, a remnant of the Jews will turn to the Lord in deep repentance and in living faith. These will prove the greatness of His mercy and the unfailing character of His promises. No longer relying on help from the powers that persecuted and failed them in the hour of their need (as when Ahaz turned first to Assyria and then to Egypt in his desperate plight), they will find their resource and protection in God Himself.

The prophetic Word is clear and free of all obscurity. Only unbelief can deny its definite application to a literal remnant of the sons of Jacob when they turn to the Lord in the time of their greatest trouble. Then He will come to their aid, and He will save the nation in the remnant. We need to remember that “they are not all Israel, which are of Israel” (**Romans 9:6**). Of Jacob’s descendants, who will be as numerous “as the sand of the sea,” the great majority will go into utter apostasy and be destroyed in their sins. But a remnant will return and be acknowledged by God as His people. This remnant will be the true Israel and so in the day of Jehovah’s power “all Israel shall be saved” (**Romans 11:26**).

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### **Isaiah 10:24-27**

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In view of this declaration of the divine purpose, God called on His people to trust His Word and not to fear the Assyrian, proud and powerful though he was. Then in clear and definite terms, the prophet predicted the overthrow of the enemy who was hammering as it were at the gate of Jerusalem. God would prevent the carrying out of the Assyrian's purpose even though it might seem for a time that Judah's case was hopeless.

As far as the prophecy had to do with the Assyrian of the past, all was literally fulfilled in due time. When in the last days another mighty power comes against Palestine from the same region as that occupied by the Assyrians of old, his doom will be just as certain.

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### **Isaiah 10:28-34**

Prophecy is history written beforehand, and here Isaiah foretold the path that the Assyrian took as he marched through Palestine, wreaking his vengeance on city after city. The prophet also foretold the Assyrian's defeat when the Lord of hosts at last intervened with His mighty power for the deliverance of those who had cried to Him in the hour of their distress. No military strategy, no weapons of war could avail to save the haughty invader when the hand of God was stretched out against him.

What a lesson for faith we have here! These prophecies, while applying directly to Judah and her foes, have precious lessons for us today. It is *not* true that God is on the side of the greatest armies, as some have said. He stands ready to uphold all who put their confidence in Him and who rely not on an arm of flesh, but on His omnipotence and unchanging love for His own.

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## Isaiah 11 When God's Anointed Takes Over (Part One)

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### Isaiah

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#### Isaiah 11:1-5

After the Assyrian of the endtimes is destroyed and Israel is delivered from all her enemies, there will be peace during the reign of Him who is the Rod out of Jesse's stem. Coming by virgin birth through David's line, He is the Branch out of the root of Jesse, who was the father of David. The Branch of the Lord will bring all things into subjection to God and rule with the iron rod of inflexible righteousness.

This Ruler is the One who is presented in the Apocalypse as having the seven spirits of God—that is, the Holy Spirit in the sevenfold plenitude of His power. Upon Him rests (1) the Spirit of Jehovah; (2) the Spirit of wisdom; (3) the Spirit of understanding; (4) the Spirit of counsel; (5) the Spirit of might; (6) the Spirit of knowledge; and (7) the Spirit of the fear of Jehovah, which is the Spirit of reverence. We are told in **John 3:34** that the Father giveth not the Spirit “by measure” to His beloved Son.

From the moment of His birth the Lord Jesus was under the controlling power of the Holy Spirit. As man on earth He chose not to act in His own omnipotence, but as the Servant of the godhead. After His baptism in the Jordan, the Spirit was seen descending on Him as a dove. This was the anointing (of which the apostle Peter spoke) in preparation for His gracious public ministry. Never for one moment was He out of harmony with the Spirit. It was this that made it possible for Him to grow in wisdom as he grew in stature, “and in favour with God and man” (**Luke 2:52**).

Scripture guards carefully the truths of the perfect manhood of our Lord and His true deity. Confessedly, this mystery is

great: that the eternal wisdom should have so limited Himself as a man that He grew in wisdom and knowledge from childhood to physical maturity as under the tutelage of the Father; and that the Father by the Spirit revealed His will to Jesus from day to day so that He could say, "I speak not My own words, but the words of Him that sent Me." All the works Christ wrought, He attributed to the Spirit of God who dwelt in Him in all His fullness. We see Jesus in **Isaiah 11:1-5** as Jehovah's Servant, speaking and acting according to the Father's will. So our Lord's judgment was inerrant and His understanding perfect.

When in God's due time Christ takes over the reins of the government of this world, all will be equally right and just at last. David's prophetic words will be fulfilled, for there will be "a righteous Ruler over men, a Ruler in the fear of God" (literal rendering of **2 Samuel 23:3**). Earth's long centuries of selfish misrule will come to an end, and Israel and the nations will enjoy the blessings of Messiah's gracious and faithful sway. All wickedness will be dealt with in unsparing judgment and the meek of the earth will be protected and enter into undisturbed blessedness.

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### **Isaiah 11:6-9**

When Christ comes to rule, the curse will be lifted from the lower creation and the very nature of the beasts of the earth will be changed.

Those who attempt to spiritualize **Isaiah 11:6-9** would say that the beasts here represent violent and savage men whose hearts will be changed by regeneration. But the prophet gave no hint of such an application of his words. He very definitely spoke of that which God will do for the animal kingdom when the curse is lifted. There is no hint that the prophet was speaking allegorically or that his language should not be interpreted literally.

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It seems evident that when the Second Man, the last Adam, is set over this lower universe, ideal conditions will prevail on earth. The earth will be as it was before sin came in to mar God's fair creation. Sin's sad consequences—violence and rapine among the beasts and sickness and death among men and women—will all be undone when Christ comes, as predicted by the prophets, to be the restorer of all things. "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (see also **Habakkuk 2:14**).

While the millennium is not to be confused with the new heavens and the new earth, it will nevertheless be a period of wonderful blessing for those who will dwell in the world during that time. Then God will head up all things in Christ.

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### **Isaiah 11:10-16**

It is when Jesus returns in glory and, as the Branch out of the root of Jesse, fulfills the promises made to David, that all these things will come to pass. Then Jacob's prophecy will have its glorious fulfillment: "Unto Him shall the gathering of the peoples be" (literal rendering of **Genesis 49:10**). In that day, we are told, God will magnify Jesus in the eyes of Israel, and the Gentiles too will seek Him.

God's own earthly people, scattered for so long among the Gentile nations, will be gathered back to their own land. Many people think that the promises of their restoration were fulfilled long ago when a remnant returned in the days of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. But in **Isaiah 11:11** we are definitely informed that "the Lord shall set his hand again the *second* time to recover the remnant of his people" (*italics added*). We also learn that they will return not simply from Babylon as before, but from all the lands where they have been dispersed throughout the long centuries of their sorrow and suffering. Israel and Judah, no longer divided, will be drawn to the Lord Himself—the "ensign" to be set up



in that day. They will flow together to the land of their fathers, no longer as rival nations, but as one people in glad subjection to their King and their God.

The chapter closes with details about the manner of Israel and Judah's return. They will be assisted by nations that were once their enemies and aided by certain geographical changes. No doubt these changes will be effected at the time when the feet of our Lord stand again on the mount of Olives and a great earthquake with far-reaching results occurs as foretold in **Zechariah 14**.

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### **Isaiah 12 When God's Anointed Takes Over (Part Two)**

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## Isaiah

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There will be great joy when God's Anointed takes over and the remnant return to Zion. **Isaiah 12** gives us the song of triumph that will rise exultantly from the hearts of the redeemed of the Lord, as in the days when the people sang on the shore of the Red Sea after all their enemies had been destroyed.

It is a blessed and precious experience when the heart is fixed on the Lord Himself and the soul realizes the gladness of reconciliation to the One against whom he has sinned. Then with joy he is able to say, "Though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me."

It means much to know God as the One through whom deliverance has been wrought and who is Himself "salvation." Such knowledge is the end of all worry and anxiety. And so we hear the remnant saying, "I will trust, and not be afraid." Faith is the antidote to fear. As we learn to look to God in confidence, all anxiety disappears, for we know that He who saved us will stand between us and every foe. He does not leave His people to fight their battles in their own power; He is the strength of all who rest on His Word.

The self-righteous Jew, seeking to save himself by his own efforts, has long spurned the wells of salvation. But from that well the returned remnant will draw the water of life as they call on His name and bear witness before all the world to the salvation He has provided.

The exultant song in **Isaiah 12** is a psalm and it ends with a call to praise and adore the God of Israel, who will dwell

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glory “is known in all the earth.” Even now those who come to Him in faith can make this song their own as they know the reality of His saving grace.

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**Isaiah 13 The Burden Of Babylon (Part One)**

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**Henry Allen Ironside**

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## Isaiah

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**Isaiah 13-23** is a distinct section of Isaiah's prophecy, dealing particularly with the nations who had caused Israel to suffer in the past. In these chapters are "burdens"—that is, prophetic messages—relating particularly to Babylon (13-14); Moab (15-16); Damascus, the capital of Syria (17); some unnamed maritime power west of Ethiopia (18); Egypt (19); Egypt and Ethiopia (20); Edom and Arabia (21); and Tyre (23). Some of these nations will appear on the scene in the last days, still manifesting their old enmity toward the chosen race. Chapter 22 refers definitely to Palestine in connection with the attacks of their enemies.

In **Isaiah 13-14** the prophet predicted the future destruction that would come upon Babylon as a result of the Medo-Persian invasion of Chaldea. It may seem strange that Babylon occupies the place it does in these prophetic visions inasmuch as it was an insignificant power completely overshadowed by Assyria in Isaiah's day. But the spirit of prophecy enabled Isaiah to look ahead to the time when Babylon and Assyria would be combined in one great dominion, of which the city of Babylon would be the capital. Babylon was the power destined to carry out the judgments of God against Judah because of its rebellion and idolatry.

As you read **Isaiah 13-14** you will see that behind the literal rulers of Babylon was a sinister spirit-personality named Lucifer, the "son of the morning" (14:12). That this evil angel is identical with Satan himself seems to be perfectly clear.

The prophecy regarding Babylon was to have a double

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Cyrus and Cyaxares (who is probably the same as the Darius of **Daniel 5**); and second, the final destruction of the Assyrian of the last days. In eloquent and dramatic language Isaiah pictured the downfall of the future oppressor of the people of God.

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### **Isaiah 13:1-11**

The picture presented goes far beyond that of the literal destruction of Babylon on the Euphrates in the days of the Medo-Persian conquest. Reflected here are the conditions that will prevail not only among the nations of central and western Asia, but among all Gentile powers in the day of the Lord's indignation. In other words, the doom that fell upon Babylon of old was an illustration of the terrible fate that awaits the godless Gentile powers who will be taken in red-handed rebellion against the Lord and His Anointed in the last days.

Note that many of the expressions used in these verses are practically identical with those in other prophecies concerning the day of the Lord and with those describing the events to follow the breaking of the sixth seal in the book of Revelation.

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### **Isaiah 13:12-16**

If you compare this passage with **Haggai 2:6-7**, **Hebrews 12:25-29**, **Zechariah 14:4-5**, and other passages relating to the day of the Lord, you will learn that the kingdoms of the world will be broken to pieces, but that is not all. There will also be tremendous natural convulsions that will shake the earth and cause disorder even among the heavenly bodies. The people of the world will be in abject terror because of the judgments of the Lord.

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in the conflicts and natural catastrophes of those days that a man will be more precious than gold. Fear will take hold of all the inhabitants of the earth who do not know and wait for the Lord in that day of His power.

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### **Isaiah 13:17-22**

Here the prophet reverted to the literal destruction of Babylon that began with its siege and overthrow by the Medes and Persians. Its destruction was fully consummated some centuries later when at last that one-time proud city was leveled to the dust. Its palaces were demolished and its hanging gardens ruined. In all the centuries since, Babylon has never been able to rise again, for God has decreed, "It shall never be inhabited." It is true that from time to time small villages have been built near the site of the ancient city, but even to this day Arabians refuse to pitch their tents on the site. They think that demons prowl by night among the ruins where owls, lizards ("dragons" in 13:22), and other nocturnal creatures abound. The ruins of Babylon uncovered by archeologists show how completely the prophet's words were fulfilled.

The Babylon of the Apocalypse is a symbolic picture of the great religious-commercial organization that will become fully developed in the last days after the true church has been caught up to be with the Lord. The doom of that organization, like that of the ancient city, will soon be consummated and it too will fall, never to lift itself up again against God and His people.

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### **Isaiah 14 The Burden Of Babylon (Part Two)**

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## Henry Allen Ironside

### Isaiah

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**Isaiah 14** shows that God linked Israel's restoration with Babylon's doom. Part of this divine prediction concerning the recovery of Judah was fulfilled when through a decree of the conquering Cyrus a remnant was permitted to return to Jerusalem. Likewise the future final restoration of Israel will be connected to the complete overthrow of Gentile power.

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#### **Isaiah 14:1-2**

Note the expression in 14:2, "They shall take them captives, whose captives they were." This seems to explain that much-debated passage in **Ephesians 4:8**: "He led captivity captive." Paul was quoting those words from **Psalms 68:18**. The same Hebraism is found in **Judges 5:12**, where the meaning is perfectly clear: Barak was to lead captive those who had held Israel captive. Similarly Christ by His triumphant resurrection has overthrown the powers of Hell and led captive Satan and his hosts who had held humanity captive for so long. The devil was utterly defeated at that time and those who had once been his victims are now delivered from his power (**Hebrews 2:14**). In **Colossians 2:15** we are told that Christ, in rising from the dead, spoiled or made a prey of principalities and powers—that is, the hosts of evil—and therefore Satan is now a defeated foe. His judgment has not yet been carried out, but it is as certain as God's Word is true. The believer, knowing that the devil can have no power against those who cleave to the Word of God, is to resist Satan and remain steadfast in the faith.

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#### **Isaiah 14:3-8**

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This passage shows Israel exulting over the destruction of her great enemy. The “king of Babylon” seems to be used in 14:4 as a synonym for all the Gentile powers that throughout the centuries have taken part in the persecution of God’s ancient people. When their last great enemy is destroyed, they will be able to rejoice in the display of Jehovah’s power. Just as Israel sang on the shores of the Red Sea when they viewed the destruction of the pharaoh and his host, so in that coming day they will be able to raise the song of Moses and the Lamb when they see all their enemies brought to naught.

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### **Isaiah 14:9-15**

These verses enable us to understand how sin began in the heavens and to comprehend something of the unseen powers that throughout the centuries have dominated the minds of evil-disposed men who seek to thwart the purpose of God. This passage, which portrays the fall of Lucifer (Satan), links very closely with **Ezekiel 28**, which should be carefully considered in an effort to understand Isaiah’s words fully.

These words of Isaiah cannot apply to any mere mortal man. Lucifer (the light-bearer) is a created angel of the very highest order and is identical with the covering cherub of **Ezekiel 28**. Apparently he was the greatest of all the angel host and was perfect before God until pride caused him to fall. His ambition was to take the throne of deity for himself and become the supreme ruler of the universe. Note his five “I wills” in 14:13-14: “*I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High*” (italics added). The assertion of the creature’s will in opposition to the will of

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the Creator brought about his downfall, and thus an archangel became the devil!

Cast down from the place of power and favor that he had enjoyed, he became the untiring enemy of God and man, and throughout the millenniums since his expulsion, he has used every conceivable device to ruin mankind and rob God of the glory due to His name. In **John 8:44** the Lord showed that Satan is an apostate, having fallen from a position once enjoyed, and we know from **1 Peter 5:8** that he ever goes about “as a roaring lion...seeking whom he may devour.” The cross was the precursor of Satan’s doom, but because his heart is filled with hatred against God and those whom God loves, he is determined to wreak his vengeance on mankind as much as he can before his own final judgment takes place.

We know from passages such as **2 Peter 2:4** that Lucifer was not alone in his rebellion. This is confirmed in **Matthew 25:41**, where our Lord spoke of “the devil and his angels,” and in **Revelation 12:7**, where we read of the coming war in Heaven between Michael (and his angels) and the dragon (and his angels). These evil angels are “the world-rulers of this darkness” (literal rendering of **Ephesians 6:12**). They seek to dominate the hearts and minds of the rulers of the nations and stir them up to act in opposition to the will of God. Therefore it is not surprising to find that in the next verses of **Isaiah 14** the king of Babylon seems to be confounded with Lucifer. The meaning of course is that the king was controlled or dominated by Satan.

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### **Isaiah 14:16-27**

This passage, which describes the downfall of the king, is highly poetical. Yet it was in no uncertain terms that

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enemy of Israel in the day of the Lord. (See also **Ezekiel 31:16-18**.) All the glory of the warrior and the pride of world conquest will be destroyed. No one who has dared to rise up in pride and arrogance to defy the living God has ever been able to escape the inevitable result of his folly.

In the Assyrian of the last days we see the incarnation as it were of all the persecuting powers who have distressed Israel since their dispersion among the Gentiles. When the nations are gathered together for the Armageddon conflict, the Lord Himself will destroy the Assyrian and every other enemy of Christ and His truth. Israel will be completely delivered and God will be glorified in the kingdom to be set up in righteousness.

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### **Isaiah 14:28-32**

In the last five verses of **Isaiah 14** we find a separate prophecy relating to Palestine and its people. This prophecy was given in the last year of King Ahaz.

For the time being God had turned back the armies of Syria and Assyria, but greater conflicts were in store for Judah in the days of Hezekiah and at the close of the short reign of Zedekiah. First the land was overrun by the Assyrians. They had to turn back without accomplishing their purpose, but because of Judah's lack of repentance and self-judgment, the armies of Nebuchadnezzar eventually destroyed Jerusalem, slew thousands of the people, and carried many more into captivity.

This was not to be the last distress that would come upon that doomed land. Throughout the long years since the Jews' dispersion, Palestine has been a veritable battleground and Israel's sufferings have beggared all description. The day of their deliverance is yet to come and

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nation rejected when He came in lowly grace as the  
promised Savior and Messiah.

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