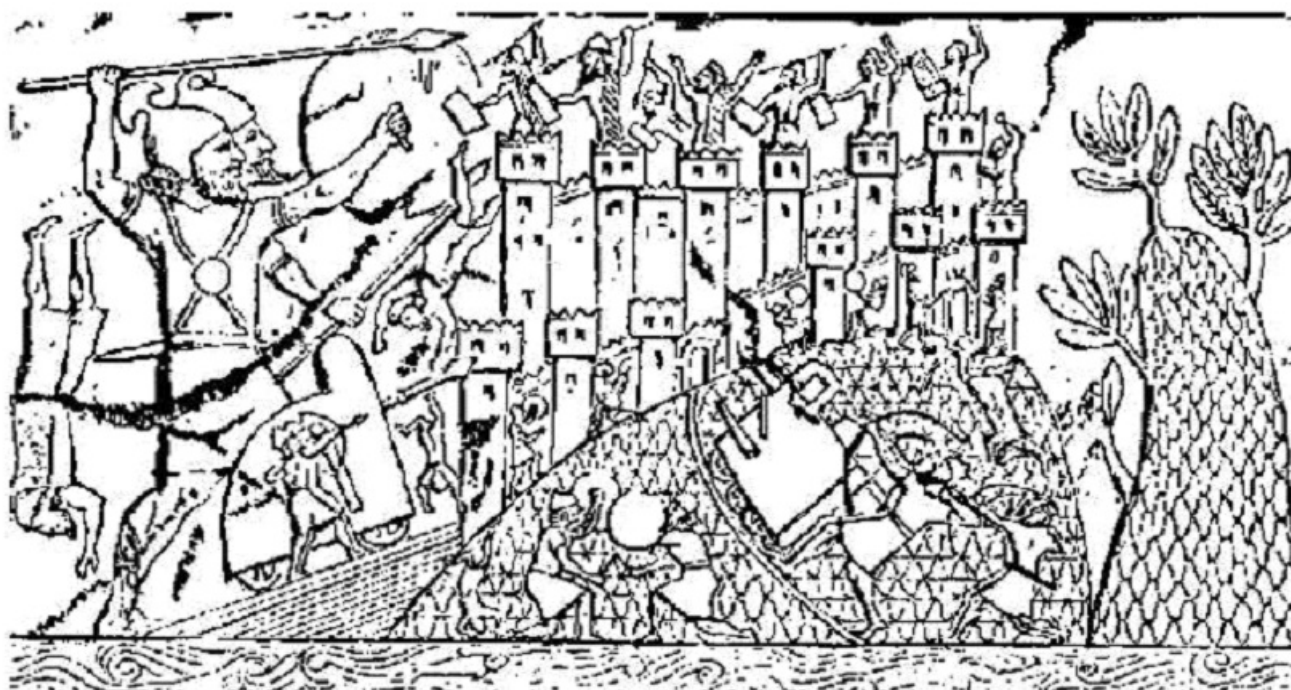


ISAIAH

Part One: The Assyrian Period Chapters 1 - 35



Sennacherib Besieging Lachish

Adult Bible Class – Wednesday Evening – Fall Quarter 2026

Forum Terrace Church of Christ, Grand Prairie, Texas

A Workbook by Daniel R. Vess

Table of Contents

Lesson 1:	Introduction to Isaiah, <i>Isaiah 1:1</i>	5
	<i>Wednesday Evening, October 7, 2026</i>	
Lesson 2:	Rebellion of God's Children, <i>Isaiah 1:2-31</i>	12
	<i>Wednesday Evening, October 14, 2026</i>	
Lesson 3:	Three Views of Jerusalem, <i>Isaiah 2-4</i>	16
	<i>Wednesday Evening, October 21, 2026</i>	
Lesson 4:	God's Vineyard & Isaiah's Call, <i>Isaiah 5-6</i>	21
	<i>Wednesday Evening, October 28, 2026</i>	
Lesson 5:	Trust in God, Not Assyria, <i>Isaiah 7-10:4</i>	26
	<i>Wednesday Evening, November 4, 2026</i>	
Lesson 6:	Assyria Today, A Remnant Tomorrow, <i>Isaiah 10:5-12:6</i>	31
	<i>Wednesday Evening, November 11, 2026</i>	
Lesson 7:	Burden Upon Babylon, Assyria, & Philistia, <i>Isaiah 13-14</i>	36
	<i>Wednesday Evening, November 18, 2026</i>	
Lesson 8:	Burden Upon Moab, Syria, Israel, Assyria, Ethiopia & Egypt, <i>Isaiah 15-19</i>	41
	<i>Wednesday Evening, November 25, 2026</i>	
Lesson 9:	Burden Upon Egypt, Babylon, Edom, Arabia, Jerusalem & Tyre, <i>Isaiah 20-23</i>	47
	<i>Wednesday Evening, December 2, 2026</i>	
Lesson 10:	Judgment Upon the World, <i>Isaiah 24-27</i>	52
	<i>Wednesday Evening, December 9, 2026</i>	
Lesson 11:	Woe to Drunkards, Jerusalem, & Those Who Hide from God, <i>Isaiah 28-29</i>	58
	<i>Wednesday Evening, December 16, 2026</i>	
Lesson 12:	Woe to those Who Trust in Egypt, <i>Isaiah 30-32</i>	62
	<i>Wednesday Evening, December 23, 2026</i>	
Lesson 13:	Woe to the Assyrians & Edom, <i>Isaiah 33-35</i>	67
	<i>Wednesday Evening, December 30, 2026</i>	

Introduction to Isaiah

Isaiah 1:1

Authorship

Isaiah leaves no room for doubt as to the author for this massive prophetic book begins *"The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz,..."* However, for the past two hundred years many liberal scholars have called into question whether Isaiah, the son of Amoz, is the author of all sixty-six chapters. Yet this theory is quickly rejected by those who believe the testimony of the New Testament writers which quote Isaiah some one hundred and twenty times and specifically identify him as the author.

Isaiah also authored other books which have not been preserved for us. According to 2 Chronicles 26:22 he wrote about the life of Uzziah. We also know that he recorded a vision in which he detailed "the rest of the acts of Hezekiah and his good deeds."

Date

Isaiah received his call to the prophetic office in the last year of King Uzziah's life which would be approximately 740 B.C. Isaiah 1:1 shows that he was active as a prophet spanning the reigns of four kings of Judah: *"The vision of Isaiah... which he saw during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah."* Uzziah lived out his last years in a "several house" for lepers. His son, Jotham, was coregent and directed the affairs of Judah (2 Chr. 26:21f). Apparently, during the reign of Jotham, Isaiah was silent. Jotham is mentioned only twice in Isaiah (1:1; 7:1). Most of his prophecy prior to chapter ten took place during the reign of Ahaz. Thus, the major bulk of Isaiah starting with 10:5 transpired during the reign of Hezekiah. Since Isaiah is said to have recorded the deeds of Hezekiah, it is reasonable to believe that he outlived the noble monarch. Hezekiah died in 699 B.C. The last historical event which can be dated is his reference to the death of Sennacherib, which did not occur until 681 B.C. Isaiah could have easily lived during the early reign of Manasseh, however, there is no indications that he continued to receive visions from God during the last years of his life.

Toward the close of the second century A.D., a tradition in the Jewish Talmud said that Isaiah was martyred by the wicked son of Hezekiah, Manasseh. Isaiah opposed the idolatrous practices of this wicked king and according to the tradition Manasseh had him fastened between two planks and sawn in two. This tradition is backed up by the Mishnah. In 150 A.D. Justin Martyr in a letter to a Jew named, Trypho, indicted the Jews with murdering Isaiah with this statement, "whom ye sawed asunder with a wooden saw". This tradition is further promoted in the Jewish apocryphal book, *Ascension of Isaiah*, also of the second century A.D. This is certainly reminiscent of Hebrews 13:37 which says, *"They were stoned, they were sawn in two."* However, none of this can be viewed as conclusive evidence concerning the death of Isaiah.

The Man, Isaiah

◆ His Name

Isaiah was a common name during his time. During the time of David one of the head singers and one of the Levites went by that name. One of the chief men who return from captivity with Ezra was named Isaiah. A Benjamite named Isaiah is mentioned in Nehemiah.

In Old Testament societies great significance was placed on the meaning of names. Today, we name our children according to how a name sounds or after a family member or friend. However, Jewish parents gave their children names based on what the name meant. "Isaiah" means "salvation of Jehovah." Which is equivalent to "Joshua" which appears in the New Testament as "Jesus." Thus, Isaiah proclaimed the life of one whose name meant the same, Jesus the Messiah. It should be noted that the Greek

equivalent is "Esaias" which occurs in some translations of the New Testament. Isaiah is a most fitting name for a man whose mission was to show that only in God and eventually through the Messiah can salvation be found.

◆ **His Occupation and Residence**

Throughout his ministry he is in the city of Jerusalem. Although his prophetic work is directed predominately at the Judean court he dealt with the common people as well as the enemies of the Lord.

The first part of Isaiah's mission is quite specific: save Judah from Assyrian captivity and destruction. He witnessed the fall of the Northern Kingdom. He used what happened to her sister nation to teach Judah that the same Divine Judgment awaited if there was no repentance. His preaching was a great success in averting the Assyrian captivity even though the Assyrians destroyed most of Judah and besieged Jerusalem at one point. However, the rest of Isaiah's mission was to point out that their captivity of Jerusalem had merely been postponed for Babylonian captivity awaited them.

Because of his mission and position, Isaiah was more than just a religious counselor, but a political one as well. Like a statesman he was able to help change Judah's political alliances from Assyria or Egypt to total trust in the hand of God. Furthermore, since he recorded the events of the Kings of his time, he must have been a court historiographer.

Isaiah met mixed response to his work. His counsel was greatly rejected by the idolatrous King Ahaz. During this same time period Isaiah's preaching was made fun of by the general public (5:19; 28:9,10). However, the godly king Hezekiah often consulted him during times of crisis (37:1-7, 21-25).

◆ **His Family**

Jewish tradition has it that Isaiah's father, Amoz, was the brother of King Amaziah. This would make Isaiah a cousin of King Uzziah and of royal descent. This would help explain his constant close ties with the court of several kings. Amoz may have been a person of prominence, since the prophet is often called "the son of Amoz". Yet, this is merely a Rabbinic tradition with no real evidence to substantiate it.

Isaiah had an immediate family. His wife is called a prophetess in chapter eight verse three. Two sons are mentioned. Both were given symbolic names directly relating to Isaiah's prophecies. The first son was named "Shear-jashub" meaning *"a remnant shall return"* (7:3). This would be one of Isaiah's long term predictions for they would not even go into captivity during the time his son lived. His second son was Maher-shalal-hash-baz whose name means *"the spoil speedeth, the prey hasteth"* (8:3). This symbolized Assyria's mad desire for conquest. Shear-jashub was the elder of the two by many years.

◆ **His Contemporaries**

The only prophetic contemporary of Isaiah was the minor prophet Micah. He may have been somewhat younger than Isaiah because Isaiah started prophesying in the later days of King Uzziah, but Micah began his ministry when Uzziah's son Jotham was on the throne (Mic. 1:1). Micah's writings have a lot in common with that of Isaiah's. They both concur concerning the moral corruption of Judah. Some of Isaiah's prophecies can be found in Micah's writings. In some passages the wording is almost identical (cf. Is. 2:1-4; Mic. 4:1-5). Micah has been called the prophet of the countryside in contrast with Isaiah who was a prophet of the city and Temple. This may well explain why Micah does not talk about the politics of the day like Isaiah, but deals more with the moral injustices against the common people. Both Micah and Isaiah were needed at this time of great turmoil. Their ministries may well have spared Judah the fate of Israel giving them another 140 years of freedom.

Historical Background

(For a background to the current events study 2 Kings 15:32 - 20:21 and 2 Chronicles 27:1 - 32:33.)

A wealth of knowledge can be learned about the Assyrian Empire from the annals and Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III, the Prism of Sennacherib, the library of Ashurbanipal, and the Babylonian Chronicles. Since Isaiah's whole life transpired under the threatening power of Assyria, a historical review of the Assyrian empire will prove invaluable to our study.

The first contact that God's people had with Assyria was during the time of King Ahab at the Battle of Qarqar in 853 B.C. As early as the reign of King Jehu, the Kingdom of Israel, they had paid tribute to Assyria in 840 B.C. The Assyrian King Adad-nirari III decisively defeated Israel's old enemy Syria in 805

B.C. The leadership of Assyria was weak and thus having lost momentum made no real attempts to press on to the Mediterranean until Tiglath-pileser III ascended to the Assyrian throne in 745 B.C. This sixty year period gave both Israel and Judah an opportunity for territorial expansion and strengthening.

King Uzziah's reign over Judah is parallel to Jeroboam II's reign over the northern tribes in that they both ushered in great periods of prosperity. Under King Uzziah Judah exercised authority over the Edomites, Philistines, and Ammonites. He encouraged advancement in agriculture, the fine arts, military strength, and the fortification of Jerusalem (2 Chr. 26). He increased the inland trade and established a port of commerce on the Red Sea.

The Northern Kingdom had been even more successful under the leadership of Jeroboam II. He extended Israel's borders until they coincided with those of Solomon's day (2 Kgs. 14:23-29). During these years of ease and affluence, both Israel and Judah became complacent toward their relationship with God. It had been nearly two hundred years since God set up the ten northern tribes as a separate kingdom under Jeroboam I. Now during a period of great security from the outward enemies under Jeroboam II, God sent prophets like Amos and Hosea to warn them of coming judgment. Ever since Jeroboam I, Israel had worshiped God through means of two golden calves, one at Dan and the other at Bethel. Jezebel had introduced Baal worship into the land. The ten tribes by now were steeped in idolatry. The distribution of the new found wealth in Israel caused the development of economic classes: the very rich and the very poor. The rich had a life of great comfort with their "silken cushions" some having "houses of hewn-stone". They acquired even more wealth at the expense of the poor who were suffering without even the basic necessities of life. This imbalance of wealth even affected the political and judicial systems of Israel.

The Kingdom of Judah was not much better. During the swift economic expansion a large gap between the upper and lower classes became more and more evident. As seen in Amos' prophecy this led to many abuses. Two things often go hand in hand: great wealth and great corruption. It appears the nation's progress was merely material, not spiritual. King Ahaz promoted idolatry throughout his reign. He replaced the altar of Solomon with a altar copied after the pattern of one he saw in Syria. He even caused his sons to pass through the fire in Molech worship (2 Kgs. 16:10-16; 2 Chr. 28:3).

Immediately following the Indian summer of Jeroboam II's reign chaos and anarchy enveloped the nation. In just twenty-five cruel and bloody years Israel would go through six kings and then be utterly destroyed by Assyria. Until this time Assyria had been a sleeping giant. In 745 B.C., Tiglath-pileser III took the throne of Assyria. The empire awoke with an insatiable hunger of expansion. During this time Jeroboam II died and left Israel in the hands of his son, Zechariah. After reigning six months he was assassinated by Shallum. Shallum reigned for a month before one of his generals, Menahem murdered him. Under Menahem Israel became a tributary to Assyria. His son, Pekahiah, reigned for two years before he was slain by Pekah. Pekah led Israel in an alliance with Rezin of Damascus against Judah. Pekah and Rezin wanted Ahaz, king of Judah, to join their alliance against Assyria, but Ahaz refused. So, they defeated Judah's army and marched through Judah besieging Jerusalem (2 Kgs. 16:5). This is commonly known as the Syro-Ephraimite war. They were planning to depose Ahaz and place the son of Tabeel upon the throne (2 Kgs. 16:5; Is. 7:6). Ahaz called upon Assyrian aid. He had to pay a large sum of tribute from the Temple to procure their assistance. That was just for starters, Ahaz then had to appear before Tiglath-pileser III and pay homage and from then on reigning as a vassal and tributary king of the Assyrian empire. The Assyrians came down on both Damascus and Samaria killing Rezin and Pekah and setting up Hoshea as King. All of the Galilee and Gilead area of Northern Israel was carried off into captivity (734 B.C.). When Shalmaneser IV discovered Hoshea's plot to procure the aid of Egypt against the Assyrians, he had him captured and sent into exile. Shalmaneser V (727-705 B.C.) began the siege of Samaria, but died before it fell. After a three year siege Samaria fell to the Assyrians under the Assyrian general, Sargon. Sargon who had usurped the Assyrian throne from Shalmaneser claimed to have carried off 27,280 Israelites. In just forty years the Assyrian Empire having started its progress toward the Mediterranean under Tiglath-pileser III attacked Israel in great force. In 721 B.C., Samaria fell to the Assyrians and with the people being taken into captivity the Kingdom of Israel was banished into obscurity.

All went well for Judah until the Philistines revolted in 711 B.C. and brought Sargon II and the Assyrian army through Judah. In Isaiah 20:1 it is said: *"Sargon King of Assyria sent Tartan and fought*

against Ashdod and took it." For years critics of the Bible claimed this to be a historical blunder of Isaiah for there was not a single trace of Sargon in ancient history. However, in 1842 archaeologist found the ruins of Sargon's place on the north edge of Nineveh. The base of Sargon's Throne had sculptured sides representing Sargon in his chariot while officers pile up before him a pyramid of heads from his vanquished enemies. This was typical of the brutality of the Assyrian war machine. An inscription was found by which Sargon confirms what Isaiah wrote: "Azuri, king of Ashdod, planned in his heart not to pay tribute. In my anger I marched against Ashdod with my usual body guard. I conquered Ashdod, and Gath. I took their treasures and their people. I settled in them people from the lands of the east. I took tribute from Philistia, Judah, Edom, and Moab."

Hezekiah became king of Judah in 727 B.C. He was the most righteous king of Judah since King David. Coming to the throne at age twenty-five he began a series of reforms in an attempt to remove the idolatry promoted by his father. He cut down the groves where the people practiced the Canaanite fertility rites. He beat the idols into pieces. In cleaning out the Temple, he destroyed the brass serpent of Moses which the people were worshipping. The law was ordered to be read before the people and a general call for repentance went forth.

At that time there were three different political parties in Jerusalem. The Assyrian Party favored continued subjection to Assyria. While the Egyptian Party wanted independence through an alliance with Egypt. Politicians, like Shebna and Eliakim, led by worldly wisdom, felt this could only be procured and maintained through a threat from a powerful nation. Isaiah was the main spokesmen for the most unpopular party which called for sole trust and dependence upon Jehovah. Unlike his father, Hezekiah followed the counsel of Isaiah and *"rebelled against the King of Assyria, and served him not"* (2 Kgs. 18:7). Yet, Hezekiah seemed to be blown this way and that way by the political winds of the day. In 701 B.C., the Assyrian king, Sennacherib, demanded the surrender of Jerusalem and the payment of tribute. Hezekiah sent a large sum of gold and silver to him by stripping the Temple and the treasury. He then outwardly resumed the role of a tributary monarch, but was courting the favor of Egypt. This brought Sennacherib back in force and the Assyrian army began a systematic destruction of Judah. On one of his palace walls, Sennacherib made a bas-relief of his campaign in Judah. Today, it can be seen in the British Museum. On it Sennacherib had pictured the siege of Lachish and boast of taking forty-six of Hezekiah's walled cities. He also carried off some 200,000 captives. On his six-sided baked clay Prism, Sennacherib (705-681 B.C.) boasted of shutting up Hezekiah in Jerusalem "as a bird in a cage." He sent an army under Rabshakeh to demand the immediate surrender of Jerusalem claiming that God had sent Assyria to destroy Judah. Hezekiah at this point consulted Isaiah, who told him to continue to defy his foe. Sennacherib had sent a letter containing violent threats against Jerusalem. Hezekiah *"spread this letter before the Lord"* (2 Kgs. 37:14). Through Divine intervention Sennacherib was prevented from taking the city. The angel of the Lord was sent and killed 185,000 of the proud Assyrian army. Sennacherib never came again against Jerusalem even though he lived another twenty years and made an independent expedition into north Arabia in 691-689 B.C. He was assassinated by his sons while worshipping in a pagan temple in 681 B.C.

Sennacherib's son, Esarhaddon (681-668 B.C.), brought about important political developments. He rebuilt Babylon, conquered Egypt, and according to Ezra 4:2 brought deportees into Samaria. Manasseh submitted to him after the fall of Sidon. He died during his second Egyptian campaign.

Under Ashurbanipal (668-625 B.C.) the Assyrian Empire reached its zenith of power and world influence. He continued his father's second Egyptian campaign which climaxed with the fall of Thebes (No-amon, Nah. 3:8). He was able to subjugate all of Mesopotamia and defeated the Babylonians.

Following Ashurbanipal's death in 626 B.C. Assyria began to rapidly weaken. Assyria was not a unified empire. It derived its strength, wealth, and populace by plundering the subjugating other peoples. Though they could conquer the world they could not rule it. There was never anything more than the wealth of their spoils to hold the parts of the empire together.

Cyaxares the Mede led an expedition against Nineveh as early as 625 B.C. Unable to breach the walls he was driven back by the Babylonian, Nabopolassar. For this feat the Assyrians gave him the title of the King of Babylon. He was able to establish his independence from Assyria fifteen years later. Forming a confederacy composed of the Medes and Persians, Egyptians, and other nations who were

enemies of Assyria, he attacked in force. After three years of assorted attacks, Nineveh finally fell in a mere three month siege in 612 B.C. With the city besieged, Esarhaddon III had his wives, children, and wealth placed in the palace with him and ordered it to be burned. The remainder of the Assyrian forces entrenched at Haran west of Nineveh. In 609 B.C. the Assyrian Empire came to an end with the destruction of Haran. "One of the bewildering riddles of history is that this nation at her apex in 663 B.C. - fell to oblivion in just fifty-one years, never to be heard from again" (George Meisinger, *the Fall of Ninevah*, p. 65). The prophecies of Isaiah against Assyria gave clear warning as to its end.

Content

The book of Isaiah is not an easy book to dissect into parts and sections because it does not follow a set chronological sequence. However, chapters 1-35 deal with the Assyrian period of Isaiah's prophecy while chapters 40-66 deal with the Babylonian Exile. Chapters 35-39 form a historical interlude.

The first 39 chapters can be broken down into five sections. The first selection deals with the prophecies of rebuke and promise for Jerusalem and Judah. The second section covers the prophecies against the foreign nations (chapters 13-23). Chapters 24-27 deal with world judgment and blessings upon God's people. The next section involves a series of woes upon Jerusalem (chps. 28-35). Finally, there is the historical interlude which concludes with chapter thirty-nine.

Prophecies

One of Isaiah's reoccurring proofs of the True God's greatness is his unique power to predict. Isaiah gives an overwhelming amount of predictions to substantiate this. He even talks about future events as if he is there and watching them take place. He takes one prediction and builds several more on top of it. Sometimes he talks of an event as if it has already occurred. This causes problems for some students of Isaiah. However, for those who already trust in the predictive powers of God these are of no consequence. They merely serve to enhance the appreciation and understanding of the Almighty.

The following are just a few of the predictions which were fulfilled in Isaiah's lifetime. Judah was to be delivered from Syria and Israel (7:4-7,16). Syria and Israel would then be destroyed by Assyria (8:4; 17:1-14) which would then invade Judah (8:7,8). Assyria was to destroy the Philistines (14:28-32), the Moabites, (15,16), Egypt and Ethiopia (20;4), and Arabia (21). Jerusalem was to be delivered from Assyria. Isaiah told Hezekiah that he would recover from his grave illness and live another fifteen years (38:5).

Some of the most amazing prophecies of Isaiah were fulfilled hundreds of years after his death. He predicted that there would be a remnant return from Babylonian captivity (48:20; 39:5-7) even while Assyria was the real threat to Judah. He goes on to name the very man who would be responsible for the return of the remnant, Cyrus (44:28). He would overthrow Babylon with the Medes and the Elamites (13:17; 21:2) and then conquer the world (41:2,3). This was predicted before Babylon even came to power or before the Medes were making a mark on the pages of history. He also predicts that Cyrus would be responsible for rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple (44:28; 45:13).

The New Testament says that Isaiah "*saw the glory of Christ, and spoke of Him*" (Jn. 12:41). He is called the Messianic Prophet because he outlines the life of Christ hundreds of years in advance. He spoke of His coming (40:3-5), His virgin birth (7:14), and the scene of His ministry, Galilee (9:1,2). In chapter 53 he graphically describes Christ's sufferings, shows that he was to be killed with the wicked, and was to be buried with the rich.

The prophecy of Isaiah is further considered as the book of church prophecy. Chapter 2 tells of the establishment of the church. He predicts that God's people are to be called by a New name (62:2; 65:15). In chapter 66 he tells of the descent of the Holy Spirit, preaching of the apostles, the offer of the Gospel to the Lord's enemies, the painless birth of the church, and uniting of Jew and Gentile into one new man.

He prophesied concerning the end of time. Though these prophecies were directed toward the future events related to Judah and her enemies. The New Testament writers show that their primary objective was the end of the world. He pointed out that the earth would be destroyed (26:21). Death would be destroyed (25:8). And prophesied that the righteous and wicked were to be eternally separated (66:15).

Isaiah and the New Testament

The great number of times Isaiah is quoted by New Testament writers shows the importance of this book. Isaiah is quoted by name 21 times, slightly more than all the other writing prophets combined. He is quoted in the New Testament more than any other prophet. The abundance of Messianic and church prophecies make a study of this book a must for every study of the New Testament. The fact that the Lord began His public ministry at Nazareth by reading from Isaiah 61 and applying its words to Himself indicates its significance.

George L. Robinson calls the book the *Epistle to the Romans of the Old Testament*. His statement is based on the fact that like the epistle to the Romans, the prophecy of Isaiah points to faith in the Messiah as the only true basis for salvation.

Questions:

1. T F Isaiah is the author of some historical writings about Uzziah and Hezekiah.
2. Isaiah began to prophecy in
 - a) the last year of Hezekiah
 - b) the first year of Uzziah
 - c) the last year of Uzziah
3. According to Jewish traditions how did Isaiah die?
4. The name "Isaiah" means
 - a) God with us
 - b) Esaias
 - c) Salvation of Jehovah
 - d) Camel of God
5. T F Isaiah lived in Jerusalem.
6. Isaiah's occupation was that of
 - a) a court historiographer
 - b) political counselor
 - c) prophet
 - d) cupbearer
7. T F Isaiah's mission was a total failure.
8. T F It is a well known fact that Isaiah was of royal blood.
9. Isaiah's first son's name "Shear-jashub" means
 - a) Salvation of Jehovah
 - b) the spoil speedeth, the pray hasteth
 - c) a remnant shall return
 - d) he who shears donkeys
10. A contemporary prophet of Isaiah was
 - a) John the Baptist
 - b) Micah
 - c) Amos

- d) Ahaz
11. The reign of King Uzziah of Judah was one of
 a) captivity
 b) military and economic weakness
 c) prosperity
 d) conquest of foreign lands
12. T F During Isaiah's time idolatry was a problem in Israel, but not in Judah.
13. The king of Israel during the Syro-Ephraimite War was
 a) Shallum
 b) Tut
 c) Ahaz
 d) Pekah
14. Israel's capital, Samaria, was destroyed by Assyria in
 a) 745 BC b) 721 BC c) 711 BC d) 70 AD
15. T F Hezekiah was one of the most wicked kings of Judah.
16. The angel of the Lord destroyed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers of the army of
 a) Sennacherib
 b) Caesar
 c) Sargon
 d) Hezekiah
17. T F God sent the Assyrian army to destroy Jerusalem
18. The book of Isaiah can be divided into two parts. Chapters _____ to _____ deal with the _____ period while chapters _____ to _____ deal with the _____ period.
19. Isaiah predicted that the man who would release the remnant from Babylonian captivity was named
 a) Cyrus
 b) Amos
 c) Medes
 d) Nebuchadnezzar
22. The chapter which predicts the establishment of the church is
 a) 2 b) 119 c) 53 d) 67
24. T F Isaiah is the most quoted prophet in the New Testament.
25. T F Isaiah never prophesied concerning the end of time.

Homework: Read Isaiah chapters one through thirty-five this week.

Rebellion of God's Children

Isaiah 1:2-31

Chapters one through thirty-nine deal with the Assyrian period of Isaiah's prophecy. The first twelve chapters focus primarily on the prophecies of rebuke and promises for Judah and Jerusalem. Throughout this section the names "Judah" and "Jerusalem" are found time and again with far greater frequency than the rest of this book.

Some hold chapter one to be a brief summation of the whole work of Isaiah. In fact, Isaiah utilizes a literary device called *inclusio*. This acts as a set of bookends to tie the book together. Chapter one contains a great deal of the same terms and phrases found in chapters sixty-five and sixty-six.

- **Sin-Sick Nation, 1:2-6**

The setting of this prophecy is a calling of a court into session. The witnesses of this case are the heavens and the earth. The controversy is between the children whom God has "*nourished and brought up*" and their rebellious response.

God's children are contrasted to an ox and a donkey. These simple-minded animals at least do not forget their master who cares for them. However, Israel has forgotten God. Who, therefore, is more intelligent? Who are the true ignorant brutes? They do not know God. Hosea noticed the same problem which led to the demise of the Kingdom of Israel. "*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children*" (Hosea 4:6). They have turned their back on God and walked out on Him.

Judah is diseased from the sole of the foot to the top of the head. They are filled with the sores caused by their sinfulness and nothing has been done to heal these. "The words occurring in v. 6 describe injuries received in battle: slash wounds [petsa], lacerations [chabbura], and bleeding wounds [makkah t'riya]" (Oswalt 89).

There seems to be no courage of conviction. The nation as a whole is corrupted and are corrupters. This is why the "*Holy One of Israel*" is angry with them. Note, this title is given to God by Isaiah nearly thirty times. It is used here to contrast His holy nature and perfection with their iniquity. God could chastisement them again, but it is useless. They are completely hardened in their heart and mind.

- **Desolate Land and Population, 1:7-9**

God points to the condition of the land and its meager inhabitants. The strangers in verse seven are the Assyrians. When Sennacherib came he destroyed and burned forty-six cities of Judah, he took a quarter of a million of Hezekiah's people into captivity. He besieged Jerusalem (Zion) to the point God compared it to the little booth or hut found in a vineyard or garden. The image is one of utter desolation. It was only by the mercy of God that a small group of survivors remained in the land. Otherwise, Judah would have become as desolate as Sodom and Gomorrah, that is, completely wiped out.

- **Vain Worship, 1:10-15**

Continuing the comparison of Zion with Sodom and Gomorrah God calls upon both rulers and subjects to listen to what He also has against them. He does not like their empty, vain attempts to worship Him. The sacrifices are many but God does not want any of them. He does not like their sacrifices even though they are of the type that has been commanded of them in the Law. God does not even want them to come into the court of the Temple. Why? There seems to be nothing wrong with the acts of worship, but with the sinful attitude and empty heart of the worshipers. God hates outward worship while the heart and hands are engaged in violence and sin. If God does not want these mere outward forms of worship what

does He want? *“He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?”* (Mic. 6:8). Sinful hearts negate even true worship (John 4:23,24). They are wasting the lives of these animals, because they are not acceptable to God. Samuel told King Saul, *“Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams”* (1 Sam. 15:22). Surely, God does not need these sacrifices. He said, *“I do not reprove you for your sacrifices, and your burnt offerings are continually before Me. I shall take no young bull out of your house, nor male goats out of your fold. For every beast of the forest is Mine. The cattle on a 1000 hills”* (Ps. 50:8-10). Mere attendance for worship is not what was required of God then or now. Heartless worship from a godless life only irritates the Lord. God does not even want to hear their prayers. Why? Apparently they have shed the blood of the innocent. Quoting Psalm 34 Peter wrote, *“for the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil”* (1 Peter 3:12).

- **Cleaning Up Their Act, 1:16-20**

God informs them how to reform their lives. He gives them nine commandments to observe in verses sixteen and seventeen. Outward worship was not needed. Inward purification was essential. These things they must do are the weightier matters of the Law (Mt. 23:23,24).

God has brought His case before all of His creation. He is willing to strike a plea bargain with them out of His mercy. If they will comply with these nine requirements He will cleanse them. No matter what the sin or how heinous the evil, God can get the stains out of their souls. This is just and a proper motive because obedience will be followed by blessings and rebellion by destruction. They can either remain and eat the blessings from their own land or God will send the Babylonian sword and exile them to a foreign land.

- **Corrupt Harlot, 1:21-23**

Though God will cleanse the people, the city has to be purified as well. Jerusalem is like a harlot because of all her spiritual adulteries with the love of idols. This situation had been prophesied centuries before. *“And this people will rise up, and play the harlot after the strange gods of the land ..and will forsake me”* (Deut. 31:16). The city used to be a pillar of justice but now a haven for killers. The economy is corrupted with dishonest trade. The leadership rebel and seek money and bribes instead of justice. Orphans and widows are neglected. Honest men cannot be found in the once faithful city.

- **Purification of Zion, 1:24-31**

The city can be faithful once more. God knows how to come into town and clean it up. All His enemies must go. First, comes the cleaning out the refuse and next comes the restoration of the good. Righteous judgment removes the wicked and the righteous are then restored.

The process is compared to fine metals being heated in a furnace to remove the impurities which contaminate it. This may literally require the burning up of the idols and/or the removal of the people and torching of Zion by the Babylonians.

The renewed city will have just rulers and the city will regain its reputation for righteousness. The redemption will be based on the justice and righteousness of those who repent.

God mentions trees and gardens as part of the purification process. According to Smith's Bible Dictionary, "in the religions of the ancient heathen world groves play a prominent part. In the old times altars only were erected to the gods. It was thought wrong to shut up the gods within walls, and hence trees were the first temples; and from the earliest times groves are mentioned in connection with religious worship." When the Jews returned from captivity they were ashamed of their former worship of idols set among terebinth trees and places of worship in gardens. After all they remember the God torched both the trees and gardens along with those who worshiped there.

Questions:

1. Why is Judah contrasted with an ox and a donkey?

2. To what extent was Judah diseased?
3. Who are the strangers in verse seven?
4. To what two cities is Zion compared?
5. Why has the Lord reacted the way he has to their sacrifices, incense, new moon, sabbath, assemblies, and prayers?
6. What are their sins compared to in verse 18?
7. What is the result if they obey and what is the result if they refuse?
8. What is the "faithful city" and what has it become?
9. Matching:

_____ Righteousness lodged in city	a. companions of thieves
_____ Silver	b. loves bribes
_____ Wine	c. now murderers
_____ Princes	d. mixed with water
_____ Fatherless	e. become dross
_____ Everyone	f. not defended

10 How will God make them a city of righteousness or faithful city?

11. What will the citizens become ashamed of? Why?

12. To what are the sinners compared to in verses 30 and 31?

Lessons for Discussion and Application:

1. Forgetting or forsaking our relationship with the Father results in a sin sick condition.
2. Mere outward, formalistic worship is rejected by God, Mt. 15:1-9.
3. Spiritual blessings are unattainable without repentance.
4. Divine Discipline leads helps to purify our lives, Heb. 12:5f.

Three Views of Jerusalem

Isaiah 2-4

The first verse clearly identifies who is speaking, whence comes his authority, and whom this prophecy concerns. *"The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem"* (2:1).

The Ideal Jerusalem, 2:2-4

The vision concerns the specific time period called here the *"latter days."* It could mean the last days of the Jewish Dispensation or more likely means the last era of time, the Christian Dispensation. It could most likely be fulfilled on the day of Pentecost in 30 A.D. (Ac. 2:17; Dan. 2:28; Joel 2:28; Ac. 3:24).

Zion or mountain in the text is the same mountain which is the church of the firstborn in Hebrews 12:18-23. On the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 seventeen nationalities flowed into the church and later all nations. Gentiles are also implied here as citizens of this ideal Jerusalem. The mountain is the government of the Kingdom. The Law and Word which goes forth is the Gospel of Christ. Jesus told His disciples *"that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem"* (Lk. 24:47). This new Kingdom will be one of peace (Eph. 2:17). It will not be enlarged or defended by carnal weapons. The weapons of the church are spiritual (2 Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:10-17). God will judge who is and who is not in the kingdom. *"To the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect"* (Heb. 12:23).

The Real Jerusalem

◆ **Full of Worldly Ways, 2:5-9**

God calls upon the current inhabitants to take a little stroll with Him in the light of reality. They have filled Jerusalem with the wicked customs of the east, this had brought them silver and gold, and horses and chariots, but most of all idols. They put their trust in the nations, the riches, their armaments, and idols, but not God. They are full of everything except righteousness. They may be prosperous, but they are not pleasing to God. They may be pleased with foreigners, but God is foreign to them. The soothsayers may speak soothing words to their ears, but they are to not listening to God.

God will not forgive them because they bow down to idols which they have made with their own hands. Instead of worshiping the true God who created them. The worship what they have created. "Idols" a favorite term in Isaiah, perhaps because it is identical with the adjective 'worthless' (Kidner). God is determined to punish their pagan worship.

◆ **Lofty Brought Low, 2:10-22**

They may have trusted in their riches, weapons, alliances and idols, but now they must hide *"for the fear of the Lord."* There were many caves throughout Palestine. God will bring upon them a time when they will run and hide in them. If they do not already have a bomb-shelter, they best find one in that day. The Day of the Lord is in contrast with the "latter days" in verse two. One is a day of hope and the later a day of fear and dread, because God's judgment is coming with His wrath. This warning is to those who have exalted themselves in the previous paragraph.

The day of reckoning for the proud is here. An extensive list of all things to be brought low is given. Even the trade ships as far away as Tarshish, Spain are mentioned. Perhaps the towers are those built by Uzziah and Jotham (2 Ch. 26:9,10). Every thing which is exalted will be brought low by God. *"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall"* (Prov. 16:18). *"God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble"* (James 4:6b). God includes the idols being "utterly abolished." Only He will not be brought down.

The time for the proud to run and hide is when God comes in His day to shake things up. At the time he will not flee with his idols but cast them aside. Even those idols made with precious metals. They will leave them to the bats and the moles.

Idolaters are to be ostracized by all the righteous. Those who exalt idols find no help for themselves and can give no assistance to others. They may breath unlike their idols, but they are of no help to anyone. A man may take his final breath at any moment, so it is foolishness to trust in mere men.

♦ **Removal Of Jerusalem's Leadership, 3:1-12**

Isaiah listed about a dozen things which will be removed. The have to do with the leadership of Judah and Jerusalem. All the food supplies will vanish. All the military leaders will be taken away. The city council as well as even those who dabble in sorcery and witchcraft will be gone. Babylonian was known for this practice. It hindered future rebellion among leaders of the people and helped the transition of Babylonian or foreign rulers to step in and take control.

The new leadership would consist of young children or young men or even a man with a coat and food. All this illustrates how desperate they will become for leadership. The only thing one needs is a good suit and a full belly and he is qualified to be mayor of Jerusalem. Even this man will refuse the job. It is interesting to note ages of the subsequent kings of Judah: Hezekiah was 25; Jehoahaz 23; Amon, 22; Zedekiah, 21; Jehoiachin, 18; Manasseh, 12; and Josiah, 8. With a lack of mature leadership will come a lack of respect for age and station.

Why is God punishing Judah and Jerusalem in this manner? They have refuse to listen or obey. They are rebellious against God in their speech and actions. Even their faces are hardened with guiltiness and they are set to shamelessly parade their wickedness like Sodom (Gen. 19:4-9). They have no one to blame but themselves. They have *"received in themselves the recompense of their error which was meet"* (Rom. 1:27). They will reap as they have sown (Gal. 6:7,8). They directed the people wrong and confounded them as to the instructions of God.

♦ **Leaders are Judged, 3:13-15**

The leaders are to be condemned, because they have used their position to steal from the poor. The Lord questions their treatment of the poor. How could they be doing this?

♦ **Women are Judged, 3:16-4:1**

The women of Judah and Jerusalem strut around town with an arrogant disposition. They lack any demonstration of humility in their step and gaze. The dress and walk with silver bells to attract attention. Strong defines their walk "to trip (with short steps) flirtatiously." They have certainly attracted God's attention.

Next, twenty-one items of their wardrobe are singled out for removal. Not because these were wrong to wear, but the attitude behind their dress. They will be given a scab on their head and their nakedness completely exposed. The attire and condition of the women as described in verse twenty-four is that of those in great poverty, sorrow, and slavery. Slaves were often branded. They would pluck or pull their hair out in mourning as they were led away naked into captivity. With the men dead and gone seven women will try to seek protection just to be called the wife of a man. The shame of their childless and single status is traded for a polygamous relationship by sharing one man with six other women.

Jerusalem Redeemed, 4:2-6

As chapter 1 served as an introduction to the entire book, chapters, 2-4 serve as a preview of the remainder of the book. The redeemed remnant will find hope in the Branch. Further mention of this Branch is found in 11:10; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 3:8; 6:12-13. This Branch is Christ who will come after the land has been judged. He will cloth them in beauty.

The remnant will be those of the beautified bride consisting of those who have been made holy (Eph. 5:23f). They will have their names recorded in the book of life. In order for them to be so blessed the Lord must first wash away the women's filth and purge Jerusalem of the bloodshed. This was down through the captivity. Old Israel must first be put away in divorce for her adultery with idolatry. The cloud by day and flaming fire by night will serve his holy people as a shelter, as a representation of Divine presence, protection and guidance (Ex. 13:21).

Questions:

1. When did the "*last days*" prophesied here by Isaiah take place?
2. How does this ideal Jerusalem resemble the church and its establishment?
3. What will become of the weapons of the nations?
4. With what have they filled Jerusalem?
5. Why are they told to hide?
6. What will become of their idols?
7. Why shouldn't man esteem or trust in himself?
8. Of what will the new leadership consist?
9. Why has Jerusalem and Judah fallen?
10. Why will it go well with the righteous and badly with the wicked?
11. What concluding remarks of this paragraph tells why Jerusalem's leadership will be removed?
12. Why are the leaders condemned?

13. What is the reason for the women being condemned?
14. What does the attire and condition of the women described in verse 24 indicate?
15. Why will seven women attach themselves to one man in the day of their judgment?
16. Who is being referred to as a Branch?
17. What must be done in order for the remnant to be called holy?
18. What purpose will the cloud by day and flaming fire by night serve for Jerusalem's assembly?

Lessons for Application & Discussion

1. Isaiah prophesied concerning the establishment of the church, the Gentiles in coming to the church, the church as the teacher of God's ways, and the peaceful nature of the church, 2:2-4.
2. The influence of human wisdom and materialism often causes men to reject God, 2:5-11.
3. God will eventually bring down the proud and the objects of their pride, 2:12-22.
4. The vanity of relying on corrupt and inept leadership.
5. All will reap as they have sown, Gal. 6:7,8.
6. Women share in the ruin of a nation

7. Christ, the Branch, is the one who created a remnant in Jerusalem.
8. Christ's holy ones are recorded in a book of life.
9. Christ had to cleanse the church, Eph. 5:23f
10. Christ provides perpetual guidance and protection for the holy remnant.

God's Vineyard & Isaiah's Call

Isaiah 5 & 6

Isaiah the prophet sings a poetic parable about God's Vineyard. It is a review of the subject matter of the first four chapters.

Song of the Vineyard, 5:1-7

Privileged Position

This "*Well-beloved*" is Isaiah's reference to God but is found twenty-three times in the Song of Solomon with a different application. He has a vineyard which is on a hillside and most likely facing south so as to be in the best possible position. "The vineyard was situated upon a *keren*, i.e., upon a prominent mountain peak projecting like a horn, and therefore open to the sun on all sides" (Keil and Delitzsch 160). The selection for the position of a vineyard is very important for productivity and the quality of grapes. God's vineyard no doubt will be in a privileged position. There is no reason for it not to produce the most and the best.

Profuse Preparation

The vineyard needed to be protected from animals, such as, wild boars, jackals, and foxes. It would need to be protected from the obstacles like rocks. In clearing the rocks the husbandman builds a wall for protection. A tower for a watchman would be made to watch over the field and the vine-dressers. A winepress and vat would be hewn out of the rock. Everything is prepared for His "choicest vine" which is Israel or the children of Abraham.

Produce

With all the preparation and protection put into His vineyard, God expected to have the best grapes. However, all He harvested were "*wild grapes*."

Pondering the Problem

Like Nathan called upon David to judge himself unwittingly in the parable of the stolen lamb, God calls upon Judah to judge whether God should have expected more from His vineyard. Is there anything He did not do that He should have done? Why did He not get good grapes? God is obviously not at fault. God gives us so much and we give back so little. God expects us to be fruitful.

Punishment

What can be done with a vineyard full of rotten fruit? It has to be destroyed. If it continues to exist, it will waste time, effort, and valuable resources. The continued production of worthless fruit merits disposal of the vineyard. It was Judah's unfruitfulness in good service to God and her production of wickedness that has left God no other choice but punishment.

Protection Withdrawn

God will remove the protection of the hedge and wall. Without this protection a vineyard would be invaded by sheep and cattle. They would make quick work of the vines and fruit. When God removed His protection from Judah, the Assyrians and Babylonians invaded and quickly destroyed the nation. If the vineyard is going to respond like a piece of wild countryside through which the animals prowl and thoughtless people tramp, then He would treat it as a piece of open countryside. He would withdraw His protection.

Prep Work Suspended

Once a vineyard is planted a great deal of labor is involved in pruning and weeding. Water is essential for the fruit. When cultivation is neglected, only briars and thorns grow.

Parable Explained

Just as Jesus explained the parable of the Sower to His disciples and Nathan explained his parable of the little lamb to David, so Isaiah explains the meaning of this parable. The vineyard is the Kingdom of Judah and its citizens are the plants. The good fruit God had expected of them are: justice and righteousness. The wicked fruit He harvested from them was: oppression and weeping. They were guilty of unjust and cruel treatment of the poor and the weak. These in turn cried out to God.

Woes of Rotten Grapes

Isaiah goes on to give us a few specimens of “wild grapes.” “Woe” is not the opposite of “Giddy UP!” Perhaps “*Woe to....*” is the negative form of “happy is the man who...”

☛ **Covetousness, 5:9,10**

When the economy is booming the houses are expanded, so is coveting and greediness. Isaiah’s contemporary, Micah wrote, “*they covet fields and take them by violence, also houses, and seize them. So they oppress a man and his house, a man and his inheritance*” (Micah 2:2).

The punishment of this attitude toward material blessings has always reaped fruitlessness and resulted in dispossession. Adam and Eve coveted the forbidden fruit and were kicked out of the Garden of Eden. Cain killed his brother, Abel, and was left to wander away from his land. Both the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah would experience the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. The land will not produce as much as hoped. Only a little more than eight gallons of grape juice per acre are produced. It could have produced as much as four thousand gallons. The Law of Moses had warned that sin would bring a curse upon the land (Lev. 25:20; Duet. 28:16-19).

☛ **Carnal Lifestyle, 5:11-17**

Next they are warned about their party lifestyle. Fun and luxury are the focus of their life. They were having a good time getting drunk with their music play in the background while surrounded by their equally carnal minded friends. Drinking has been warned about in the Proverbs. “*Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper*” (Prov. 23:31,32). The rich find alcohol glamorous while many are made poor through addition. Many Christians are made worldly and godless by its consumption while recovering addicts abstain and become Christians.

These party animals will be brought low. One day the music will stop and they will suffer great thirst and hunger. Death (Sheol) will come and crash their party.

☛ **Confidence in Corruption, 5:18,19**

Some, however, will be so brazen in their sinful attitude that they will even mock the coming judgments of God. In effect they are saying in their hearts: “Okay, God, just bring it on. The sooner the better.” The same cords by which they pull their sins ever before God’s face, flaunting them as they go, will become the cords which will bind them in the future.

☛ **Compromised Morality, 5:20**

So corrupted and entrenched in their own wicked ways they have turned their view of morality upside down. Changing the definitions or names of sin will not make them righteous before God. Calling pornography “art” will not make it beautiful in the eyes of God. Ann Tucker of Houston’s Museum of Fine Arts wrote, “if it’s art, it’s not obscene” (Houston Chronicle, 6 Oct. 1990, 18A). Remove an unwanted foreign growth from a woman’s womb, and presto, suddenly abortion is no longer murder of an innocent unborn child.

☛ **Conceited Self-Assurance**

Take God and sin out of the picture and man becomes his own spiritual leader and makes his own moral laws. No one can judge his behavior. Nothing he does is foolish because he has become wise in his own eyes. You cannot tell the self-conceited know-it-all anything.

☛ **Corrupt Justice of the Drunk, 5:22,23**

The second woe focused on the partying and drinking. This final woe deals with the need for a clear sober-minded head on the shoulders of those to be in a position of authority. Judges and leaders of the people have always been warned about the special dangers of drinking. The judicial system must be run by men of sound mind and judgment. Those who are intoxicated cannot render just judgments. “*Lest they*

drink and forget the law, and pervert the justice of all the afflicted” (Prov. 31:5).

Grapes of Wrath, 5:24-28

God will summon nations from afar to destroy them. The disaster which is coming is either the invasion of Sennecrib's Assyrian army upon Judah or the future invasion of the Babylonians sent by Nebuchadnezzar. This will come with the fire of destruction. It will be swift and strong. Bodies will fill the streets and the land left wasted and ruined. Like a lion carries away its prey, they would be drug off into captivity. There will be no hope of rescue.

Woe to those who do not bare the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22,23).

Call of Isaiah, 6:1-13

It would be far more natural if the book of Isaiah began with this chapter detailing the call of Isaiah. However, God in his wisdom and Isaiah in his great literary style gave us enough background in the previous chapters give an appropriate setting for His call to be God's messenger.

*** Isaiah's Vision, 6:1-4**

The year is 740 BC. The great and prosperous King Uzziah is dead. What will happen next? The vision of God's throne will reassure Isaiah that the King of kings is still in control.

The term “*seraphim*” comes from a Hebrew verb in the which means “to burn.” These are the “burning ones.” The altar is located before God's throne and this is where they find the burning coal. In the throne scene in Revelation 4 there are four creatures with six-wings each. The multitude of wings indicated the swift manner in which they will carry out God's commands. However, these appear to be a different class of angelic beings than Ezekiel's cherubim. These burning ones praise God with a three-fold “*holy*” and proclaim His glory.

*** Isaiah's Vocation, 6:5-8**

Isaiah pronounces here a woe upon himself. Witnessing this scene caused Isaiah to experience a sense of his own unworthiness. His mouth has uttered offensive words before God making him a man of unclean lips. He is doomed. When King Uzziah had attempted to offer incense in the Temple his egotistical words of defiance against God's priests caused him to be plagued instantly with leprosy. Lepers were to cover their lips and cry out, “*Unclean, unclean*” (Lev. 13:45).

With a coal from the altar from before the throne, a seraphim cleanse the lips of Isaiah. How painful this must have been? The removed of sin is not without pain, just consider the cross of Christ.

God calls upon someone to go on a mission for Him. Not just God the Father, but “us.” This is in reference to the Godhead (Gen. 1:26). Isaiah volunteers for the job. Just as Moses was sent to Pharaoh to have him let God's people go and Paul sent as an apostle to the Gentiles, so Isaiah is sent on a mission to Judah.

*** Isaiah's Mission, 5:9-13**

Isaiah's mission was not going to be easy. It is a difficult task to preach to people who will not get the message. The response to the message and the consequences of rejecting God's words were already determined by the rebellious nature of the listeners' hearts.

The response to the warnings would be met with a discouraging response. The people were already plagued with hardness of heart, dullness of ears, and blindness of eyes.

The length of Isaiah's mission would last until the Assyrians would first carry off the Kingdom of Israel into captivity and then twenty years latter destroy most of Judah.

God does give His prophet a ray of hope. A remnant would survive to live off the land. They would be the stump from which the nation would be reestablished in the land. Paul wrote, “*even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace*” (Rom. 11:5).

Questions:

1. What did the vineyard produce?

2. Was the husbandman just in destroying the vineyard?
3. Who is the vineyard and what is the worthless fruit that the Lord found in it?
4. What is a homer and an ephah?
5. What is associated with the drunkards banquets?
6. Why will they go into exile?
7. What does the third woe in verse 18 mean?
8. Which woe indicates that the people can no longer distinguish between right and wrong?
9. How is the final woe different from the second woe?
10. Why will the Lord punish them?
11. Who will the Lord summon to punish them?
12. What stood above God in this vision?

13. Why did Isaiah pronounce a woe upon himself?
14. What was the meaning of the touching of Isaiah's lips with a coal from the altar?
15. What would become the heart, ears and eyes of the people to whom Isaiah would preach?
16. What will happen to the people of the land?
17. What will become of the "tenth"?

Lessons for Application & Discussion:

1. Greed will fail to reap the harvest one expects.
2. Drunkenness will lead to spiritual ignorance and perversion of justice.
3. Entanglement in sin will enslave us.
4. There are those who confuse moral distinctions.
5. Self-conceit is self-deception.
6. Failure to bring forth good fruit will result in God rejecting and destroying us.
7. All men stand guilty before the Lord and should humbly confess their condition before God.
8. As servants of God we must be willing and ready to do the Lord's work.
9. The preaching of God's word will either cause the people to return to God or become hardened in their sins.

Trust in God, Not Assyria

Isaiah 7-10:4

The Syro-Ephraminitic War

The kings of Israel and Syria had a common enemy, Assyria. They formed a pact. Judah refused to join. The southern kingdom suffered two defeats at the hand of Syria and one from Israel (2 Chron. 28:4,6). King Ahaz of Judah was trusting in Assyria attacking Syria and Israel so as to take pressure off the borders of his kingdom.

■ **Ahaz to Trust in God, 7:1-9**

When the armies of Syria and Israel are coming upon Jerusalem those in the palace is shaken up like trees in a windstorm. Isaiah is sent with his son, Shear-jashub, to meet with King Ahaz. Shear-Jashub means "a remnant shall return." Isaiah compares Syrian and Israel (Ephraim) to smoking firebrands. They may be an irritant to their eyes, but they are nothing for them to fear since they are nothing but smoke.

The enemies of Judah wanted to remove Ahaz and set up their own puppet king, Tabeel. But this was not in the Lord's plans. Instead, within sixty-five years Ephraim be broken (2 King. 17:24).

■ **The Sign Of Immanuel, 7:10-17**

The Lord asked Ahaz to request a sign that the Lord would do the things mentioned above. Ahaz refused. He did not want to test the Lord. Perhaps his mind was already made up. God goes ahead and gives him the sign of a virgin who will conceive and bear a son and call Him Immanuel. This was ultimately fulfilled in Christ (Mt. 1:23). The term for virgin is *almah* and means an unmarried women who has never had sex with a man. Before this child would grow up and know the difference between right and wrong the kings of both Syria and Israel would be no more. He will also eat the food of a child and not the food of royalty. The instrument of God's destruction on these two nations will be the king of Assyria. The trouble which will come upon Ephraim will be greater than they have ever witnessed since they became a separate nation from Judah.

■ **The Assyrians Will Invade, 7:18-25**

God will whistle for the poisonous fly from Egypt and the stinging bee of Assyria. This is in reference to the armies which will come. Destruction will come upon Judah as these settle across the countryside. They will strip the land of people and animals. "Tiglath-Pileaser, in his inscriptions, mentions his carrying off horned cattle and sheep to the amount that many thousands from the countries which he overran or conquered" (Rawlinson). Therefore the diet of those in Judah will be reduced to curds and honey. The vineyards and the fields will become briars and thorns and hunting grounds for men and wild animals. A place for oxen and sheep to roam. The value of the land is reduced to just a field of worthless thorns.

The Assyrian Flood

▶ **The Sign Of Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, 8:1-4**

Isaiah was to write the name "*Maher-shalal-Hash-Baz*" which means "speed the spoil, hasten the booty." This name was to be set up in a place for all to see. It was a warning to "Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah." The prophetess was Isaiah's wife and the son she bore him was Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz. Before their son could say "mommy" or "daddy" the capitals of Syria and Israel would be destroyed. So in little over a year the prophecy would be fulfilled.

▶ **The Assyrian Flood, 8:5-8**

"Shiloah is a small stream that issued from beneath the temple area and flowed south into the southeastern section of the city" (Hailey). It is a simple flowing stream in contrast the raging powerful river Euphrates which would often overflow its banks in a flood. The area of the Euphrates is from whence the Assyrians would come. When water rose it would come up as far as the neck of Judah which is very close

to drowning the head, which is their capital, Jerusalem.

► **Trust in God, Not Assyria, 8:9-15**

The nations of Syrian and Israel who form plans against God's people in Judah will never prevail no matter how clever and diligent they may be. Why? God is with Judah (Immanuel meaning "God with us").

Isaiah is instructed by a firm hand of God not to follow the fearful ways of the people. He cannot be afraid of the threats of those who call him a conspirator or a traitor. This was just because he would not support an alliance with Assyria. Instead God will be a refuge for Isaiah and a stumbling block or snare to the people who do not fear God but trust in Assyria. As a result a majority will fall and be taken captive.

► **Bind The Testimony, 8:16-22**

Even though most of the people will not listen, the message will stand. Those who do listen will trust in God. Both of Isaiah's sons along with the prophet himself will be the sign that this testimony is sure. The meaning of their names are a sign of God's will which will come to be: Shear-jeshub - A remnant shall return; Maher-shalal-hash-baz - plunder speeds, spoil hastens, and Isaiah - Salvation is of Jehovah.

When God's testimony is rejected, an alternative view of the future is sought by Judah from mediums and wizards. God says these people are seeking the dead on behalf of the living. They do not have the light of life or truth in them. One day these same people will become hungry from the devastation of the land and will curse their king and God for this condition which they brought upon themselves. God and the leaders of the land are often used scapegoats. They rejected living in the light and will have to live in darkness.

The Light of a New Day will Dawn

☼ **Christ Will Come and Shine in Galilee, 9:1-7**

The condition of the people will change one day. The far reaches of the former Kingdom of Israel will no longer live in gloom and darkness. Zebulun and Naphtali were the first to be overrun by Assyrian and will be the first to be blessed when the light shines forth. This is a Messianic promise. Jesus would be "*the light of the world*" (John 8:12). Jesus lived in the town of Nazareth which was in the land of Zebulun. The preaching of the Gospel would go forth from there throughout all of Galilee (Mt. 4:13-17).

As a result of the Light of Christ their gladness will be like that of the harvest or when men of war take the spoils of their conquest. The yoke of sin will be broken as in the days when the hoard of the Midianites camped for seven years in Israel and oppressed the people until Gideon freed them. When that day arrives both boot and cloak will be burned. It will be a day when the weapons of carnal warfare are of no use.

A child will be born. The child is Jesus. This is a favorite verse of the Christmas season. Christ will have the government of His kingdom on His shoulders. He will be a Counselor who is wonderful, that is, He causes the jaws to drop in amazement. He will share in the same eternal nature of the Father in Heaven. Instead of bringing war He will be the Prince of Peace. This peace will be characterized by five things which only He could accomplish. His peace will be unending. A peace that will never go to war or even prepare for war. A peace connected to the name of David. It will be established on true justice. It is guaranteed by God's zeal for His people.

☼ **Israel's Pride Condemned, 9:8-12**

God turns His attention to the present day attitudes of those in Ephraim as a way of contrast to the tribes above. They may think they will be able to spring back from the Assyrian invasion with even better cities and stronger nation. This is a self-conceited deception. God will bring against them the Syrians and the Philistines and will never let up.

☼ **Israel's Leadership Condemned, 9:13-17**

No matter what God does to punish Israel they will not repent. This is why He will judge their leaders. Isaiah uses the figures of an animal cut-off at both ends and the cutting down off of a branch and bulrush. The head of the decapitated animal are the elders and the tail would be the false prophets. They have been the tail that wags the dog. This event will come swiftly. The leaders have led the people astray. God will not even have pity on the orphans and widows for all have become godless and evildoers speaking lies. Therefore all will be judged.

☼ **Israel's Wickedness Condemned, 9:18-21**

The people are the wicked trees which burn and they are so many that the whole forest is set ablaze. No one will be able to help another in that day of conflagration. They will be eaten up by civil war as they destroy themselves. Every man for himself in that day. Even then God will not withhold His wrath.

☼ **Israel's Injustice Condemned, 10:1-4**

The poor, the widows, and the orphans were being taken advantage of by the injustices of Israel. The Law of Moses clearly condemned this unjust treatment of those most vulnerable (Deut. 27:19; Lev. 19:15). Those who practice such injustices will be lead away captive or be killed in the invasion. Still, there is no hope that God will withhold or restrain His punishment.

Questions:

1. Who went with Isaiah to see Ahaz and what did his name mean?
2. To what is Syria and Ephraim compared?
3. Who did Syria and Ephraim intend to make king of Judah?
4. Why wouldn't Ahaz ask for a sign?
5. What sign did God give and who fulfilled this sign?
6. What will God whistle for?
7. What will become of the vineyards and the fields?
8. What was Isaiah to write and what did it mean?
9. How soon would Assyria plunder Damascus and Samaria?

10. To what extent do the flood waters rise in Judah? Explain.
11. What was Isaiah not be afraid of?
12. What will God be to Isaiah and what will He be to those who do not fear Him?
13. Who are signs for Israel?
14. Why is it illogical for them to seek mediums and wizards instead of seeking God?
15. How will the treatment of Zebulun and Naphtali change?
16. What will become of the instruments and elements of war?
17. What will the child be called?
18. With what will they replace the bricks and sycamore trees?
19. Who will the Lord bring against them?
20. Who represents the head and who represents the tail of Israel?
21. Why doesn't the Lord have pity on the widows and orphans?
22. Who was being taken advantage of by their injustice?

Lessons for Application & Discussion

1. Those who have faith and trust in God in time of trouble will find assurance.
2. The sign of a virgin giving birth to a son (named Immanuel) has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ, Mt. 1:22,23.
3. God is a refuge for those who trust in Him, but a stumbling block or trap to those who do not fear Him.
4. Seeking the Law of God gives light, but seeking the wisdom of men brings darkness.
5. Men often speak out against God, His spokesmen, and His leaders when they are suffering from the wages of their own sins.
6. Christ, the Light of the world, was to shine in the land of Galilee, Lk. 4:16-21; Jn. 2:11; 4:54; Mt. 4:13-17.
7. Christ was to set up a government of peace lifting the oppression of sin from the people.
8. Christ is the Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.
9. God will judge those who are arrogant, lead the people astray, are led astray by others, and those who greedily attack one another.

Assyria Today, a Remnant Tomorrow

Isaiah 10:5 - 12

When Tom Clancy was interviewed concerning his novel *Hunt for Red October* he said, "I will always be able to find a villain." When God has been in need of a villain to punish the wicked, He also has always been able to locate one. "He used Assyria against Ephraim and Judah at this time, raised up Babylon to destroy Assyria and to carry Judah into captivity, raise up the Medes against Babylon. and then bring Alexander against the Medo-Persians" (Hailey).

Assyria & God's Wrath

»»» **Assyria Is God's Weapon, 10:5-11**

God admits here that He is the one using Assyria as a staff or rod to punish Israel and Judah. Why? Because Judah is an ungodly nation just like its sister kingdom of Israel. This has resulted in the wrath of God against them. He will be the one who gives the command for the Assyrians to charge into the land to pillage and destroy (2 Kings 18:14-16). Assyria does not know they are just a weapon welded by the arm of God for His purposes (2 Kings 18:25). The motive of Assyria to attack had nothing to do with supporting righteousness or just punishment. Their heart was set on spoils of war and political gain.

What was in the heart of Assyria as to why they were becoming a world empire? They felt they were superior to everyone else. Six cities are listed starting with Carchemish an ancient Hittite city then Arpad, a city of Syria, southwest of Carchemish, and then Hamath, located on the Orantes River was the center of an independent kingdom these are getting closer and closer to Jerusalem. The Assyrians took them all in order. When Assyrians came to Samaria it destroyed the idols and carried the survivors off into captivity. In this manner they viewed their gods superior to the gods of Samaria as in any other of their conquests. The idols of Jerusalem must also be destroyed. It was King Hezekiah who destroyed the brazen serpent was worshiped as an idol at Jerusalem.

»»» **Assyria's Vain Boasting, 10:12-19**

Assyria would boast against God of Judah who was the one who actually was giving them victories over the idolatrous nations. The king of Assyria would boast in his self-glorification before Jerusalem and King Hezekiah. So God's wrath will be turned upon Assyria.

The Assyrian king would attribute his successes to his own power, wisdom, and understanding. He believe he is the one who is the real mover and shaker and map maker of the world, not God. He has gather the nations and the spoil like a man gathers eggs from chickens.

In contrast God views Assyria like the ax in the hand of the lumberjack or a saw in the hand of a carpenter. Assyria thinks it is a rod or staff which could work independently of a hand and arm to hold and move it.

It is not really Assyria but the Lord who will bring physical want and fire upon Israel in swift destruction. God will burn down the forest of Israel until they are so few in number a child could count what is left. Assyria is only a match in the hand of God to start the fire.

»»» **A Remnant Will Be Restored to the Land, 10:20-23**

One day after Assyria is gone the Holy One of Israel will restore the remnant. They will not depend on Assyria but on God. King Ahaz had depended upon the help of the Assyrian King Tiglath-Pileser, who "*distressed him and strengthened him not*" (2 Chr. 28:21). However, before this remnant can return the masses of Israel who depend on idols will be destroyed or led into captivity.

»»» **Assyria to be Destroyed, 10:24-34**

The citizens of Jerusalem are not to fear the Assyrians, even though they will be used by God to

chastise the wicked among them. They will be gone quickly like God's wrath will cease. When Judah has been justly punished, God's chastisement will end. Then He will punish Assyria with just destruction.

God will find a weapon to use against Assyrian. Two historical events in the annuals of Israel are referred to in verse twenty-six to demonstrate the wrath of God against Assyria. First, the destruction of Midian and then when Moses lifted up the rod and parted the Red Sea for Israel to pass and afterward closed the flood waters upon the pursuing Egyptian army. Just as God had delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage, so the yoke of the Assyrians will be lifted off of them.

God warns now of the time when Assyria's army will march ever closer to Jerusalem's walls. First, the Assyrians come to Aiath some twelve miles north of Jerusalem, next is Michmash seven miles away, then Gibeah six miles due north, then Anathoth a small village just three miles northeast of Judah's capital, and finally within two miles is Madmenah. They will come as close as Nob where Assyria will only be able to shake its fist at Jerusalem. Then they will suddenly retreat on the same path they came. At this time God will humble the Assyrians as one would bring down a tall tree like the cedars of Lebanon.

The Coming Messianic Kingdom

Although the kingdom of Judah and Israel would one day cease there is the hope in the future through David's lineage a spiritual kingdom will come forth and endure.

*** Judge of the Kingdom, 11:1-5**

Since there is only one Jesse mentioned in the Old Testament, Isaiah is referring to a rod coming from a twig or the ancestry tree of David. He is the Branch which will spring forth with new life from the very roots of this tree. This Branch will have the following character traits: wisdom, understanding, spirit of counsel, strength, knowledge, and fear of the Lord. The Branch is Jesus Christ. Verse two refers to the Holy Spirit's coming upon Jesus at His baptism (Mt. 3:16; Mk. 1:10; Lk. 3:22; Jn. 1:32). Christ would come and judge men not by mere appearance or hearsay. He instructed others, "*do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment*" (John 7:24). He will know the very thoughts of the hearts of men (Matt. 9:4). He will judge in righteousness and fairness. Therefore when he chastises the wicked, He will do so with the rod of His mouth the breath of His lips. He will be the final judge of the righteous and the wicked (Matt. 10:34; 2 Th. 2:8; Rev. 1:16; 2:16). He will wear justice and trustworthiness like a belt.

*** Nature of the Kingdom's Citizens, 11:6-9**

The nature of this Kingdom is seen through the peaceful interactions between those in the animal kingdom who would naturally be enemies. However, they will be subject to a new peaceful attitude. Citizens will be new creatures in the Messianic kingdom. Instead of marching against the enemies of God in warfare and destruction, they will fill the earth with the knowledge of the Lord (see Rom.10:18; 16:26; Col. 1:23).

*** A Remnant from All the Earth Comes into the Kingdom, 11:10-16**

Christ will be the Root of Jesse who stands holding a banner or flag to rally all the remnant of God's people from around the world. This would even include the Gentiles. This passage is used in Romans 15:12 to demonstrate the Gospel is for the Gentiles. A second remnant will come "*from Assyria and Egypt, from Pathros and Cush, from Elam and Shinar, from Hamath and the islands of the sea*" which are in the Mediterranean. For example, the Ethiopian eunuch would come from Africa to the Lord (Acts 8:27). The citizens of the Messianic Kingdom will come from all over the earth.

This remnant will go forth and conquer the nations not with carnal weapons of warfare but with the Gospel. None of the national and physical boundaries will not hinder this spiritual kingdom's progress. Just as the Israelites marched on dry ground through the Red Sea, so they will move freely to spread the Gospel and/or return to the Lord. God will even prepare a highway from Assyria to make a smooth path for those who will return to God.

The Remnant's Song of Praise and Thanksgiving

This section of Isaiah concludes with a song of thanksgiving from those who are part of the remnant returning to the Messianic Kingdom. It's message is even appropriate to be sung in worship by Christians today. Compare this song to the Song of Moses sung in rejoicing at the victory over and deliverance from

Egyptian bondage (Ex. 15:1f).

Divine indignation has been dealt with in the captivity, the people have forsaken the idols, therefore God's anger has been turned away. Now God is able to bring comfort and joy to His people. God's people are no longer afraid, because God is their strength, song and salvation. Their joy over salvation is compared to the time when God provided water from the rock at Horeb and again at Meribah. Compare this to Jesus telling the woman at the well He would provide for her living water to drink (John 4:14).

Those who have experienced salvation will praise God for His deeds among His people and His name will be exalted. Christians have many reasons to be thankful to God (Col. 3:15-17; I Th. 5:17,18; Phil. 4:6). Songs are sung today to teach and admonish others. Singing can be used as a tool in evangelism in order to publish the good news. In fact, it is the church's duty to be heard praising God.

Questions:

1. Who is God sending Assyria Against?
2. What had Assyria done to Samaria and its idols?
3. To what would the King of Assyria attribute his success?
4. How would you answer the questions in verse 15?
5. On who will the Remnant rely?
6. What two historical events in the history of Israel is Isaiah referring to in verse 26?
7. Where are the following cities located in relation to Jerusalem?

Aiath	Gallim
Migron	Laish
Michmash	Anathoth
Geba	Madmenah
Ramah	Gebim
Gibeah	Nob

8. What will the Assyrians do at Nob?
9. To what is proud Assyria compared to in verses 33 and 34?
10. What character traits will the Branch have?
11. How will He judge?
12. How will He chastise the worldly and the wicked?
13. Where will the peaceful conditions be located which are described in verses 6 through 8?
14. What will fill the earth?
15. What is the glorious resting place prophesied in verse 10?
16. Where are "the islands of the sea"?
17. Is verse 14 showing that the remnant will make physical war on its neighbors?
18. Why will there be a highway from Assyria?

19. How was God's anger turned away?
20. Why will they no longer be afraid?
21. What are they called upon to make known?

Lessons for Application & Discussion:

1. God used nations and men to carry out His Will.
2. Men must learn to trust in God, because trusting in others will only result in further distress.
3. Divine indignation is fair and equitable.
4. Christ has wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, and the fear of the Lord.
5. Christ renders perfect judgment.
6. The church is a place of peace and rest.
7. All nations are to come to the church.
8. All barriers to the church will be removed; the new kingdom will have no boundaries.
9. Christians should sing praises and thanksgiving to God.
10. Our salvation is solely and abundantly from God.
11. Christians should tell the world of the great salvation from the Lord.

Burden Upon Babylon, Assyria & Philistia

Isaiah 13 - 14

Chapters thirteen through twenty-three make up the second section of Isaiah. It details the prophecies of God against various foreign nations. These prophecies are introduced as a “burden” placed upon a particular nation by God. “Burden lit. means a load. The word carries the idea of a heavy and weighty pronouncement of doom from God” (Hailey). Strong defines it as “an utterance, chiefly a doom.”

The Burden Upon Babylon

➡ **God's Army Against Babylon, 13:1-5**

God summons his armies against Babylon by voice, waving the hand, and lifting a banner. God has called His consecrated ones, mighty warriors and proudly exulting ones to battle. This is most likely a reference to the Medes and the Persians for they were mountainous nations or the host of angels who are his spiritual unseen army which does God bidding. The Medes and the Persians did come from a far country. They were God's instrument of wrath upon Babylon.

➡ **A Day of Terror Upon Babylon, 13:6-16**

When the day of wrath come upon Babylon it will be one which brings great terror and fear (see Dan. 4:30). Their pain is compared to a woman in labor. Even the sources of light in the universe will be darkened, perhaps not physically or literally but psychologically. The purpose of this is to destroy sinners with punishment for their pride and evil. So complete is this destruction that finding a man is rarer than finding a brick of pure gold. The very heavens will be shaken. They are compared to a hunted gazelle or shepe which are scattered everywhere and do not return. All the inhabitants of Babylon will be thrust through with a sword. No one will be spared not even little children whom parents will see killed before their very eyes. All of the possessions will be spoils of war. Their women will be raped. War against the wicked is heartless and cruel.

➡ **The Medes to Destroy Babylon, 13:17-22**

According to the prophet Isaiah who prophesied around 740 to 700 B.C., the Medes were to defeat Babylon and would become like Sodom and Gomorrah (13:17-19). “Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them” (13:17). The Cyrus Cylinder tells of how Cyrus the Mede capture the city of Babylon without even breaking down a wall in 539 B.C. Greek Historian Herodotus (484-425 B.C.) said that Cyrus had his men diverted the water of the Euphrates which flowed under the city walls. Once the river was diverted around the city, they went under the city wall and surprised the Babylonians who were having a drunken party (i., p. 191). These invaders could not be bribed with silver and gold. They would destroy their young men, children, and even the unborn.

After its fall to the Medes, Babylon slowly began to deteriorate. The last mention of Babylon is a tablet dating 10 B.C. “Trajan visited Babylon in A.D. 116 during his campaign against the Parthians and found, according to Dio Cassius, ‘mounds and legends of mounds’” (Gerald A. Larue, *Babylon and the Bible*, p. 80). Isaiah prophesied that it would never be inhabited again, not even the tents of the Arab will be pitch there, and shepherds would not make their flocks lie down upon its ruins (13:20). Floyd Hamilton observed: “Travelers report that the city is absolutely uninhabited, even [by] Bedouins. There are various superstitions current among the Arabs that prevent them from pitching their tents there, while the character of the soil prevents the growth of vegetation suitable for the pasturage of flocks” (The Basis of Christian Faith, p. 310). In contrast to those who would not inhabit Babylon, Isaiah informs us that wild beasts of the desert will be found on this ancient site. (13:21,23). Its new residents will be wild beasts, owls, ostriches, goats, hyenas, and jackals. Nora B. Kubie wrote: “The owl's hoot and the lion's roar were still heard in

the ruins of Babylon" (Road to Nineveh, p. 272).

When will this all come about? Soon. For Babylon's days cannot be prolonged. However, it will be about one hundred and eighty years before the fall of Babylon from the time of this prophecy.

➡ **A Remnant Comes Out of Destroyed Babylon, 14:1-8**

A promise of a remnant returning from Babylonian captivity before Judah is ever attacked and before Babylon even rises to power. The children of Jacob will even be joined by strangers. "Many from among the peoples of the land become Jews, for the fear of the Jews was fallen upon them" (Est. 8:17). Even in the New Testament some of the Greeks become Jewish proselytes (Ac. 17:4,17). Verse two says some Babylonians will become servants to those who they once held captive. God will give this remnant rest and peace. They will taunt Babylon saying: *"How the oppressor has ceased, the golden city ceased!"* (14:4). The symbols of Babylonian rule will be broken. God will punish the this ruler of nations and no one can stop Him.

At the fall of Babylon will come great rejoicing in the earth. Even the cypress trees and cedars will rejoice because not more violence will be committed against them by the Babylonians.

➡ **The Fall of the Morning Star, 14:9-22**

The dead rulers in Sheol express amazement at the sight of the King of Babylon who has died and become just like the rest of them. Death is the great equalizer of all men.

This is the text where we find the term "Lucifer" in the King James Version. This popular translation borrowed the name from Jerome's translation of the Bible (A.D. 383-405) known as the Latin Vulgate. Keep in mind that the original Old Testament was written mostly in Hebrew. So the name Lucifer does not come from the Hebrew or even from the Greek translation (Septuagint), but from the fourth century AD Latin translation of this verse: *quomodo cecidisti de caelo lucifer qui mane oriebaris corruisti in terram qui vulnerabas gentes.*

The meaning of any term must be determined by its usage in context. In this case "Lucifer" mentioned in Isaiah 14:12 must be interpreted in relationship to the paragraphs associated with it. Isaiah begins this chapter with the promise of Israel's return from Babylonian exile. God will "give them rest from their sorrows and hard bondage" (v.3). Verse four makes it very clear as to whom this prophecy concerns: "you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon" (Isa 14:4,NIV). This monarch lived in and abided over a "golden city" (vs. 4). In contrast to this, Satan is the monarch of a kingdom of spiritual darkness (cf. Ephesians 6:12). In 14:5-7 God's people are celebrating the fall of Babylon, not the fall of Satan. Concerning the king's body, it will be eaten by worms (14:11). This is what happens when the flesh is placed into the grave. Isaiah makes reference to the pride of the Babylonian kings in 14:13,14. While Lucifer was alive he made the earth tremble with his power and military might (14:16) by overthrowing cities and refusing to release his captives (14:17). He was not to be buried like others kings but only find dishonor in death (14:18). This passage may be making reference to the demise of the last king of Babylon. Lucifer is "thrust through with a sword" and is cast out of his grave and into the pits reserved for the downtrodden masses (14:19-20). He is a man. Isaiah calls him the father of descendants who will be slain for his iniquities (14:21). Isaiah is most certainly describing Babylon and her evil kings (14:22). Nowhere within the context of Isaiah 14, however, is Satan depicted as Lucifer.

Within the context of the paragraph, section, book of Isaiah and the whole Bible there is no evidence for Lucifer being Satan. He does not make a direct mention of Satan in the entire book. Furthermore, no where does the Bible support the belief that Lucifer is Satan. However there does seem to be plenty of archeological evidence for the term "lucifier" to be a metaphor for the king of Babylon. An old Canaanite story says that the Morning Star made a move to become dominant in the sky but was cast down into the underworld. Isaiah even used two names of Babylonian astral deities within the context: Helel meaning "morning star", and Shaha meaning "dawn." Often ancient kings were deified as gods. The Babylonians worshiped the celestial bodies in their astral religion. The effects of God's punishment upon Babylon is described as a failure of the heavenly bodies to give light. "And He will destroy its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations; Will not give their light; The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine. I will punish the world for its evil" (Isaiah 13:9-11). The habit of the kings of the east to be considered incarnations of the gods the people worshiped is being turned

against them in this prophecy.

The actual meaning of the term "Lucifer" as the "morning star" is supported by the context and the archeological evidence. Many translations, such as the ASV, NIV, NRSV, NASB, NJB and ESV, use "day star", "morning star" or something similar, and never use the word "Lucifer". For example, "How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn!" (Isaiah 14:12, NRSV). The planet Venus' orbit lies within the orbit of the Earth around the Sun. So just before dawn Venus (the morning star) can be seen in the eastern sky for an hour before the rising of the sun. Lucifer is the name for the dawn appearance of the planet Venus, heralding daylight. It is not another name for Satan.

The kings of Babylon as well as Assyria took conquered peoples captive. Cyrus reversed this policy allowing captives to go home (14:17). The King of Babylon would not go home to sleep in death with the former kings. He will lie among the corpse of the battlefield. Even his children will be killed because of the wickedness of their fathers will not be perpetuated when they mature and take over spreading their evil empire.

► **Babylon Swept with Destruction, 14:22,23**

The land will be inhabited by porcupine marshes. To this day "large deposits of the Euphrates water are left stagnant in the hollows between the ruins" (Rawlinson). God will sweep it with the broom of destruction.

In surveying just seven of the above prophecy about Babylon, Peter Stoner found that "The probable fulfillment of each item in the Babylonian prophecy was estimated as follows: (1) 1 in 10 [it will be destroyed]; (2) 1 in 100 [never be reinhabited]; (3) 1 in 200 [Arabs will not pitch their tents there]; (4) 1 in 4 [no sheepfolds there]; (5) 1 in 5 [wild beasts occupy the ruins]; (6) 1 in 100 [stones will not be removed from other buildings]; (7) 1 in 10 [men will not pass by the ruins]. This makes a probability for the whole prophecy of 1 in 5 x 10 to the ninth power" (Stoner, 95).

The Burden Upon Assyria, 14:24-27

Although Babylon had not risen yet to be a world power it was doomed before the burden against the current world empire is prophesied by Isaiah. All prophecies are for sure to come to pass if God is the author. God will remove the yoke of Assyrian oppression from Judah. This will happen in the mountains of Judah. No one will be able to spare them.

The Burden Upon Philistia, 14:28-32

Next comes a burden against one of Israel's greatest adversaries since the days of the judges. Hezekiah would be victorious over them (2 Kings 18:7,8). This particular prophecy of their doom comes in the year that king Ahaz died with is about 715 B.C. Apparently the former weapon used to chastise the Philistines was broken. Most likely a reference to the demise of the Assyrians at Jerusalem. God has other weapons in his arsenal to punish them, like "*a viper*" and "*a fiery flying serpent*." These may refer to the Babylonians and the Greeks.

They have oppressed others and now will be oppressed and even the survivors destroyed. They will see the doom coming from the north which is the direction the armies of invaders took when invading Palestine. The only refuge left is those who fled to Zion.

Questions:

1. Who has God called to execute His anger?
2. From where is this army of God to come?
3. To what is their pain compared?

4. What will become of all the sources of light in the universe?
5. Why will the Lord punish Babylon?
6. What will happen to their children?
7. What nation is God going to use to punish Babylon?
8. Like what will beautiful Babylon become?
9. What animals will dwell in the ruins of Babylon?
10. When will this come about?
11. Who will join the remnant in their home land? What will become of them?
12. Why do the cypress trees and cedars rejoice?
13. Why do the dead rulers of the nations in Sheol express amazement?
14. Who is being referred to here as Lucifer (in KJV and NKJV)?
15. Where does the King of Babylon think he is going and where does he end up?
16. Where do the kings of the nations "sleep"? Where will the king of Babylon "sleep"?
17. With what will Babylon be swept?

18. From whom will the Assyrian yoke and burden be removed?

19. How should the questions in verse 27 be answered?

20. When did this burden come?

21. What will come out of the broken rod?

22. Where will the poor of God's people find refuge?

Lessons for Application & Discussion:

1. God did use the Medes as his instruments of indignation against Babylon.
2. The reason God brings judgment against a nation is to punish their sins.
3. Even to this very day Babylon lies in total ruin inhabited only by wild animals, thus bearing witness to Isaiah's prophecy.
4. Even the greatest of men are the same as the most common after death.
5. Nothing can stop God from carrying out His Will.
6. The poor in spirit will find refuge in the Church.
7. God's servants should even feel compassion for the sufferings of the wicked.
8. Refuge and hope is found for all in spiritual Zion under the messianic David.
9. Pride has often caused many to reject God's offer of hope and salvation.
10. The prayers of the wicked in despair will not avail.

The Burden Upon Moab, Damascus, Israel, Assyria, Ethiopia & Egypt

Isaiah 15 - 19

The Burden Upon Moab

Isaiah had just pronounced the doom of Philistia to Judah's west. Now he turns the direction of these woes upon Moab to Judah's east. The Moabites are the descendants of Lot through one of his daughters. Over twenty places are identified in this prophecy. The location of about ten can be located on a map the others are unknown.

▲ Moab's Cries of Destruction, 15:1-9

Both Ar and Kir are two cities destroyed in the night. One day they are then and the next they are wiped off the map. In mourning for the destruction of Moab they will shaved their heads bald and cut off their beards while clothing themselves in sackcloth (an uncomfortable hairy garment worn next to the skin). The temple referenced here is not of Jerusalem but a reference to Moab's idolatry. When Heshbon and Elealeh are attacked the cry of the victims of war will be heard miles away at Jahaz. The soldiers will despair for being left alive.

It is interesting to note the refugees will flee to Zoar where Lot and his two daughters had fled to escape the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, but they continued to flee to a cave in the mountains (Gen. 19:20-22). The Moabites will continue to flee seeking refuge in the lands belonging to Edom and Judah. The waters of Moab will be desolate. Perhaps the invaders had dammed up the river. As they flee they carry all they own as far as the border with Edom. Their rivers may be empty with life giving water, but they will be filled with the blood of their deaths. Those who do manage to flee into the wilderness will fall prey to the lions or symbolic for some other misfortune which will befall them.

▲ Moab's Refuge is Zion, 16:1-5

Perhaps a lamb is a symbol either of sacrifice at Zion or tribute to Judah for safe passage and refuge. These Moabite refugees are compared to birds cast out of their nest. They are going to request that Judah will give them advice, made a decision, and give them protection from their enemies. "The throne in Zion will stand out as a champion of the rights of afflicted nations" (Zerr). The prophet tells Moab to accept help because they will not need refuge for very long, because the oppressor will soon be gone. Verse five may be a Messianic prophecy of Christ, the Son of David. He is the refuge for all seeking justice and help.

▲ Moab Is Mourned Over, 16:6-12

Out of Moabite pride the offer of refuge is rejected. There is nothing left to do for Moab but to weep and sorrow at the nation's destruction. Note how Moab's excessive self-conceitedness and haughtiness is compared to lies. A reference is made of the destruction of the vineyards of the Moabites. "The Assyrians made it a practice of destroying the fruit trees in an enemy's county" (Rawlinson). So the joy over the harvest in Moab has ceased. Those who tread the grapes in the vats often would sing. Instead of rejoicing over the demise of Moab, Isaiah weeps bitterly and drenches them with his tears. The heart strings of have been pulled expressing his inward feelings of grief over their pain and loss. The paragraph ends showing the futility of them running to their pagan sanctuary and praying.

▲ Moab's Destruction Within Three Years, 16:13,14

Moab will be destroyed within three years as a workman counts time. A worker will not give extra time to the one who hired him. If he is hired to work for ninety days, he will does not work ninety-one days.

There will be a remnant of Moab, but they will be very few (Jer. 48:45-47).

Burden Upon Damascus

Having prophesied of the destruction of Moab, Isaiah turns his message of doom and gloom upon the enemy of Judah to the northeast; Syria. Damascus is the capital of Syria. In this time period both the kingdoms of Syria and Israel had been united at allies against Assyrian aggression. When Judah refused to join their pact it was attacked.

◆ **The Glory of Damascus' to Wane, 7:1-3**

After destruction comes upon Damascus it will never again rise to the level of world power and influence it once had. Even the cities in the area of Aroer will become a place of peace for flocks of sheep. The alliance Syria enjoyed with Israel (Ephraim) will be ended by the invasion of the Assyrian kings Sargon and Sennacherib. Damascus will not be the capital of a kingdom. Its glory will be just like its ally, Israel. According to verse four Israel's glory will wane.

◆ **The Glory of Damascus' Ally to Wane, 17:4-11**

The nation of Israel will be depopulated (2 Kings 17:25; 24:14). The Assyrians will come and harvest the people out of the land and only leave a remnant of the poor. This is all illustrated by the harvesting of olives and grapes.

The idols they have worshiped and placed their hope and trust in will not be given any regard after these, because they will learn to have regard for God. They will reject the very idols which they had made with their own hands. This will take place after captivity. First will come the desolation of her cities.

The reason for this coming desolation is because they have forgotten the God of their salvation and delighted to trust in the strange gods. The inevitable harvest of the wickedness they have sown will come. They will reap, as they have sown (Gal. 6:7,8).

Burden Upon Assyria, 17:12-14

The multitude prophesied against in this section can be none other than the Assyrian hoard which God will unleash against all the nations previously doomed in this section of Isaiah. They are compared in might to the crushing waters of the sea. God will in a word from his mouth turn back the rushing tide waters of the Assyrians. Those who have plundered God's people will be struck at night and be no more by morning. This was fulfilled when the Assyrian army was encamped with their multitudes around Jerusalem and God struck dead in one night nearly two hundred thousands soldiers.

Burden Upon Ethiopia

Ethiopia is often referred to by the ancient name "Cush." Its borders would have been to the south of Egypt.

➤ **Ethiopian Ambassadors to Return Home, 18:1-3**

This prophecy may be in reference to the "Ethiopian mercenary soldiers who were in the Egyptian army when Shishak assaulted Jerusalem Isaiah mentions Tirhakah king of Ethiopia and his effort to check Sennacherib in Judah. The probable date of the events of this chapter is the period of the Assyrian threat to Judah 720-702" (Hailey).

Ethiopia is connected with the hoards of flies which in turn are a perhaps a figurative allusion to the massive army they could assemble. The ambassadors are commanded by God to return home. Sennacherib *"heard say of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, Behold, he is come out to fight against thee"* (2 Kings. 19:9). They are identified as a nation of people who are tall and have smooth skin. Apparently the whole world knows when the Ethiopian army is on the move.

➤ **Ethiopians Shown God is in Control, 18:4-6**

The reason the Ethiopians are not to be involved in these conflicts with the nations is due to the fact that God Himself is the one who is in control of the world affairs. He will prepare the world for the harvest of judgment in His own time. In fact right before the harvest time God will come in and cut off the sprigs and the branches destroying the Assyrian threat. The corpses army of the Assyrians will be feasted upon by the beasts and birds.

➤ **Ethiopians to Come to Zion, 18:7**

Ethiopia will not come to Zion at this time to aid it. But one day God will bring this people to Zion where they will bring their gift to the Lord of hosts. This is in reference to the Gospel being preached to those from the land of Cush both at Pentecost and to the Ethiopian in Acts chapters two and eight.

Burden Upon of Egypt

Israel and Egypt share a long history. Their paths first crossed when Abraham fled to Egypt for security in the time of a famine. The Israelites were slaves in Egypt for hundreds of years. No sooner did God free them from Pharaoh, then they were willing to return to Egypt in time of trouble. In Judah there will be a pro-Egyptian party who will seek security from the Assyrians and later the Babylonians by courting the political and military favor of Egypt. This is all in vain for God has other plans for Egypt.

X **Egypt's Idols Are Useless, 19:1-4**

God is coming in the clouds to judge Egypt. The people of Egypt will not find help or comfort in their idols. Civil wars will devour the nation. They will turn to the idols and other pagan religious practitioners for guidance. But God will still bring upon them "*cruel masters*." Thebes would be taken by the Assyrians in the time of King Ashurbanipal. Both the Babylonians led by Nebuchadnezzar and later the Persians under Cambyses will afflict this ancient nation.

X **Egypt to Suffer from Both Physical and Financial Catastrophe, 19:5-10**

The Nile river gives life to the land of Egypt. When its flood waters fail, famine and disaster follow. Economic disaster will come upon the farming, fishing, and clothing industry of Egypt. Even the common laborer will suffer. They are the "*foundations of Egypt*."

X **Egypt's Leaders are Fools, 19:11-17**

The city of Zoan was often a royal residence of rulers. Their renowned wisdom will be nothing but foolishness in the day of God's judgment. Their bragging will mean nothing when God declares His intentions. They will not know God's will for Egypt or stop it. The so-called wise men have made Egypt like a drunken man who staggers in his own vomit. Nothing can be accomplished by their wisdom.

The women who were not typically warriors would feel very insecure when judgment comes. They cannot help or be helped. Once "Xerxes said of his fighting men at Salamis: 'My men have become women'" (Rawlinson).

The very mention of the land of Judah will bring terror to the Egyptians. The Assyrians are coming from Judah as will the Babylonians. Bad news travels to Egypt by way Judah.

X **Egypt Turned Back to God, 19:18-22**

Homer Hailey wrote "it appears more reasonable to think of the language of Canaan as the language of 'the merchant people'." They will have something to do with the coming of Jehovah worship in Egypt. Pillars erected for worshiping God or gods was wrong but pillars as monuments for witness an event were not wrong (Deut. 16:22). This pillar could be metaphorical in alluding to the seed promise to Abraham.

When they turn to God in time of need He will send them a Savior and Champion who will deliver them. When God blesses them they will worship Him with sacrifice and offering and keep their vows. This may be in reference to the number of Jews which made their home in Alexandria. Most likely this is a Messianic prophecy. First, God must strike Egypt before there can be a spiritual healing.

X **Egypt, Assyria, and Judah Spiritually United, 19:23-25**

The same highway used to bring war back and forth to Egypt and Assyria will one day be a road of peace. This begins to be fulfilled on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:9,10. They will be joined by Israel in worship to God. This will result in God blessing all these nations to which He is now bringing burdens.

Questions:

1. What two cities are destroyed in the night?

2. What have they done to their physical appearance? Why?
3. Who cried out for Moab?
4. Who will God send upon the remnant of Moab?
5. To where were they to send a lamb?
6. What were they going to request from Judah?
7. Whose reign is prophesied in verse 5?
8. Why does Moab reject this hope?
9. How does the prophet react to the destruction of Moab?
10. To where will they turn for hope and refuge?
11. When will Moab be destroyed?
12. What will become of the cities of Aroer?
13. How will they react to their idols? Why?
14. Why must the desolation come?
15. What will become of the plunderers and those that pillage God's people?

16. Where is Cush?
17. What are the physical features of this people?
18. What will the Lord do to the vineyard right before harvest?
19. Where will they bring their gift?
20. According to verse two what will God cause to happen in Egypt?
21. What or who will the Egyptians consult?
22. What natural disaster will hit Egypt?
23. What groups will be hurt economically?
24. How will God respond to their cry?
25. How will the Egyptians respond to this?
26. What is the purpose in the Lord striking Egypt?
27. Who will be the third party that worships with Egypt?

Lessons for Application & Discussion:

1. God's servants should even feel compassion for the sufferings of the wicked.
2. Refuge and hope is found for all in spiritual Zion under the messianic David.

3. Pride has often caused many to reject God's offer of hope and salvation.
4. The prayers of the wicked in despair will not avail.
5. God is our salvation and rock of safety.
6. The Chastening of God is meant to turn our minds back to Him.
7. God can intervene in the affairs of the world anytime and will at the right time.
8. Economic distress upon a nation can come from God.
9. God has provided a Savior and Champion to deliver the world.
10. Any one from any nation can come together and worship God.

Burden Upon Egypt, Babylon, Edom, Arabia, Jerusalem & Tyre

Isaiah 20 - 23

Burden Against Egypt & Ethiopia

In 713 BC the Philistine city of Ashdod revolted against Assyria. King Sargon of Assyria sent his Tartan, Commander-in-Chief of his armed forces. The title Tartan may have given a man a rank as great as second in the empire. The Tartan took the city. An inscription found in Sargon's palace supports this prophecy. "Azuri, king of Ashdod, planned in his heart not to pay tribute. In my anger I marched against Ashdod with my usual bodyguard. I conquered Ashdod, and Gath. I took their treasures and their people. I settled in them people from the lands of the east. I took tribute from Philistia, Judah, Edom and Moab" (Halley 288). The nations around the area of Ashdod sent to Egypt and as far as Ethiopian for military aid. However, Isaiah's job at this time was to not letting Judah join the foolish hope of these nations.

As a very strange part of Isaiah's mission and prophecy, he was to go naked and barefoot as a sign before Judah. Regardless of what some think it was unlikely the God who made modest garments for the only married couple in the world, Adam and Eve, would have had him go totally nude. Strong defines the term for "naked" as "nude, either partially or totally." Perhaps he wore only the undergarment or short tunic. Evidence from ancient captives of Assyria are so represented. Isaiah was to go about dressed in this socially shameful condition for three years. It would represent to Judah the Egyptian and Ethiopian captives to be led away by Ashurbanipal in 663 BC. Some would have their backsides exposed as they marched into captivity. This would result in others who put their trust in these two nations to become ashamed. They would not provide a place of refuge for those fleeing from the Assyrians.

Burden Upon Babylon, 21:1-10

The phrase "*Wilderness of the Sea*" is a description of Babylon. In his Revelation the apostle John called the symbolic Babylon "*many waters*" which represents "*peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues*" (Rev. 17:15).

At the time of this prophecy Babylon was not an independent nation. It was only when in 626 BC that Nabopolassar was made king. But one day God will send both Elam and Media against Babylon. So terrible is the vision of the doom of Babylon that Isaiah's loins are full of anguish and pain like a woman in labor. Isaiah is not in disagreement with God, but is showing compassion for his fellow man and the human suffering which touches his heart.

Isaiah notes the city of Babylon is in no way prepared for what it to come. According to Daniel Belshazzar was having feast the very night the city fell. Setting a watch and oiling the shield are in preparation for the city to defend itself from attack. The watchmen see a large number of riders of horsemen and those riding upon camels and trains of donkeys carrying supplies for the army. The watchman complains about the long watch. The final cry of this watchman is announcing the fall of Babylon and the destruction of their idols.

Isaiah's final comment on the doom of Babylon is hard to understand. But one thing is for sure, this prophecy is from God and is not a concoction from the mind of a mere man like Isaiah.

Burden Upon Edom, 21:11,12

Another distant relative of Judah is targeted by Isaiah. The Edomites were the descendants of

Abraham through his grandson, Esau. Edom is described at "Duman" - a land south of the Dead Sea. The term means "silence" in Hebrew. Edom joined in an alliance against Assyria with Ashdod. Sargon sent his Tartan against this nation. The watchman is asked to report and all he declares is that morning comes then night. Night does not follow the morning except figuratively. Edom will experience only a short dawn of hope and then complete destruction (night).

Burden Upon Arabia, 21:13-17

The Assyrians did not enter Arabia until about 715 BC. Arabia is the largest peninsula in the world. One of the cities of ancient Arabia was Dedan. The citizens of Tema will bring bread for the refugees fleeing from the invaders. Within a year and not a day longer, Kedar's splendor will end and only a remnant of mighty men left. This prophecy is certain.

Burden Upon Jerusalem

This burden against Jerusalem is called a prophecy about "*the Valley of Vision*." It is hard to determine for sure whether this prophecy concerns the Assyrian threat of 701 or the final conquest of Jerusalem by Babylon. The former is more likely in this general context.

*** Jerusalem Has Not Reason for Hope, (22:1-10)**

Isaiah asked the citizen's of Jerusalem why they have gone up on the rooftops. It is not for a party or rejoicing. Even if this is the brief reprieve experienced during the siege by Assyrian when news of an Egypt force was coming but no hope will come. The housetops were "used as a gathering place in times of excitement....Thus is described a typical Oriental city in the midst of a time of great commotion. Just as the Westerner at such a time gathers in the streets, so the Easterner goes to the housetops, where he can see down the streets, and discover what is happening" (Wight 32).

The prophet continues to address the citizens. The inhabitants are not dying of wounds received in battle but disease and starvation. While under siege the rulers have made a run for it to escape and have been captured and led off into captivity or killed. Isaiah tells his fellow citizens not to look at him while he weeps over this vision neither are they to try to comfort him. They in turn will not cry unto the Lord but to the mountains which can afford not comfort or help.

Often when a world empire came upon another nation they brought with them allies and armies of conquered people. Both Elam and Kir have come upon Jerusalem. These soldiers have come great distances to attack them. The armed have filled the valleys around Jerusalem. The citizens make preparations to defend the city with weapons in the armory (1 Kings 7:2; 10:17), storing up water for the long siege, and even tearing down their homes to build up the walls. In all the preparations to defend Jerusalem they failed to depend upon the Lord as their only real defender and defense. Instead, they prepare for the final days of their lives by having one last party saying: "*Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!*" (22:12). They are going to get in one more moment of pleasure before they die. Therefore, God will not give them a chance to redeem themselves from death.

*** Prophecies Concerning Shebna and Eliakim, 22:15-25**

This paragraph mentions the only prophecy of Isaiah directed against an individual. Shebna is in charge of the royal household. Perhaps this judgment against him is used to symbolized the doom of those with political ambitions. His name is also found in 36:3 and 37:2 as scribe. He is asked why he thinks he is so important that he should be making for himself such a fine, large tomb hewn out of the rocky hills of Jerusalem. God was going to take him and throw him away. After all, God has doomed him to die in a foreign land. His lofty government position will not last forever. God will kick him out of office.

God has already found a replacement for Shebna, it is Eliakim the son of Hilkiah. Shebna at that time was demoted to scribe (36:3; 37:2). He will wear the noble vestments of Shebna and will treat Jerusalem's citizens like he was their father. His authority is described by him having "*the key of the house of David*." Whatever he decides, that is the way it will be. He is compared to a peg driven firmly into a wall upon which valuable wares could be securely hung. He will be reliable and trustworthy. He will bring respect to his father's name. Regardless of how good and noble he would be, God will still have to punish Jerusalem one day, that is, the peg will eventually break off and dump everything on the floor.

Burden Upon Tyre

The next prophecy comes against the greatest commercial power of that day: Tyre. Often Tyre is mentioned along with Sidon. They founded colonies for trade in Tarshish, Spain and Carthage in north Africa and travelled as far away as the Indian Ocean. The city was completely destroyed by Alexander the Great in 332 BC.

✎ **Tyre's Destruction has a World-wide Effect, 23:1-7**

The ships from Tarshish are called upon to wail, because when they arrive at Cyprus, they learn of the destruction of Tyre. Now they have lost their home port. There will be no market for their ships laden with goods from afar. Tyre has been the marketplace of the nations because her ships would go down to Egypt and trade goods for grain and then trade the grain from Shihor on the Nile to the Mediterranean world. Even the sea speaks concerning Tyre. Egypt will react with anguish having lost a great trading partner. Some will flee as far away as Tarshish for safety. Some will one day come and see the site of the ancient city and hardly believe those ruins are the great Tyre.

✎ **Tyre's Destruction Is By God, 23:8-12**

It is God who has planned to bring down Tyre. He will be the one who takes credit for defiling the glory of this seaport. He will take away its power. The merchant people will lose their merchandising upon the sea and means of support. Tyre is related to both Sidon and Tarshish in this passage. Those who are refugees will flee to Cyprus? However, there too, they will find not refuge.

✎ **Tyre's Destruction and Restoration To Prosperity, 23:13-18**

Tyre is called upon to remember what the Assyrians did to Babylon. They besieged it, plundered its palace, and made it a heap of ruins. This should scare the people of Tyre since Babylon was a much more powerful city and the Assyrians could defeat it. This conflict between the two great powers would end with Babylon the victor. Eventually, Tyre would hold off the Babylonians during a thirteen years siege. Again the ships from Tarshish weep over Tyre's demise.

After a period of time, in this case seventy years, Tyre will be remembered. She is called a harlot and is to play and sing in order to be remembered by her old customers as well as attract the attention of the new ones. She will return one day to her old habits.

In Tyre's future is gifts to the Lord and sufficient food and fine attire given to those who live in the Lord and are set apart to Him. God will use the commerce of Tyre to benefit His people and purposes.

Questions:

1. Who did Sargon send against Ashdod?
2. What was Isaiah to do for three years and of what was it a sign?
3. Who will be ashamed and why?
4. Who is to come up against Babylon?
5. What did the watchmen see?

6. What are the inhabitants of Tema to do and why?
7. What will happen to Kedar in a definite period of time?
8. What has become of their rulers?
9. How will the Jews make preparations to defend Jerusalem?
10. What have they failed to do in preparing their defense?
11. What is the attitude of the people in the Day of the Lord?
12. What was Shebna in charge of?
13. Where will he die?
14. Who will the Lord set up to take Shebna's place?
15. How will he treat the citizens of Jerusalem?
16. Why do the ships of Tarshish wail?

17. How was Tyre the "*market of the nations*"?
18. How will Egypt react to Tyre's destruction?
19. What has God planned to do to Tyre?
20. Will they find refuge in fleeing to Cyprus?
21. What did Assyria do to Babylon?
22. How long will Tyre be forgotten?
23. To what is Tyre compared?
24. Instead of being hoarded up what will become of Tyre's revenues?

Lessons for Application & Discussion:

1. God's people should put their trust in Him only, and not lean upon mere men for help and security.
2. The servants of God sympathize with those who suffer the consequences of sin.
3. Rejoicing is inappropriate if it expresses self-security or failure to rely on God.
4. Men should make plans in the spirit of dependence on God.
5. Good leadership treats others with a father-like attitude.
6. Great wealth and economic strength in the world cannot preclude Divine Judgment.
7. Commerce and business is not meant just for one's personal gain and pleasure, but for the benefit of the world and the Lord.

Judgment Upon the World

Isaiah 24 -27

Having completed a series of burdens against specific nations and an individual, Isaiah brings to bear several prophecies which are more general in nature. They involve judgment upon the world. "These four chapters present a contrast between the true and the false, the lofty (proud) and the holy; the earth and Mt. Zion; peoples and the people; nations and the nation; the cities and the city; lords and the Lord" (Hailey).

The Earth to Be Judged

○ **Earth Made Empty of Men and Joy, 24:1-13**

The earth and its inhabitants are affected by a scattering of people. The judgment is to be so universal all social classes, religious leaders, economic groups, and occupations are included. The emptying of the earth is according to the will of God. The earth, world, and proud are those who fade like a flower. Isaiah gives three reasons why the earth is defiled. First, its residents have broken God's commandments, others have made changes to His Law, and they have failed to keep an everlasting covenant. God will consume the earth and people with fire until only a remnant remains. All reason for joy has ended. The sound of music is heard any more. Not even those who use alcoholic beverages will find pleasure. No one is hospitable. The city is totally bereft of any merrymaking. The residents are compared to the shaking of an olive tree and when the grape harvest has ended the gleanings is all that is left. In other words, people will be few in number.

○ **Earth Over-Weighted by Sin, 24:14-23**

From afar a new day will dawn when men will sing out for the sea. In Judah the dawn came from the direction of the Mediterranean sea. They will sing, "Glory to the righteous!" Isaiah will cry of woes and ruin because of those who dispense wickedness. Apparently this rejoicing has been premature. It is as if God has already dealt with the wicked. No one will be able to escape God's judgment. If he flees from one threat he will only meet another. The wickedness of the transgressors is so great the earth totters back and forth like a drunkard. The world can no longer bear the weight of the sins of its inhabitants. When the time is ripe, judgment upon the proud and high will commence. God will imprison all the wicked for many days. The moon and sun become ashamed when Christ comes to reign in Zion.

Song of Thanksgivings

b **Thanksgiving For Trustworthiness, 25:1-5**

God has faithfully brought to pass all that He has promised. This is why He is worthy of praise. Of course, "*God...cannot lie*" (Tit. 1:2). All the cities which have been doomed in the previous section had not yet received judgment. However, since God always keeps His word whatever He has declared is a good as done. Babylon, Tyre, the cities of Moab, Philistia, Edom, Syria, Israel, and Judah are as if judgment has already occurred. Praise is given to God for doing something which has not yet come to fruition. Both glory and fear come to God because He is the defender of the helpless and needy. Foreigners will be silenced by God's judgments.

b **Thanksgiving for Divine Blessings, 25:6-8**

In Mount Zion, perhaps the church, God will make a feast of the best and choicest of foods. Perhaps this can be compared to the marriage feast in Matthew 22:2-12 or Revelation 19:7-9. At this supper the covering or veil of death will be swallowed up. The good news of the Gospel is Christ's power over death (Heb. 2:14f; 2 Tim. 1:9,10; 1 Cor. 15:24). It could also indicate the end of the darkness of ignorance. The veil is upon the hardened hearts of men against God (2 Cor. 3:14-16).

♭ **Thanksgiving for Salvation, 25:9-12**

They have waited for a day of salvation and rejoice at its coming. Again *"this mountain"* is most likely Mount Zion when the kingdom and salvation will come to the world. First, Moab must be completely destroyed. The Moabites represent the pride of mankind against the Lord. As a swimmer stretches his arms out to swim, so God will judge those who are proud and use *"trickery of their hands."* *"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall"* (Prov. 16:18). God will bring the proud down like the walls of a fort are brought down by the siege machines.

Song of Praise

♪ **Praise For God's Security, 26:1-6**

God is praised in this song for providing a city of great security. The walls are not made of stone but salvation. Those who may enter its open gates are the nation or peoples who have remained faithful to the truth and continue to put their trust in God. The benefits of trusting in God are complete peace. The reason is because of God's everlasting strength. There is never a need for us to worry if God's strength will give out.

In contrast to those who trust in God, are the proud enemies of God who trust in themselves. God knows how to bring them down. God knows how to bring down all those strongholds of men (2 Cor. 10:3-5). He can even do it with those who are low and least likely to be exalted. Indeed, the first shall be last and the last first.

♪ **Praise for God's Justice, 26:7-15**

Lady Justice is often picture with a pair of scales in hand. For just justice to be rendered one must must have accurate scales. God is always just and will be able to rightly assess the righteous path of those who practice uprightness. The righteous have been patiently waiting for God's justice. Good men and women desire God's upright ways. This desire for God begins in the night as they fall asleep and it continues in the morning when they awake. When God's just ways are seen in the world mankind can learn to be righteous. Not everyone will learn righteousness. There are those in the world who are so wicked they practice unrighteousness and never see God as upright.

Those who are not upright will suffer judgment from God. In contrast, the upright will have peace. All of these who have been sinners have been slaves to many masters. Now they call upon the name of God as the master over them. Their former masters are dead and gone and will not be raised back to life. Whereas God is to be remembered, these masters will not be. Even the memory of them will end. This may be in reference to the idols man made to be his master. The end result is the borders of God's kingdom or city will keep on expanding.

♪ **Praise God for Renewed Life, 26:16-27:1**

Hard times and chastening by God will bring some men back to him. All man's efforts to deliver themselves will only accomplish giving birth to wind. All that pain and effort for nothing. This passage is speaking of the spiritual resurrection one experiences from being dead in sin (Rom. 6:2f; Eph. 5:14). The sinners are like those who have died and returned to the dust of the earth and the resurrection from the dead in sin is as if they are cast out of the earth.

However, the time of renewed life has not yet arrived. God's people need to hide for a little longer until God's indignation against the wicked has come to pass. The blood guiltiness will not be covered up. God will come in judgment. The blood of the innocent have always cried out to God for judgment upon the persecutors (2 Kings 24:4; Gen. 4:10; Rev. 16:6).

When the day of spiritual renewal comes God will bring a sword to slay Leviathan. He is here described as the fleeing, twisting serpent, and the dragon of the sea. Whereas Leviathan is mentioned in Job 41 among real creatures created by God here and in Psalm 74:14 and 104:26, he is a symbol of the powers of this wicked world. However, in Revelation Satan is called the red dragon (Rev. 12:7,9). Whatever this monster represents, he must be defeated before the new vineyard can be planted. Perhaps this is an allusion Christ defeating Satan who has the power of death by His resurrection from the dead.

Song of the New Vineyard

♪ God Plants a New Vineyard, 27:2-6

The vineyard of Isaiah 5:1-7 had to be destroyed because it only produced rotten grapes. This time a vineyard will be tended to by the Lord as its husbandman both night and day. He will not be hindered by the briars and thorns. They will be removed or made to repent. Paul is one example of a penitent enemy. As a Pharisee he persecuted Christ until Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus. Paul made peace with God through the strength of reconciliation. A Spiritual Israel will take root in this vineyard and the whole earth will be filled with the fruits of it. All the nations of the earth will be blessed by the seed promise of Abraham.

♪ Destruction of the Old Vineyard, 27:7-11

The prophecy reverts back to the need to first destroy the old vineyard of Jacob. God has sent the sirocco or fierce dry wind against it in moderation. The destruction of the vineyard is akin to the destruction of the idols which must be pulverized like chalk stone and not allowed to stand. The city of Jerusalem must also be cut down since it became a center of idolatry. Even women will come and break off the boughs of the old vine. This speaks to the weakness of the old vineyard. God will not relent nor will those who repented of their idolatry and show no mercy to the idols of their own creation.

♪ Harvesting from the New Vineyard, 27:12,13

Isaiah returns once more to the positive nature of the new vineyard. God will gather the fruits of it from as far as the land of Assyria and the Nile river in Egypt and bring them to worship in Jerusalem. The idea is that of bringing them into the church.

Questions:

1. Why is the earth polluted?
2. According to verses 7 - 9 what will cease?
3. To what are the inhabitants of the earth compared to in verse 24:13?
4. What do those glorifying God sing?
5. Will the inhabitant of the earth be able to escape divine Judgment?
6. Why is the earth compared to a reeling drunkard or a tottering shack?
7. Who will the Lord imprison?
8. Why will the moon be abashed and the sun ashamed?
9. Who has the Lord defended?

10. Where will the Lord prepare a banquet?
11. What will be swallowed up at this banquet?
12. Why had they waited for the Lord?
13. Who will the Lord trodden down?
14. What characteristics of theirs will the Lord destroy?
15. Who may enter into the strong city?
16. Why should they trust in the Lord forever?
17. What is the desire of the righteous' souls?
18. How will the wicked react to the favor shown them?
19. What has become of their former masters?
20. Could their efforts to obtain deliverance accomplish anything?
21. What is the resurrection discussed in 26:19?
22. How long are God's people to hide?
23. What will become of the enemies of the vineyard?

- 24. How fruitful will this new vineyard be?
- 25. What will become of the altars?
- 26. What will happen to the limbs of the old vineyard?
- 27. From where and to where will the outcasts be gathered?

Lessons for Application & Discussion:

- 1. The world will be destroy because of man's transgressions.
- 2. No one can escape the Judgment of God.
- 3. God is faithful in bring about all that He has planned.
- 4. God is a sure place of refuge from all our enemies.
- 5. In His Church God, will remove the veil of ignorance and hardening of heart of the people.
- 6. Through Christ the fear of death has been removed.
- 7. Only those who are righteous, remain faithful, and are steadfast of mind are fit citizens in God's Holy City, 26:2,3.
- 8. Many wicked people are influenced by blessings from God, the example of the upright, or the greatness of God, 26:10.
- 9. In all of man's efforts he is unable to save himself, only God can provide a spiritual resurrection, 26:16-19.
- 10. God's vineyard, the church, will never be destroyed by its enemies, 27:2-5.

11. God's vineyard will be fruitful throughout the world, 27:6.
12. God's Judgments are always commensurate and proportionate to the sins committed, 27:7-11.
13. God invites men to respond to the gospel individually - one by one, 27:12.

Woe to the Drunkards, Jerusalem & Those Who Hide from God

Isaiah 28,29

The fourth section covers chapters twenty-eight through thirty-five of Isaiah. It contains six woes and several promises mix together. Remember a woe is a pronouncement of doom upon those who should expect the coming wrath of God because of sin. Since some of these woes are warnings against the kingdom of Israel, it would be safe to say these prophecies by Isaiah came before Samaria fell to the Assyrians in 722 B.C.

Woe to the Drunkards

↔ **Ephraim's Drunks, 28:1-6**

The pride and crown of Ephraim was the capital of Israel: Samaria. The rich vineyards around it provided an opportunity for its citizens to indulge in strong drink. Yet, God has prepared *"a mighty and strong one."* They are compared to three powerful, devastating, and unstoppable forces of nature: a storm of hail, a tempest of destruction, and a flood. This is an allusion to the coming Assyrian invasion. They will destroy the object of Israel's pride. The first harvest season between May and June is mentioned. Instead of saving the harvest, they eat it. Their hope is in the hoarding up for the winter food from the later harvest. When the siege against them begins they will not be able to harvest anymore.

God promises them a remnant who will be a beautiful crown and a glorious diadem for Him in contrast to Samaria. Hezekiah would turn back the battle of the Assyrians at the very gates of Jerusalem with a prayer. He would go on to rid Israel of many of the remaining idols.

↔ **Judah's Drunken Priests And Prophets, 28:7-13**

Two other groups have also committed transgression through their drunkenness: the priests and prophets of Judah. They reel, stagger, are confused, have visions but not from God, and fill their tables with vomit. These are the physical effects of being intoxicated. However, this is not the only problem with drinking intoxicating wine. They are unable to render their assigned spiritual services to God and His people. Priests are forbidden in the Law from drinking intoxicating beverages (Lev. 10:9). Those in positions of authority are also warned against wine's hindrances to their duties. *"It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes intoxicating drink; lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the justice of all the afflicted"* (Prov. 31:4,5). Serving spiritual drink to satisfy the thirst of God's people is often made bitter by the leaders being intoxicated with wine.

The drunken priests and prophets mock Isaiah as if they are instructing a baby. They mock his prophecies as if he is just rambling on and on. The truth is, if they will not heed the words of Isaiah, they will find themselves stumbling over the words of a foreign tongue. Moses warned of this, *"the Lord will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you will not understand, a nation of fierce countenance, which does not respect the elderly nor show favor to the young"* (Deut. 28:49-50). God will turn their mocking back upon them. For by mocking Isaiah they were mocking God. In the end the consequence will be captivity.

↔ **Judah's Scornful Rulers, 28:14-22**

Although King Hezekiah may have been for the most part a king like David, he was not the only one in position of leadership in Jerusalem. These rulers feel secure in spite of the coming flood and tidal wave of the Assyrian invasion. They have signed an treaty or agreement with them and will not die like the rest of the nations and their leaders. However, they are looking for security among lies.

The only refuge to be found is the one God will lay in Zion. It is a tested stone and costly cornerstone. This is a reference to a Messianic hope fulfilled by the coming of Jesus Christ.

True believers will not make a hasty pact with Assyria. God will be the one who will measure the extent of Assyrian aggression with His justice and righteousness. He will bring the flood waters upon Judah and even drowned them in their hiding places. God, not the rulers, will control the Assyrians. God will annul whatever hopes and treaties they have made. Like a morning and evening tide the Assyrians will sweep over Judah time after time. Their trust in Assyria is like a tall man trying to stretch out on a small bed or a fat man using a narrow blanket on a cold night. It is foolish futility. Two events are mentioned showing God's ability to bring about His acts of destruction upon the wicked. At Gibeon he destroyed the Amosites with great hail stones in the time of Joshua (Josh. 10:10-11). He brought down David's enemies at Perazim (2 Sam. 5:20).

Isaiah's final warning is for the rulers not to be so stubborn. God has spoken and He can bring judgment not only on them as He will but on the whole earth.

↔ **Parable of the Plowman, Sower & Thresher, 28:23-29**

Just as Jesus would call upon His disciples to hear His parables and understand their meaning, Isaiah calls upon them to consider the parable of the plowman who turns the soil, the sower of the seed, and the thresher of the harvest. And as Jesus liked to use stories based upon agriculture, Isaiah asked them about the plowman. He does not just plow and plow. He must also stop and sow the seeds. The seeds sown are that of black cummin, cummin, wheat, barley, and spelt. He knows how to sow them in the correct fashion. The God of all nature has indirectly taught him of this. When harvesting and threshing he uses the proper equipment and in the correct manner. Some grains will be threshed with a cartwheel others with rods or sticks. Still he does this for the correct amount of time. He only uses enough force to harvest his crops not destroy them. God is the plowman, sower, and thresher. He knows when and what instruments to use when meting out judgment upon the wicked. God knows what He is doing.

Woe to Jerusalem

× **Jerusalem Under Distress, 29:1-4**

The next woe is upon Ariel. It means "lion of God." It is a symbolic term used to identify Jerusalem. This is not the city where David was from but the city he lived and reigned. There is time for one more cycle of annual feasts before the Assyrians come and lay siege. The time of festivals will be turn into days of great distress. God through the Assyrians will be encamped against the city. A mound of earth will be piled up against he walls, war machines will be brought against Jerusalem's fortifications. Mediums would use trickery of a low voice to fool their clients. Likewise, the people's voices will be feeble while they suffered from the siege.

× **Jerusalem Delivered from the Multitudes, 29:5-8**

After the woe comes a promise of hope. The enemies of Jerusalem will suddenly blow away like the dust or the chaff. But first God will use the Assyrians to punish them with earthquake, storms, and fire. Yet after the Assyrians are gone it will all seem like they have awoken from a bad dream. He likens the Assyrians hope of victory and plunder like a dream where they eat and drink, yet when they awake their hunger and thirst have not been satisfied at all.

× **Jerusalem's Blind Ignorance, 29:9-14**

The citizens of Jerusalem have blinded themselves to the understanding of God's Will. They stagger like a drunk because of their ignorance. God has brought upon them a deep sleep by removing the seers and prophets. When men reject God's messengers, they reject the Divine message and God. God has nothing left to do but to let them slumber in their own wilful ignorance. As Paul wrote concerning the Romans, "*and even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting*" (Rom. 1:28). It is like they have been given a sealed book to read and cannot for the literate will not read a sealed book and the illiterate cannot read it.

The Lord explains the nature of their spiritual blindness. They may outwardly serve Him yet lack in sense of inward devotion. The problem is not with their eyes or education but with their hearts. They have heard the commandments of God through His servants. God will bring to nothing the wisdom of men,

because they have rejected His Word which brings wisdom.

Woe to Those Who Hide from God, 29:15-24

Instead of seeking God's counsel those of Jerusalem will seek the aid of Egypt against the Assyrians. So while they openly submit to the Assyrian rule, they secretly revolt by sending to Egypt for help. Since God is the one sending the Assyrians, they are trying to hide their plans from not only the king of Assyrian but from the King of kings.

One day things will change. God will bring about the reforesting of Lebanon and the deaf and blind will have spiritual understanding. He will cause the humble and poor to rejoice in Him. Three enemies of a holy God and hindrances to spiritual growth will be removed: the terrible one, the scornful, and those seeking sin. These cause others to stumble in sin, ensnare the one who executes justice for the citizens, and those who use meaningless arguments against the righteous.

God remembers His covenant with Abraham and spares Jacob. God's blessings will cause them to glorify Him. They will repent and regain the ability to discern the will of God.

Questions:

1. To what is the Lord's strong and mighty agent compared?
2. How does strong drink affect them?
3. Who is being mocked in verses 9 and 10?
4. What will be the consequences of this mocking?
5. Why do the rulers feel secure in spite of coming invaders?
6. What will be the true refuge God will place in Zion?
7. What will become of the rulers refuge?
8. What happened at Mt. Perazim and in the valley of Gibeon that is being referred to in verse 21?
9. What is the meaning of the term "Ariel"?
10. What will God bring against Ariel?
11. What will happen to the enemies of Jerusalem?

12. How will they be like a hungry or thirsty man who dreams?
13. Why are they blind and drunk?
14. Will anyone be able to comprehend the meaning of this prophecy?
15. Why is their worship rejected by God?
16. How should the questions in verse 15 be answered?
17. What will happen to the deaf and the blind?
18. What methods do the wicked use against God's people?
19. How will the children of Jacob behave in these days?

Lessons for Application & Discussion:

1. Drinking leads to arrogance, the spoiling of what is beautiful, confusion and poor judgment, 28:1-8.
2. Those who reject and scoff at the Word of the Lord will be punished, 28:9-13.
3. Jesus Christ is the only sure refuge. He is the precious cornerstone that has been tried and tested, 28:14-22.
4. God's Judgments upon his people are adapted to their strength and to their needs, 28:23-29.
5. Those who battle against God's people can only dream of winning the war, 29:7,8.
6. No one is as blind as the man who refuse to see, 29:9-12.
7. God rejects outward religion which is not inwardly felt and/or originates from the traditions of men, 29:13.
8. It is folly to attempt to hide your plans from God, 29:15,16.
9. The wicked are hard at work trying to bring the righteous down to their level, 29:20,21.

Woe to Those Who Trust in Egypt

Isaiah 30 - 32

Woe to Those Who Trust in Egypt, 30:1-17

Judah is rebelling against the Lord, when they turn to Egypt for help. They are behaving like stubborn children who disobey their parents, because they seek their peers' advice over the wisdom of the aged. Again a warning is given not to trust in aid from Egypt in a time of trouble. Any alliance with the Egyptians is certain to fail. Isaiah was told in chapter twenty to go naked for three years to show what will become of Egyptians and Ethiopians as they are led away captive by the Assyrians. They would go to the cities of Zoan and Hanes. Of the people of Philistia, Judah, Edom, and Moab, an inscription of Sennacherib says, "They and their evil chiefs, to fight against me, unto Pharaoh, King of Egypt, a monarch who could not save them, their presents carried, and besought his alliance" (Rawlinson).

When the coastal route was cut off through Palestine in time of war. The camel caravans of trade had to cross over dangerous barren lands to the south of Judah to reach Egypt. Because Egyptian help is so useless, God has called Egypt Rahab-Hem-Shebeth meaning a storm or arrogance.

Isaiah was to write all this down for generation to come to read and witness what God has said will forever be true. He makes three charges against Judah: they are rebellious, untruthful, and will not listen to Him. They do not want the seers to see. They ask the prophets to stop speaking the truth and tell them what they want to hear: lies. They do not want anyone standing in the way of that they want to do. They do not want to hear anymore about the "*Holy One of Israel*."

Because they have resorted to trusting in Egypt and not the word of the Lord, they will be punished by their own sins. The wickedness they are doing will be like a bulge in at the top of a tall wall which can give way at any moment. The second comparison is that of a piece of pottery that is shattered into such small pieces, one cannot find a shard of it large enough to retrieve a coal of fire or even a little water from the well. Notice how Isaiah loves to mix his metaphors.

If they had only trusted in the Lord, they would have found salvation. Those of Judah may trust in swift horses upon which to flee to Egypt, but the Assyrians had swifter horses by which to overtake them. They may flee even in greater numbers than their pursuers but in the end only one will be left.

Promise of God's Loving-Kindness, 30:18-26

God has been waiting to show His people mercy because He is also a God of justice. With God mercy is always a part of His justice. Sin must be justly punished. Never does a holy and just God overlook sin. He is waiting, therefore we must wait on Him.

Next, God speaks of a coming time when His children will dwell in Zion. At this time they will not weep, because he as shown loving-kindness is response to their cries and has answered their prayers. God has fed them with times of punishment, so they will be open to being fed by their teachers the truth and commandments of God. When they have sinned they have forced the teachers of God's Word into a corner out of sight. Now they are looking to them for instruction. These teachers will instruct them on which way they should walk and not let them deviate from the path. "*Therefore you shall be careful to do as the Lord your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left*" (Deut. 5:32). "*Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: Remove they foot from evil*" (Pr. 4:27).

In turning to God for mercy and to their teachers for instruction, they will be motivated to turn away from their idols. They will get their teachers in their sights, and tell their idols to get out of their sight. This is done by defiling them and scattering them. As Moses had broken the golden calf in pieces and scattered in the people drinking water.

The blessings which follow are of a physical and agricultural nature. They will receive only the best God can provide. While the wicked are brought down by God, the righteous are exalted. The light of the moon will be as bright as the sun. While the sun will be seven times as bright. These blessings are perhaps spiritual blessings found in Christ.

Fiery Indignation Against the Nation of Assyria, 30:27-33

God will come with loving-kindness to His people who have been justly punished. Now He comes with righteous indignation upon Assyria. His lips, tongue, and breath sound out His anger. His wrath is shown through sending upon them a flood, sieve, and bridle. The flood to overwhelm them, a sieve to put them through the strainer, and a bridle used to force them in a particular direction. All this leads to their destruction.

Meanwhile, the godly will have a song to sing as the voice of God continues to sound forth against Assyria. His arm will bring anger, consuming fire, scattering, a storm with hail, and a rod to chastise them. This rod would be the Babylonians. Every time God punishes Assyria, it will be a moment of rejoicing among the nations. God illustrates the end by the mention of Topheth in the Valley of Hinnom, where the children had gone out of Jerusalem and caused their children to pass through fire in sacrifice to the god Molech (2 Kings 23:10). God will make them pass through the fires in like manner. This valley was later a dump and a place to cast the bodies of criminals and enemies to be burned and not buried. Perhaps when the 185,000 Assyrian soldiers died by the hand of the Lord, their bodies were so disposed of at this location.

Woe to Those Who Trust in Military Might

✧ Trust God's Help, Egypt of No Help, 31:1-3

Not only did Judah want the aid of Egypt to fight along side of them against the Assyrians, they hoped to arm themselves with the Egyptian's weapons of warfare: horses, chariots, and horsemen. The Egyptian Pharaoh Sesostrius had some 27,000 chariots in his arsenal. This attempt would not save them from the Assyrians, only God should be sought to aid them (2 Kings 18:21,24).

The evildoers are those who seek aid from Egypt and not God. They will suffer for this. God will be against not only them but also their help. A couple of reasons are given as to why they must look to God in time of need and not Egypt. The Egyptians are mere men with fleshly weapons. God is spirit and is not mortal. He will bring down both the helper and the helped. *"Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help"* (Ps. 146:3).

✧ God to Deliver Jerusalem out of the Mouth of Assyria, 31:4,5

This next paragraph also speaks of God's deliverance of Zion from the Assyrians. First, God will be like a lion or young lion who is devouring its prey. It is hard to take prey from the mouth of a lion. God is an army of shepherds in protecting the flock in Jerusalem. This is added here to give them comfort. He is powerful enough to snatch Jerusalem away from the lion-like jaws of Assyria. God will also be like a mother bird which protects her young. In all this God will deliver, pass over, and preserve Jerusalem.

✧ Call to Reject Idols and Return to God, 31:6,7

When Judah revolted against God by turn to idols and Egypt for help He sent the Assyrians. When they threw their idols away and turned back to him, He removed the Assyrians.

✧ God's Sword Falls Upon Assyria, 31:8,9

God's weapons are not carnal, yet they are still more powerful. Assyria will feel the devouring edge of that sword in one night when 185,000 fall. Their young men will become forced laborers and their princes will become terrified at the very sight of the enemy's standard. Their attack on Jerusalem would turn into a furnace when the fire of God's wrath devours them.

The Promise of a Time of Righteousness

❖ The Reign of Righteousness, 32:1-8

Isaiah now delivers promises which will be fulfilled in the Messianic kingdom. Both Hezekiah and Josiah will act as righteous rulers. But the ultimate example and promise is fulfilled in Christ. When Christ

reigns as a righteous King, the saints will serve as a royal priesthood and reign with Christ upon the earth (1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 4:10).

These righteous men will serve as a shelter from the wind and storm, a provision of refreshing water in a desert, and a shade and protect from the elements in the wilderness. As a result of the righteous reign blindness, deafness, stammering of the tongue, ignorance and foolishness will cease. The opposite type of man is described. These will not make up the kingdom. The reasons are: their weapons are evil; they devise schemes; and they neglect the needy.

❖ **Trouble from Apathetic Women, 32:9-15**

Homer Hailey aptly described the style and structure of this section of Isaiah, “the prophecy has the usual three stages: Sin in the present, judgment in the immediate future, and a state of blessedness in the latter days.” The women of Judah are to rise up, listen, and understand. In little over a year they will be troubled, because they have been confident to the point of becoming careless and unconcerned. The trouble coming is because they have neglected the vineyard so that it bears not harvest. They are to change out of their fine clothing and gird themselves is the sackcloth of one in mourning. The women will beat upon their breast, because there is no fruit from the vineyard. The Assyrians are the one who have laid waste to the countryside and led away 200,000 captives, so that the land and cities are left deserted. They animals will move into the abandoned structures and take up residence. The land will remain desolate until the Spirit from the Lord is poured out upon the people. Perhaps this is in allusion to the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1f) or the general Messianic promises give to Israel.

❖ **Righteousness Brings With It Peace, 32:16-20**

Righteousness and justice will spring forth in harvest throughout the land. As a result peace will prevail with eternal quietness and assurance. Injustices and wickedness bring war and conflicted. Even when God destroys the wicked forest of Assyrian even when the city of Jerusalem is brought low during the siege, the fruits of righteousness will be harvested by those who sow the seeds freely.

Questions:

1. Why did they go down to Egypt?
2. Will they be profited by this trip to Egypt?
3. What will God call Egypt” Why?
4. What do the rebellious people ask of the prophets?
5. Where could they have found salvation? But in what did they trust?
6. Why has God been waiting to show mercy?

7. What will they do to their idols?
8. How bright will the moon and sun be?
9. What will terrify Assyria?
10. What and where is Topheth?
11. What will become of the king?
12. Why do they go down to Egypt?
13. Why is God a great source of help in contrast to the Egyptians and their horses?
14. To what is the Lord compared to in verse 4 and again in verse 5? Why?
15. When will they cast away their idols?
16. What will become of Assyria's young men and princes?
17. What will cease during this reign of righteousness?
18. How is the rogue (churl or schemer) contrasted with the man in verse 8?
19. What three commands does Isaiah give to the women in verse 9?
20. Why should they be troubled?

21. How long will the land be desolate?
22. What will be the fruit of righteousness?
23. What do the people do at the down fall of the city and forest?

Lessons for Application & Discussion:

1. Those who fail to check with God concerning their problems of life will find only humiliation and shame elsewhere, 30:1-5.
2. Rebellion against God is seen through man's rejection of His Word, for the soothing words of false teachers, 30:9-11.
3. God wants to show mercy, but He must also demonstrate justice, 30:18.
4. God can guide us in the way we should walk, so we can find the blessings from Him, 30:20-26.
5. In Judgment, when God speaks with authority all the wicked will be terrified, 30:30-33.
6. Man should learn not to put his trust in materialism and human wisdom, but in the power and wisdom of God. 31:1-3.
7. God's indignation cannot be turned back nor can His protection be removed, 31:4,5.
8. Inherent in repentance is the rejection of our former trusts, masters, and sins. 31:6,7
9. The Messiah's reign will provide a sure refuge, 32:1,2.
10. During the Messiah's reign there will be a spiritual enlightenment and moral discernment, 32:3-8.
11. Women need to be roused from self-complacency and self-satisfaction in critical times, 32:9-12.
12. Peace, quietness and rest is found in the performance of righteousness, 32:16-20.

Woe to the Assyrians & Edom

Isaiah 33 - 35

Woe to the Assyrians

✓ **The Plunderer to be Plundered, 33:1-6**

Jerusalem was plundered when Hezekiah gave over thirty talents of gold and three hundred talents of silver to the Assyrian King Sennacherib as tribute. As soon as God is through with Assyria as a instrument of destruction upon Judah, it will be destroyed. Although no one provoked Assyrian aggression by plundering and hurting them, God will see to it they will be treated the way they treated others. In fact, Sennacherib would be killed by his own son (37:38).

Isaiah suddenly interjects a prayer to God by those who have patiently waited for Him to save them. Their hope is in God turning back the multitude of the Assyrian army and scattering them. The Jews will be like a caterpillar or locusts devouring the plunder, when the army is scattered. After the destruction of 185,000 Assyrian soldiers, all the spoils they took from the cities and nations around Jerusalem will be left behind. However, the real wealth and spoil of this defeat will be the filling of Zion with justice, righteousness, wisdom, knowledge, salvation and the fear of the Lord.

✓ **Broken Covenant, 33:7-16**

Isaiah's prophecy goes back in time to just before the siege. Ambassadors seeking peace with Assyria weep because King Sennacherib has broken the covenant. He will pay not regard to any man or city. No one is able to travel freely in their land, because the Assyrians are invading. Assyria will come against Lebanon, Sharon, Bashan, and Carmel.

God has risen up and perform His will by using Assyrian aggression against Judah. Now He will come against Assyria as it besieges Jerusalem. The Assyrians plan to take Jerusalem, but their plans give birth to chaff and the threats they have breathed out against Zion will return upon them like a devouring fire. After the thorns are burned nothing is left but a white power of ashes. So will the Assyrian army become like lime.

God calls the citizens of Zion to pay attention to what He has done with the Assyrians and be afraid, because they have sinned against Him. They are terrified and trembling when they realize God is a consuming fire (Deut 4:24). All those who will dwell in a secure Zion will be those who walk upright, talk right, reject ill gotten gain, reject bribes, do not delight in the hearing of violence; and do not enjoy evil. God will give him protection and provisions.

✓ **Secure City, Plundered Camp, 33:17-24**

The prophecy turns now to a distant place and time when the Messianic King will rule. Those Assyrians who wrote, weighed, and watched the towers are all gone. What the people of God will see is the majesty of the King and His Kingdom. They will no longer see the fierceness and hear the language of the Assyrians. Instead they will experience the feasts God has appointed and Jerusalem which is no longer under siege. "The river of God's grace, shall bear no enemy on its surface, allow no invader to cross it" (Rawlinson). The Savior of the people will be their Judge, Lawgiver, and King. This could only be a reference to Christ (Heb. 8:6; 12:24; Jn. 5:22; Rev. 17:14).

The Assyrians on the other hand will not be able to get away from the destruction. They will be caught by the coming storm. There will be so much spoils of war left behind in their camp around Jerusalem that even the slow moving lame will partake in the plundering. Again, those who plunder will recover quickly from the consequences of being in a besieged Jerusalem, but spiritually speaking they will be healed of their iniquity.

Divine Indignation Upon the Nations, 34:1-4

All nations are called upon to listen to what the Lord has to say about what He will do to the nations. He has willed and it is as good as done concerning the fall of the nations and their armies when they are destroyed by His wrath. The valleys will be filled with the stench of death and the mountain drenched in their blood. Often the bodies the soldiers of the defeated nation could lie rotting on the ancient battlefield. The great armies of the nations will be dissolved, and rolled up like scroll or dropped like dead leaves from a vine or figs from a tree.

Divine Judgment Against Edom

■ **Lord's Sword Upon Edom, 34:5-7**

God will take His sword and take sacrifices to appease His wrath and satisfy the demands of justice by destroying Edom. Bozrah was the chief city of Edom. It was considered so heavily fortified that no force could take it. No matter how strong, it will fall by the sword of the Lord.

■ **Complete Desolation Of Edom, 34:8-15**

The day of vengeance upon Edom will come when Zion is recompensed. Edom was located near the ancient site of the destroyed cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Isaiah uses the brimstone and pitch set ablaze to illustrate God's coming in judgment upon them, as He had upon the cities of the plain. The destruction of Edom will be forever. Edom to this day is no more. It is a wilderness for wild animals to inhabit. In verse fourteen it mentions the night creature which is *lilith* in the Hebrew. Also it is the name of a female demon or the mythical first wife of Adam who liked to murder her children. Isaiah so describes the new residents of Edom as a place no one really wants to choose to settle down in and raise a family.

■ **Surety Of This Prophecy Against Edom, 34:16,17**

The prophecy concerning Edom's desolation will last forever. God has said this is what will become of the land of Edom and for nearly two thousand years this has been so and will continue to be so.

God's Glorious Garden

• **Rejoicing In a Renewed Land, 35:1-4**

In contrast to the desolation of Edom Isaiah looks to the abundance and beauty of the future glorious Zion. The future excellence of the land is compared to Lebanon, Carmel and Sharon. These are previous places mentioned in being destroyed by the Assyrians. There is a harvest and abundance of all fruits, flowers, and forests. The weak, feeble, and faint-hearted are to be encouraged because God has come with vengeance, and recompense upon His enemies. But He will save them. He mentions another trio of things: hands, knees and heart.

• **Cause For The Rejoicing, 35:5-7**

A multitude of maladies will be healed at this time, such as, the blind, deaf, lame, and dumb. Jesus said to the disciples of John the Baptist concerning Himself: *"Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them"* (Matt. 11:4-5). In a spiritual sense this would be a time when the spiritually blind and deaf would see and hear to the point their tongues would be loosed to confess and praise God. The wilderness would be turned into a land of water with streams and pools (see Jn. 4:14; 7:37,38).

• **Highway of Holiness, 35:8-10**

Through or perhaps to this land God will make a Highway of Holiness. This is an illustration which Isaiah has used before (11:16;19:23,24). Jesus mentioned being the Way (Jn. 14:6) and telling His disciples to follow the narrow path to eternal life (Matt. 7:13,14). Those who will not travel this highway are the unclean, fools, or lions and any vicious beast. Those who will travel upon this road are the redeemed and the ransomed.

Questions:

1. When will the Destroyer be destroyed?
2. Who is compared to caterpillars and locusts?
3. What are the treasures from the Lord?
4. To what have the Assyrians given birth?
5. How do the sinners in Zion react to God's show of might against Assyria?
6. Who will dwell in security as a result of God's show of might?
7. Who will they no longer see?
8. What three offices does the Lord hold in Zion?
9. How much plunder will there be?
10. Who is called upon to listen to the Lord?
11. How great will be the bloodshed?
12. Where is Bozrah located?
13. Why will the Lord have a day of vengeance?
14. How long will the land smoke and burn?

15. What will become of Edom's cities?
16. How long will the wild animals possess Edom?
17. What will its glory be compared to?
18. Why are the weak or fearful to be encouraged?
19. Who will be healed?
20. What will the desert wilderness be turned into?
21. What will this highway be called?
22. Who will not travel on this highway?
23. Who will travel this roadway?

Lessons for Application & Discussion:

1. Trusting in God to deal with the enemy will result in our reaping of many treasures from the Lord, 33:1-6.
2. At the right time the Lord will rise up and bring the schemes of the wicked to nought, 33: 7-12.
3. God's judgments upon the wicked should cause all to acknowledge His might, warn the sinners, and give security to the righteous, 33:13-16.
4. Christ is our Judge, Lawgiver, and King, 33:21.
5. Under the majestic King's reign there will be spiritual security and health and forgiveness, 33:17 - 24.

6. On Judgment Day all the nations will be gathered for judgment, 34:1-4.
7. God has an appointment with the wicked to deal out retribution, 34: 5-8.
8. The place God has assigned for the wicked will forever burn and be inhabited by terrible "creatures", 34:9-15.
9. The fulfillment of prophecy is certain, God will see to its fulfillment down to the very last detail, 34:16,17.
10. The Way to rejoicing, 35:1,2,10.
11. The Way leads to spiritual strengthening, 35:3,4.
12. The Way to spiritual healing, 35:5.
13. The Way to the water of life, 35:6,7.
14. The Way to Holiness not traveled by the immoral, 35:8,9.
15. The Way of the redeemed returning to God, 35:10.

Bibliography

- Hailey, Homer; A Commentary on Isaiah with Emphasis on the Messianic Hope, Baker Book House 1985
- Kidner, Derek; The New Bible Commentary: Revised, Eerdmans, 1970
- McGuiggan, Jim; The Book of Isaiah, Star Bible Publications Inc. 1985
- Rawlinson, G., Pulpit Commentary, Isaiah, MacDonald Pub. Co.
- Shackelford, Don, Truth for Today Commentary: Isaiah, Resource Publications, 2005
- Wight, Fred H., Manners and Customs of Bible Lands, Moody Press, 1953.
- Zerr, E. M., Zerr Commentary on the Bible