

# Verse-by-Verse Studies of Selected Eschatological Prophecies from the Book of Isaiah

Most of These Prophecies Deal with God's Salvation Plans

For the Remnants of Israel and of the Nations After His End-Time

Judgment of the World

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The original paper has been modified in several minor ways to yield this internet version.

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## INTRODUCTION

I consider it a great privilege to be able to study the Bible, very much including the book of Isaiah. There is a reason that Isaiah is sometimes called the “Prince of the Prophets.” The prophecies of Isaiah are full of important revelation. The prophecies regarding the Lord Jesus Christ, by themselves, and there are many of them, would suffice to make this a very significant book of the Bible. For one thing, the prophecies regarding Christ that have already been fulfilled suffice to confirm that the Bible is a very special book, a unique book, the Word of God. Also, there are significant prophecies in the book of Isaiah that don’t directly deal with Christ that have already been fulfilled (cf., e.g., Isa. 44:28-45:7; 36:1-39:8).

The book of Isaiah deals a lot with eschatology (the study of the last things; for example, end-time judgment, resurrection, and glorification), and every passage we will study in this paper deals to a substantial extent with eschatology. The book of Isaiah deals extensively with mankind’s one great problem, the sin problem, including God’s ultimate solution to the sin problem in the unbelievable sacrifice of His Son, the Messiah (see Isaiah 52:13-53:12<sup>1</sup>). It speaks of the ultimate glorification of God’s people (the elect of true Israel and the elect of the nations) and the glorification of His creation through the Lord Jesus Christ, but it also speaks of His end-time judgment of the world through Him. Almost every prophecy that we will study in this paper includes God’s end-time judgment of the world.

In my eschatological paper dated November 1998, I dealt rather extensively with the important, but controversial, topic of God’s salvation plans for the nations (the nations being distinct from true Israel<sup>2</sup>). There is rather widespread agreement (but many Christians disagree) that God will leave a remnant of the nations after His end-time judgment of the world to enter the millennial kingdom.<sup>3</sup> In that paper I also opted for the viewpoint (without being dogmatic) that the names of some of the peoples of the nations that are resurrected at the end of the millennial kingdom to be judged at the great-white-throne judgment (Rev. 20:5, 11-15) will be found in the book of life. (I’m not speaking of people that have knowingly and willfully rejected the gospel.) In other words, they are elect of God for salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Rev. 21:27). They will have a place in God’s glorified new earth in the eternal state as part of the nations (see Rev. 21:2-4; 21:24-22:3).<sup>4</sup> True Israel will reign with the Lord Jesus Christ, which undoubtedly

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<sup>1</sup> Many key verses from this very important passage are discussed in *Holiness and Victory Over Sin*.

<sup>2</sup> True Israel embraces all the believers from Old Testament days (back to the time of the creation of man) and all true Christians (whether from Jewish or Gentile backgrounds).

<sup>3</sup> A large numbers of prophecies in the Old Testament, including many of the prophecies of Isaiah that we will study in this paper, demonstrate this point (see section 1 of the Appendix of my paper dated November 1998), but most such prophecies don’t differentiate between the millennial kingdom and the eternal state that will follow the millennial kingdom. The New Testament doesn’t have much to say regarding God’s salvation plans for the nations (Matt. 25:31-46 being one important exception) until we get to the last book, the book of Revelation. That book, which is so very important for the study of eschatology, makes it clear that God will leave a remnant of the nations (again, the nations being distinct from true Israel) after His end-time judgment of the world to enter the millennial kingdom (especially see Rev. 15:3, 4; 20:1-10). It also makes it clear that there will be a millennial kingdom before the eternal state with its new heaven, new earth, and new Jerusalem that are pictured in Revelation chapters 21, 22.

<sup>4</sup> Revelation chapters 20-22 are discussed in a verse-by-verse manner in my paper dated November 1998. Those discussions are included on the internet.

includes reigning over the nations, throughout the millennial kingdom (e.g., Rev. 20:4, 6) and in the eternal state (e.g., Rev. 22:3-5).

In the November 1998 paper (in sections 1 and 2 of the Appendix), I leaned rather heavily on some of the prophecies of Isaiah, but I didn't discuss those prophecies in much detail; some of them I just listed. One primary purpose for this present paper is to take a more detailed look at some of those prophecies. The book of Isaiah is literally packed with important eschatological prophecies. Many of the prophecies center in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah. I'm not attempting to discuss all the eschatological prophecies of the book of Isaiah in this present paper, but we will study some of the most important prophecies that deal with God's salvation plans for the nations. Having studied these prophecies in more detail in this paper, I still believe (without being dogmatic) that what I said in the November 1998 paper is correct, as far as it goes; but I don't believe we have all the answers yet on this rather important topic, or the fully balanced truth. We don't really need to have all the answers on this topic; God will take care of the details.

The most important section of Isaiah regarding God's salvation plans for the nations (especially regarding His apparent plans to ultimately save some of the peoples of the nations; peoples that lived on the earth throughout the history of mankind; peoples that were not, and never will become, part of God's true Israel<sup>5</sup>) is chapters 24-27, which is often referred to as "Isaiah's Apocalypse." I suppose it could be said that these chapters of Isaiah are at the heart of this paper, but the other passages included in this paper include very much important eschatological information relevant to the topic of God's salvation plans for the nations (and relevant to other important eschatological topics), and they help interpret Isaiah chapters 24-27. For one thing, there is widespread agreement that Isaiah chapters 24-27 build on chapters 13-23. I have included at least most of the relevant portions of chapter 13-23 in this paper. Also, the content of Isaiah chapters 24-27 is closely related to most of the content of the other passages dealt with in this paper.

This paper is not at all limited to the topic of God's salvation plans for the nations. In these verse-by-verse studies, we will deal with many other eschatological topics, especially God's salvation plans for true Israel. And we will study some of the most important Old Testament prophecies regarding the Person of the Son of God, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. (See Isaiah 9:1-7; chapter 11; 15:9; 16:5; chapter 42; chapter 49; and 59:19-21 [Some other verses are listed under Isa. 59:21].)

Even though I deal with quite a few important eschatological passages from the book of Isaiah in this paper, the book of Isaiah is so filled with such passages that I didn't begin to cover all such passages – I didn't even cover half of them. Some of the passages I'm skipping in this paper are discussed to some extent in the November 1998 paper. Also, other key passages from Isaiah are discussed in my two books.<sup>6</sup>

Unless otherwise noted all quotations from the Bible were taken from the NASB (1995 edition).

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<sup>5</sup> I'm speaking of the elect among those that will be resurrected to stand before God at the great-white-throne judgment that will have their names found in the Lamb's book of life, assuming that there are such people. The majority view among evangelical Christians is that none of the people resurrected to be judged at the great-white-throne judgment will have their names found in the book of life, but the trend is changing.

<sup>6</sup> See the listing of the passages of Scripture discussed at the front of the books, *Mid-Week Rapture and Holiness and Victory Over Sin*.

May God's good will be accomplished through this paper and His people be edified! All glory to God, the triune God!

## ISAIAH CHAPTER 2

**The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.** [This heading apparently covers chapters 2-4 of the book of Isaiah. As we will see, Isaiah chapter 2 prophesies concerning far more than Judah/Israel and Jerusalem. In this chapter we see God's end-time judgment of the world. A primary point made in this significant prophecy is that the humbled, repentant remnant of the nations (the nations being distinct from true Israel) that are left after this judgment will turn to God, whose kingdom on the earth will be centered at Jerusalem (see Isa. 2:2-4). The humbled, repentant end-time remnant of Judah/Israel will have already turned to God and submitted to the Lord Jesus Christ. When the end-time remnant of Israel/Judah become Christians, they will be grafted into the tree of God's true Israel (cf. Rom. 11:23-27).<sup>7</sup> By the beginning of the millennial kingdom, Jerusalem (along with all the members of God's true Israel of all generations) will have been glorified.<sup>8</sup> All the members of true Israel will be reigning with Christ throughout the millennium, and forever.

If we were limited to the information contained in Isaiah chapter 2, we wouldn't speak of the millennial kingdom; we would speak of God's eternal kingdom that begins after His end-time judgment of the world. This same truth applies to many other prophecies by Isaiah and by other prophets. But there are several Old Testament prophecies that fit the idea that there will be an intermediate kingdom (or a preliminary stage of the eternal kingdom) before we reach the eternal kingdom/state (e.g., Isa. 65:20-22; Dan. 7:12), and Revelation chapters 20-22 show that there will be an intermediate kingdom followed by the great-white-throne judgment before we get to the eternal state, which is pictured in Revelation chapters 21, 22. Revelation chapter 20 is the only passage in the Bible that mentions that the intermediate kingdom will last for a thousand years.)] **(2) [See Mic. 4:1-3.] Now it will come about that In the last days The mountain of the house of the LORD Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it.** [Much of the book of Isaiah is poetry in the Hebrew, including all of chapter 2, except for the first verse. The format of the NASB shows that it is poetry by printing each line separately, with each line beginning with a capital letter. With the format I'm using in this paper, I'm not able to print each line separately, but I do retain the capital letters that the NASB uses at the beginning of each line. There are six lines here in verse 2, starting with the words "Now," "In," "The," "Will," "And," and "And."

After God's end-time judgment of the world, the humbled, repentant remnant of the nations will turn to God. The "house of the LORD" refers to the temple at Jerusalem, which was the center of worship for Israel in Isaiah's day. Many Christians believe that there will be a literal temple in Jerusalem in the millennial kingdom. Some prophecies

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<sup>7</sup> *True Israel* embraces all true believers from Old Testament days (who will, I believe, be resurrected and glorified at the time of Christ's mid-week return) and all true Christians (including those converted in time to be taken in the mid-week rapture and those converted after the rapture).

<sup>8</sup> I'm not suggesting that the glory of Jerusalem during the millennial kingdom will be comparable with the glory of new Jerusalem as it will exist in the eternal state (as it is pictured in Revelation chapters 21, 22). For a discussion regarding the reign of true Israel and the time this reign will begin, see under Rev. 20:4 in my eschatological paper dated November 1998 (pages 63, 64). Under Rev. 20:2-6 in that paper, I discussed God's salvation plans for the nations (pages 61-67).

could certainly be understood in that literal sense (including the verse we are discussing and Ezekiel chapters 40-48), but I tend to doubt that there will be a literal temple at that time. Revelation 21:22 shows that there won't be a temple in new Jerusalem in the eternal state that follows the millennium. God Himself (including God the Son) will be the temple. Isaiah (and Ezekiel in chapter 40-48) was apparently speaking of worshiping God in terms that would be appropriate under the old-covenant and would be understood. Even if there is a literal temple during the millennial kingdom, I feel confident that there won't be any literal sacrifices offered in it (including what some call memorial sacrifices). All such sacrifices have been rendered obsolete by the One Sacrifice on Mount Calvary.

It's true, of course, that a temple will be built in the last days at Jerusalem and that sacrifices will be offered in it (the temple will at least be rebuilt to some extent, if not fully rebuilt), but I don't believe that that temple will have any role in the millennial kingdom. We can see the rebuilt temple in Dan. 8:11-14; 9:27; 12:11; Matt. 24:15; 2 Thess. 2:4; and Rev. 11:1, 2. The temple must be there for Antichrist to enter and to stop the sacrifices at the abomination of desolation. Isaiah 66:1-8 are quite relevant regarding the rebuilding of the temple in the last days.<sup>9</sup>

All that some Bible commentators see here in Isa. 2:2-4 is Gentiles coming to spiritual Jerusalem/Zion during this present age as they become Christians. I might be able to leave some room for that viewpoint as a secondary interpretation, but it seems clear to me that these verses speak of the nations coming to God *after His end-time judgment of the world*, which is a very common prophetic theme, as this paper demonstrates. See section 1 of the Appendix in my paper dated November 1998. The heading there is "Some Passages that Demonstrate that God Will Leave Many People from the Nations After His End-time Judgment (at the end of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week); this remnant of the nations will enter the millennial kingdom, and they (at least many of them) will be converted. Ultimately the nations will have a place in God's eternal kingdom (which starts after the millennium)." As I understand the Scriptures, the converted remnant of the nations will always be distinct from true Israel, which will be reigning with Christ throughout the millennium, and then throughout eternity. For one thing, true Israel will be reigning over the nations.] **(3) And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths." For the law will go forth from Zion And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. (4) ["In its attempt to foster peace among nations, the United Nations uses verse 4 as a motto. From a different perspective, Israel sometimes displays part of verse 3 in front of the sacred Western Wall in Jerusalem: 'The Law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.' Both dreams will be fully realized only during the millennial rule of Christ."<sup>10</sup>] **And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples** [Compare Isa. 11:1-10; 51:4, 5. It will prove to be a great blessing for the "many peoples" (the remnant of "the nations" that will be left alive on the earth when God's end-time judgment is over, at the end of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week) when they submit to God and His reign.<sup>11</sup>]; **And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against****

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<sup>9</sup> These verses are discussed in chapter 16 of *Mid-Week Rapture*.

<sup>10</sup> Herbert M. Wolf, *Interpreting Isaiah* (Zondervan, 1985), page 77.

<sup>11</sup> God's end-time judgments will not be totally finished until after the great-white-throne judgment at the end of the millennium.

**nation, And never again will they learn war.** [Compare Zech. 9:10. Based on the subsequent, much fuller revelation contained in the book of Revelation, we know that this prophecy regarding no more war won't come to pass in the full and final sense until after the millennial kingdom. (See Rev. 20:7-10; Ezekiel chapters 38, 39.) Many details regarding God's ultimate plans are revealed in more detail as time moves on, from prophet to prophet; His revelation is progressive.] **(5) Come, house of Jacob, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.** [God's people of all generations are exhorted to be faithful to Him and His Word. He always takes care of those that do stay faithful to Him (cf., e.g., Isa. 3:10), and they will have an exalted place (even a place of reigning with Him) in His eternal kingdom.] **(6) For You have abandoned Your people, the house of Jacob, because they are filled with influences from the east, And they are soothsayers like the Philistines** [cf. 2 Kings 1:2; 1 Sam. 6:2], **And they strike bargains with the children of foreigners. (7) Their land has also been filled with silver and gold And there is no end to their treasures; Their land has also been filled with horses And there is no end to their chariots. (8) Their land has also been filled with idols; They worship the work of their hands, That which their fingers have made.** [Isaiah 2:6-8 speak of sins that were common in Israel in the days of Isaiah. They learned many of these sins from the nations/Gentiles. Verse 7 demonstrates that financial prosperity doesn't prove that things are right with God (cf., e.g., Rev. 3:17, 18).] **(9) So the common man has been humbled And the man of importance has been abased, But do not forgive them.** [I'll give the translation of the NIV for this verse and comment on that translation because I believe it better communicates what was intended. (The Hebrew verbs are not easy to translate here.) "So man will be brought low and mankind humbled—do not forgive them." With this translation, the verbs look to the still future, end-time, worldwide judgment spoken of verses 10-22. One reason that God cannot just forgive them is that (the remnants of) Israel and the nations won't be ready to repent until after very intense judgment and the other things that God will do in His end-time judgment of the world to help wake up the remnant of man/mankind (for example, the rapture).] **(10) Enter the rock and hide in the dust From the terror of the LORD and from the splendor of His majesty.** [Cf. Isa. 2:19, 21; Rev. 6:15-17.] **(11) The proud look of man will be abased And the loftiness of man will be humbled, And the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.** [Compare Isa. 2:11-22; 13:11; 23:9; and 24:13-16a. The humbling of man is a big part of what God's end-time judgment of the world is meant to accomplish. Many (those who are unrepentant) will be removed by judgment, but many will be humbled through judgment (and other things like the rapture), and they will repent and submit to God. This includes the conversion of the end-time remnant of Israel (they won't become Christians until after the rapture) and the remnant of the nations. (God's end-time judgment will also fall on Christians to the extent they are living in sin.) There will be no room for pride in God's eternal kingdom; God (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit) alone will be exalted and worshipped.] **(12) For the LORD of hosts will have a day of reckoning Against everyone who is proud And lofty and against everyone who is lifted up, That he may be abased.** [Cf., e.g., Isa. 24:4.] **(13) And it will be against all the cedars of Lebanon that are lofty and lifted up, Against all the oaks of Bashan** [The "cedars of Lebanon" and the "oaks of Bashan" are used here as symbols of that which is lofty and proud (cf. Isa. 14:8; 37:24; Ezek. 31:3; and Zech. 11:1, 2).], **(14) Against all the lofty mountains, Against all the hills that are lifted up, (15) Against every high tower, Against every**

**fortified wall** [cf., e.g., Isa. 25:12], **(16) Against all the ships of Tarshish** [“...the largest known ships, capable of the greatest voyages. Such ships demonstrated human triumph over environmental forces and human enterprise creating commercial empires (Ezek. 28:2-5).”<sup>12</sup>] **And against all the beautiful craft. (17) The pride of man will be humbled And the loftiness of men will be abased; And the LORD alone will be exalted in that day, (18) But the idols will completely vanish. (19) Men will go into caves of the rocks And into holes of the ground Before the terror of the LORD And the splendor of His majesty, When He arises to make the earth tremble.** [Cf. Isa. 2:10, 21; 13:13; 24:1, 19, 20; Hag. 2:6, 7; Heb. 12:26-28; Rev. 6:12-17; and 16:18-20.] **(20) In that day men will cast away to the moles and the bats Their idols of silver and their idols of gold, Which they made for themselves to worship** [I’ll quote part of what Page H. Kelley said regarding idolatry under Isa. 2:18-22.<sup>13</sup> “An idol has been defined as any philosophical concept or material object that becomes a substitute for God. The essence of idolatry, therefore, is the setting of something less than God in the place of God. It is the denial of God’s claim to absolute lordship over one’s life. Let us not delude ourselves into thinking that we can hold on to God with one hand and to some cherished idol with the other. At the heart of the Scriptures stands the injunction: ‘Choose you this day whom you will serve.’ ”], **(21) In order to go into the caverns of the rocks and the clefts of the cliffs Before the terror of the LORD and the splendor of His majesty, When He arises to make the earth tremble.** [See Isa. 2:19.] **(22) Stop regarding man, whose breath of life is in his nostrils; For why should he be esteemed?** [Jeremiah 17:5 says, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind And makes flesh his strength, And whose heart turns away from the LORD.’ ” It seems that men are very slow to learn (many never do learn) that God requires His people to look to Him for what they need, and to worship Him, and Him alone.]

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<sup>12</sup> J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah* [Inter-Varsity Press, 1999], page 54.

<sup>13</sup> *Broadman Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5 [Broadman Press, 1971], page 197.

## ISAIAH 9:1-7

This is one of the most important of the prophecies about the Messiah/Christ (the Anointed One) in the Old Testament. It builds on the prophecy of Isa. 7:14, “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel [which in Hebrew means *God with us*].” (See Isa. 8:8; Matt. 1:23.) One thing that makes this prophecy of Isaiah 9:1-7 so significant is that it speaks of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ (Isa. 9:6).

Some other key prophecies concerning Christ in the Old Testament are Gen. 3:15 (The Seed of the woman will totally overthrow [crush] Satan and his kingdom [cf. Rom. 16:20]); Psalms 2 (God’s anointed Son will reign; we see His resurrection and birth into eternal glory in Psalm 2:7 [cf. Acts 4:25, 26; 13:33, 34; and Heb. 1:5; 5:5]); Psalms 16:8-11 (We see His resurrection [cf. Acts 2:22-28; 13:35]); Psalms 22 (We see His all-important crucifixion, including His being mocked [Psalm 22:6-8; cf. Matt. 27:39-44; Mark 15:28-32; and Luke 23:35-37], His hands and feet being pierced [Psalm 22:16; cf. Matt. 27:35; John 20:25], and lots being cast for His clothing [Psalm 22:18; cf. Matt. 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34; and John 19:23, 24], and there is more); Psalms 110:1 (David’s Lord sits at the Father’s right hand until it is time for Him to return to subdue His enemies [cf., e.g., Matt. 22:41-46; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44; Acts 2:33-36; 1 Cor. 15:25; and Heb. 1:13; 10:12, 13]); Psalms 110:4 (He, the sacrificed Lamb of God, becomes, on the basis of that Sacrifice, our great high-priest according the order of Melchizedek [cf. Heb. 5:6, 9, 10; 6:20; 7:17, 21, 22]); Isa. 11:1-16 (This significant chapter, which prophesies about the saving work of God’s Anointed One, is discussed next in this paper); Isaiah chapters 42, 49 (These chapters, which are discussed in this paper, are filled with prophetic words regarding the saving work of God’s Servant); Isa. 52:10-53:12 (The Servant of God saves His people by bearing their sins with the guilt and the penalties; there are too many cross-references to list here); Isa. 61:1-3 (The Anointed One saves from sin [with the guilt and the penalties], and He judges His enemies [cf. Luke 4:16-21]); Dan. 9:25, 26 (Messiah, the ultimate Ruler, will be cut off [temporarily]; the approximate time of His (virgin) birth is given); Mic. 5:2 (The eternal Ruler is to be born in Bethlehem [cf. Matt. 2:6; Luke 2:4-7; and John 7:42]); Zech. 9:9, 10 (The King, who will have a worldwide dominion, comes in humility and riding on a donkey; He will speak peace to the nations [cf. Matt. 21:1-11; John 12:14, 15]); Zech. 11:12, 13 (We see the Shepherd who is rejected and sold for thirty pieces of silver, which is thrown to the potter in the house of the Lord [Matt. 26:15; 27:3-10]); and Zech. 13:7 (The Shepherd is smitten [cf. Matt. 26:31; Mark 14:27]).<sup>14</sup>

It’s very significant that many of these prophecies have already been fulfilled, either totally fulfilled, or partially fulfilled (and there are many other prophecies concerning the Lord Jesus Christ that I have not listed). These prophecies concerning Christ, by themselves, suffice to prove that the Bible truly is the Word of God. (Also, there are many very significant prophecies that do not deal, at least not for the most part, with the Lord Jesus Christ. It’s very significant that many of these prophecies have already been

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<sup>14</sup> Psalms 2; 110; Daniel chapter 9; Micah chapter 5; and Zechariah chapters 9, 11, and 13 are discussed verse-by-verse in *Mid-Week Rapture*. Many key verses of Isaiah chapter 53; and Luke 4:16-21 with Isa. 61:1-3 are discussed verse-by-verse in *Holiness and Victory Over Sin*.

fulfilled.<sup>15</sup> ) Quite a few times in the book of Isaiah God declared that He was prophesying regarding things that would take place in the future, sometimes the near future, in order to prove that He, and only He, was/is God. He challenged the gods of the nations to do the same thing. See Isa. 41:21-29; 44:7-11; 45:18-25; 46:5-11; and 48:1-16. There is no other God, and there is no other book anything like the Bible.

**But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish** [The last verse of Isaiah chapter 8 prophesied regarding the coming “gloom of anguish” and darkness for the people of Israel (because they had not been faithful to God).]; **in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make it glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan** [The NIV has, “along the Jordan [River].”], **Galilee of the Gentiles.** [Zebulun and Naphtali were two of the twelve tribes of Israel. The land allotted to these two tribes was located in the northern part of the land of Israel (along with the tribes of Asher and Issachar). Galilee was located in this area. Nazareth, where Jesus grew up, was in Galilee, and much of His earthly ministry was conducted in Galilee.

Matthew 4:12-16 quote part of Isa. 9:1, 2, demonstrating that this prophecy was fulfilled (in part) in the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Also see Luke 1:79. It’s clear (clear from our perspective, but not clear from the Old Testament perspective) that there are two separate comings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Although His first coming was infinitely important, He does not subdue His enemies and fully save His people until His second coming. (I believe He will come again and the rapture will take place right in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week.) In Isaiah’s generation, and even in the generation that Jesus was born, Israel did not understand that there were to be two separate and totally different comings for Messiah.

I’ll quote part of what John A. Martin said under Isa. 9:1.<sup>16</sup> “In 732 B.C. [Isaiah’s ministry began by 739 B.C., the year that King Uzziah died (cf. Isa. 6:1-13)] this northern portion of Israel became an Assyrian province under Tiglath-Pilezer III, thus humbling the people there and putting them in gloom. Under Gentile domination, that area was called Galilee of the Gentiles. [The Assyrians had a policy of deporting (many of) the inhabitants of areas they conquered (cf. 2 Kings 15:29; 17:27-29) and of bringing in different people to live there (cf. 2 Kings 17:24-26). Also, many Gentiles lived in this area before the Assyrian invasion (cf. Jud. 1:30-33; 1 Kings 9:11).]

The way of the sea describes a major international highway running through this region. This is the only place where the Bible used this phrase, but it appears often in Assyrian and Egyptian records. The invading Assyrian soldiers took that route when they invaded the Northern Kingdom. From that area the Messiah will arise and will wipe away the gloom and darkness brought on by Gentile domination.”] **(2) The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them.** [The Hebrew poetry here uses a type of parallelism; parallelism is very common in Hebrew poetry: Isaiah makes a comment regarding people walking in darkness seeing a great light, then he says essentially the same thing (he makes a parallel statement) using different words.] **(3) You shall multiply the nation** [cf. Isa. 26:15; 54:1-3], **You shall increase their gladness** [Compare Isa. 35:10; 65:14, 18, 19; and 66:10. “You” here in verse 3 (used twice) and in

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, Dan. 2:28-49; 7:1-28; 8:1-27; 9:24-27; and 11:1-39. Most of these verses from Daniel are discussed in *Mid-Week Rapture*.

<sup>16</sup> *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Old Testament [Victor Books, 1985], page 1052.

verse 4 apparently refers to God the Father. The nation (Israel) will be multiplied (the NIV has “enlarged the nation”) in that the kingdom of God will ultimately expand to fill the earth. God’s kingdom will be the only kingdom left on the earth after His end-time judgments are completed (cf., e.g., Zech. 14:9). This will be true in a substantial sense during the millennial kingdom, but there still will be room for rebellion by the peoples of the nations during the millennium (cf. Zech. 14:16-19; Rev. 20:7-10). By the time the new heavens and new earth that are pictured in Revelation chapters 21, 22 are established (after the millennium), there will be no further rebellion in God’s worldwide kingdom.]; **They will be glad in Your presence As with the gladness of harvest, As men rejoice when they divide the spoil. (4) For You shall break the yoke of their burden and the staff on their shoulders [cf. Isa. 10:27], The rod of their oppressor, as at the battle of Midian [cf. Jud. 7:1-25; Isa. 10:26].** [The Bible (including the book of Isaiah) shows that the primary enemies that God will overthrow are spiritual enemies (spiritual death, sin, and Satan and his hosts). The Bible also speaks much of God’s overthrow of His enemies and the enemies of His people among men. That was true in Old Testament days, and we also see God’s overthrow of earthly enemies in the last book of the Bible, in the destruction of Antichrist and his armies after they are gathered to Armageddon (Rev. 16:12-16; 19:17-21).] **(5) For every boot of the booted warrior in the battle tumult, And cloak rolled in blood, will be for burning, fuel for the fire.** [Such items will be left for burning after the enemies have been totally destroyed.] **(6) For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us** [This child/son born to us is the Messiah (e.g., Isa. 7:14; 11:1; 49:1-3; 53:1-3; and Luke 2:11). First we think of the virgin *birth*, but it is also true that Jesus Christ was the first man (though He was and is much more than just a man) to leave death behind and to be *born* into the fullness of eternal life (cf. Psalm 2:7; Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 15: 20; Col. 1:18; and Rev. 1:5). Through Christ all the members of God’s true Israel will be born into the fullness of eternal life to reign with Him forever.]; **And the government will rest on His shoulders** [Compare Isa. 22:22. Christ has all authority now, including the authority to fully save those that submit to Him and the authority to overthrow and remove all those (including Satan and his hosts) that do not submit to Him (e.g., Matt. 28:18-20; 1 Cor. 15:24-28; and Eph. 1:10, 20-23).]; **And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor**<sup>17</sup> [Compare Isa. 28:29. His *counsel* is of a different dimension; it is extraordinary, to say the least; it is of God in the fullest possible sense. (As Isa. 9:6 shows, along with many other verses, Messiah is God, God the Son). I’ll quote part of what Herbert M. Wolf said here.<sup>18</sup> “ ‘Wonderful Counselor’ is literally ‘a Wonder of a Counselor.’ Miracles are often called ‘wonders,’ and in Judges 13:18 the Angel of the Lord—perhaps the preincarnate Christ [This is a common view, and I assume it is correct]—gives ‘Wonderful’ as His name.” And I’ll quote part of what J. Alec Motyer said here.<sup>19</sup> “*Wonderful*: literally ‘a wonder of a Counselor.’ The vast majority of the eighty times the verb *pālā’*, its noun (as here *pele’*) and adjective...occur, they refer to the Lord, himself and his works.<sup>20</sup> It is the nearest word

<sup>17</sup> Most commentators agree with the NASB and the NIV in taking the words *Wonderful* and *Counselor* together, but some agree with the KJV (and the margin of the NIV), which takes these words separately, with a comma in between them. I favor the majority viewpoint, but the other viewpoint is possible.

<sup>18</sup> *Interpreting Isaiah* [Zondervan, 1985], page 97.

<sup>19</sup> *Isaiah* [Inter-Varsity Press, 1999], page 89.

<sup>20</sup> The symbol ‘ that is used in the transliteration of some Hebrew words stands for *aleph*, the first letter in the Hebrew alphabet.

Hebrew has to the idea of ‘supernatural,’ here bringing a wisdom far above the human....”], **Mighty God** [Compare Isa. 10:21; Deut. 10:17; Neh. 9:32; and Jer. 32:18. These two words (and the next two words) were undoubtedly somewhat shocking to Isaiah and the old-covenant believers. Somehow, the Messiah, the son of David, the child born to us, is to be deity along with the One who sent Him. He would be the God-man. Other passages in the Old Testament helped confirm this fact, or helped explain how this could be,<sup>21</sup> but we had to wait for the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ and the fuller revelation of His Person and of the triune God given in the New Testament to get a more solid understanding regarding His Person. The deity of the Lord Jesus Christ is a foundational doctrine of key importance. The devil has probably fought against this one doctrine more than any other.

Christians don’t claim that they fully understand the Trinity (we can only know as much as God reveals, and in our present level of being some things are clearly beyond our ability to fully understand), but the Scriptures clearly teach the Trinity, and this has been the orthodox view of the Christian church from the beginning. The New Testament strongly confirms that Messiah is deity (which means, for one thing, that He is not a created being) with God the Father (e.g., John 1:1-4, 14; 20:28; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:2, 3; Rev. 1:4, 5 [There are many other passages in the New Testament that mention all three Persons of the Trinity together]; Rev. 1:12-17; 5:12-14 [It would be blasphemous to worship the Son with the Father if the Son were not deity with the Father – He is!]; Rev. 19:10, 13; 21:22, 23; and 22:5, 6, 13). The New Testament clearly teaches that the Son of God truly became a man, though not just a man (for one thing, He was not spiritually dead like other men, and He never sinned), that He died in our place as the supremely worthy Lamb of God, and that He is a Person distinct from God the Father (we will say more on this point below).

I’ll quote what Herbert M. Wolf said here.<sup>22</sup> “ ‘Mighty God’ emphasizes the deity of this Ruler and his military ability. Psalm 24:8 depicts this relationship with the words ‘The Lord strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.’ In Isaiah 10:21 the ‘Mighty God’ is identified with the Holy One of Israel.”

I’ll quote part of what John N. Oswalt said here.<sup>23</sup> After mentioning that some dismiss the translation “Mighty God” here he says, “there is no reason to depart from the traditional rendering [“Mighty God”]. Wherever *’el gibbôr* occurs elsewhere in the Bible there is no doubt that the term refers to God (Isa. 10:21; cf. Also Deut 10:17; Jer. 32:18). This king will have God’s true might about him, power so great that it can absorb all the evil which can be hurled at him until none is left to hurl (53:2-10; 59:15-20; 63:1-9).” The last two references cited by Oswalt

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<sup>21</sup> For example, the Messiah was called *Immanuel* [“God with us”] in Isa. 7:14; 8:8 and, significantly, Micah 5:2 informs us regarding the Ruler to be born in Bethlehem that “His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity.” Another very important Old Testament clue regarding this glorious Person, who was to also become a man (but not just a man), was the revelation about the Angel of the Lord, who was clearly distinguished from God the Father, but who also was recognized as being deity. The significant name *Yahweh* (which was very often used of God in the Old Testament) was used of the Angel quite a few times too, and He was also called God. (See, e.g., Gen. 22:1-19; 31:11-13; Ex. 3:1-18; Josh. 5:13-6:2; Jud. 6:11-24; and Zech. 3:2.) The Angel of the Lord, who also appears as the man dressed in linen in the Old Testament, is discussed on pages 165-179 of *Mid-Week Rapture*. On the deity of Christ in the Old Testament also see Psalm 110:1 and Psalm 45:6, 7 with Heb. 1:8, 9; other Old Testament verses could also be listed.

<sup>22</sup> *Interpreting Isaiah*, page 97.

<sup>23</sup> *Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39* [Eerdmans, 1986], page 247.

prophecy regarding the Lamb-Warrior's overpowering and totally subduing all His enemies.

I'll quote part of what F. Delitzsch said here.<sup>24</sup> "The...name *El gibbor* attributes divinity to Him [the Messiah]. ... There is no reason why we should take *El* in this name of the Messiah in any other sense than in *Immanu-El* [*Immanu* means *with us* in Hebrew]; not to mention the fact that *El* in Isaiah is always a name of God.... And finally, *El gibbor* was a traditional name of God, which occurs as early as Deut. 10:17, cf. Jer. 23:18; Neh. 9:32; Psalm 24:8; etc. ... Undoubtedly this appears to go beyond the limits of the Old Testament horizon [in that we see that Messiah is deity with God the Father here]; but what if it should go beyond them?" Delitzsch went on to point out that even though the incarnation is included in this prophetic name, it went beyond the Old Testament consciousness (including for Isaiah) to adequately comprehend this truth.

And I'll quote part of what Edward J. Young said here.<sup>25</sup> "Isaiah here brings out an important contrast. By means of the words... 'child' and 'is born' [both words were used earlier in this verse] he [Isaiah] has called attention to the Messiah's humanity, but by the phrase '*el gibbor* we are brought face to face with Messiah's deity. This interpretation is strengthened by the word *pele*' in the first name. He is a Wonder, and in the light of this strong designation, we may well expect that in the second name also the prophet is attributing deity to the Messiah.

What then did Isaiah mean by his use of the term '*el* and why did he employ it? In answering these questions we must remember that the wondrous prophecy which we are now studying was not primarily the product of Isaiah's own thought. ... It was a revelation of God. ... To what extent he himself understood the import of what he was writing we have no way of knowing. The revelation was made to him, however, that Messiah was a divine Person. In the light of the New Testament we learn that this revelation was an adumbration of the doctrine of the Trinity [that is, it foreshadowed the doctrine of the Trinity in a vague way]. Isaiah, in other words, is now given a glimpse of the fact that in the fullness of the Godhead there is a plurality of Persons. ... With this revealed truth [that Messiah is '*el gibbor*] may our hearts delight, for He who is born the mighty God is therefore able to save all those who put trust in Him."], **Eternal Father** [This name also strongly indicates the deity of Messiah. He is Father of His people in the eternal dimension. Taken in the fullest sense, this includes His work at creation (e.g., John 1:1-3) and the fatherly care of His people (e.g., saving, guiding, protecting, and providing everything that is needed).

I'll quote part of what J. Alec Motyer said here.<sup>26</sup> "used of the Lord, 'father' speaks of his concern (Ps. 65:5), care and discipline (Ps. 103:13; Pr. 3:12; Is. 63:16; 64:8); cf. Ps. 72:4, 12-14; Is. 11:4."

And I'll quote part of what F. Delitzsch said here.<sup>27</sup> This name, *Eternal Father*, springs out of the last name, *Mighty God* "for what is divine must be eternal. The title *Eternal Father* designates Him, however, not only as the possessor of eternity...but as the tender, faithful, and wise trainer, guardian, and provider for His people even in eternity (Isa. 22:21). He is eternal Father, as the eternal, loving King, according to the description in Ps. 72." We will further discuss the name *Father* for God (for God the Father and for God the Son) in a separate section after we finish discussing Isa. 9:7., **Prince** [Although the translation "Prince"

<sup>24</sup> *Commentary on the Old Testament* by C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, Vol. 7 [Eerdmans, 1976 reprint], pages 253, 254.

<sup>25</sup> *Book of Isaiah*, Vol. 1 [Eerdmans, 1983 reprint], pages 337, 338.

<sup>26</sup> *Isaiah*, pages 89, 90.

<sup>27</sup> *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 7, page 253.

sounds good with “of Peace,” the Hebrew noun used here could also be translated “Ruler,” or other ways.] **of Peace** [This Hebrew noun (*shalom*) includes the ideas of completeness, soundness, welfare, health, prosperity, peace, quiet, contentment, and friendship.]. [Compare Isa. 11:6-9; 26:12; 32:17; 53:5; 66:12; Zech. 9:10; John 16:33; Rom. 5:1; and Eph. 2:13-17. Messiah solves the sin problem in His atoning death, and He brings us *peace* with God. Flowing out of peace with God comes every other kind of peace (including inner peace, peace in the body of Christ, peace with others, and peace with our environment) and well being, and we will ultimately experience the fullness of the *shalom* of God that attends eternal glory, where everything is in divine order. In context with the rest of Isa. 9:1-7, there is an emphasis here on the peace that comes through Messiah’s overthrowing every enemy of His people and establishing His righteous, perfect government that will last forever. Messiah is the Prince/Ruler that will establish Peace throughout God’s eternal kingdom.] **(7) There will be no end to the increase of His government** [His authority extends everywhere now; He will reign in the worldwide kingdom throughout the millennial kingdom, then He will rule (with God the Father) over the new heavens and new earth in the eternal state (e.g., Matt. 28:18; 1 Cor. 15:25-28; Eph. 1:10, 20-23; and Rev. 22:1, 3).] **or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom** [Compare Isa. 11:1-10; Luke 1:32, 33. It is a common Biblical theme that the ultimate King was to be a descendant of David, which Christ was (according to the flesh).], **To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness** [Without justice and righteousness there can be no peace. Injustice and unrighteousness, by definition, are not part of God’s perfect will – these things are not compatible with divine order. Isaiah chapter 53 shows how the Messiah solves the sin problem and makes His people righteous. Isaiah 53:11 speaks of Him as the *Righteous One* who makes *righteous* His people.<sup>28</sup>] **From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.** [The “LORD [*Yahweh*] of hosts [armies]” refers to God the Father here. (God the Father is at least included; it would be possible to see the triune God here.) “He” in Isa. 9:1 (twice) and “You” and “Your” in Isa. 9:3, 4 also refer to God the Father. In that He is the One that gives the child/son spoken of in Isa. 9:6 (and He does a whole lot more than that), it can certainly be said that the glorious, saving work accomplished by Messiah that is spoken of in these verses is accomplished by God the Father (who sent His Son, anointed Him, etc.).

### **Further Discussion Regarding God as Father**

In the Old Testament the word *father/Father* was used more than five hundred times. Reading through the Old Testament verses listed under father/Father in my concordance (NASB), I found eleven verses (not counting Isa. 9:6) where God was pictured as Father to His people (Deut. 32:6; Psalm 68:5; 103:13; Prov. 3:12; Isa. 63:16; 64:8; Jer. 3:4, 19; 31:9; and Mal. 1:6; 2:10; also cf. 2 Sam. 7:14; 1 Chron. 17:13; 22:10; and Psalm 89:26). In the New Testament we find the word *Father* used of God much more often than in the Old Testament, 264 times. It is used exclusively of God the Father in the New Testament; it is never used of God the Son, the Messiah.<sup>29</sup> The *fatherhood* of God is also pictured on a much higher level in the New Testament than in the Old Testament.

<sup>28</sup> Isaiah 53:11 is discussed on pages 26-29 of *Holiness and Victory Over Sin*.

<sup>29</sup> We were not prepared to understand the New Testament name/title of “God the Father” (or “the Father”) before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, which (for one thing) made a gigantic difference in the

There are several closely related reasons for the exaltation of the *fatherhood* of God in the New Testament, which we will discuss in this paragraph and the next paragraph. Jesus taught His disciples that God the Father was their Father (e.g., Matt. 5:16, 45, 48; 6:9). He also taught them that God the Father was (in a very special sense) His Father (cf., e.g., Matt. 10:32, 33; 11:25-27; 16:27; and Luke 23:46) and that He (in a very special sense) was the Son of God (cf., e.g., Matt. 11:27; 28:19; Mark 14:36; Luke 10:21, 22; and John 3:31-35). The Son “who comes from above” (John 3:31) was sent from heaven by God the Father (cf., e.g., John 3:13, 17, 34; 6:57, 58; 10:36; and 1 John 4:9); He was with the Father in the beginning, before creation began (e.g., John 1:1; 17:5). Jesus frequently mentioned that He was going back to the Father (e.g., John 16:28; 20:17), and He is often pictured in the New Testament in heaven/the heavenly dimension after His ascension (e.g., Acts 2:33; 3:17-21; 7:56; 1 Cor. 15:20-28; Eph. 1:18-23; Rev. 1:1, 4-7; 5:1-14; 21:22, 23; 22:1, 3). In every one of the verses just cited, the Son is clearly pictured as a Person distinct from God the Father.

Those who are united with the Lord Jesus Christ through faith (based on His atoning death and by the Holy Spirit, who indwells every true Christian) become sons of God the Father (through the unique Son of God) in a very special sense. They become born-again

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relationship believers have with God. The New Testament reveals the Person of God the Son (the old covenant believers did not comprehend the Person of God the Son) and it reveals the glorious fact that new covenant believers actually become born-again sons of “God the Father” through new-covenant salvation in union with God the Son. “God the Father” actually become “the Father” of His born-again children in a very real, very special sense.

It causes substantial confusion when Christians use the term *Father* for Jesus Christ (the Son of God) now that we have been given the much fuller, New Testament revelation regarding the triune God. It was reasonable in Old Testament days for Messiah to be called *Eternal Father* in this very important prophetic passage. It was an effective way to emphasize His deity. In the same way that it was reasonable to call the Angel of the LORD *Yahweh* or *God*, it was reasonable to call Him *Eternal Father*, and especially in the middle of a glorious prophecy that emphasized His deity and dealt with His saving work. Christians who deny the Trinity typically use Isa. 9:6 as one of their primary *proof texts*, but quite improperly.

There are literally hundreds of verses in the Bible, mostly in the New Testament, which demonstrate that God the Father and God the Son are distinct Persons within the Godhead. Very often the Father and the Son are mentioned together in the same passage as separate Persons: They talk to one another; they talk about one another; the Father sends the Son; the Son goes back to the Father; the Son is at the right hand of the Father; and the Son reigns with the Father and is worshipped with the Father. The oneness doctrine is widespread in our day, and I believe that many of those holding that doctrine are true Christians. I must also say, however, that I consider this teaching to be a substantial error. It is one of the most divisive issues in the body of Christ.

The oneness doctrine may seem to make God easier for the human mind to understand, and it sounds reasonable if we are willing to limit ourselves to a few proof texts that fit the oneness doctrine, but it cannot stand when we take into account all that the Scriptures teach on the topic. By the way, it’s not surprising that we cannot fully understand God. We are required to believe all that the Scriptures teach about Him, whether we can fully understand or not. There certainly is no basis to say that the triune view of God presented in the Bible is unreasonable. We will understand God a whole lot better after we are glorified, but even then I’m quite sure that we won’t fully understand Him.

The verse we are studying (Isa. 9:6) even guards against the oneness doctrine in that this “son will be given to us.” The Bible makes it clear who does the giving: God the Father, who sends His Son to save us. I mentioned that the Angel of the Lord of the Old Testament helps us understand the Son of God and His deity. It is equally true that the Old Testament clearly distinguishes between this Angel and God the Father. I also mentioned Psalm 110:1 as another verse that helps us understand the deity of Christ. That verse also clearly distinguishes between David’s Lord (the Messiah) and God the Father (who is called *Yahweh* in Psalm 110:1).

sons of God. God the Father has a very special love for God the Son (e.g., Matt. 3:17; John 3:35; 5:20; and 17:24, 26). Through God's glorious plan of salvation, Christians become objects of this love the Father has for His unique Son (cf. John 17:20-26; 16:26-28; and Rom. 8:28-39). After we are glorified (born into the fullness of eternal life), we will enter into the full dimension of what it means to be sons of God who are loved (in a very special way) by God the Father, but in this present life we can begin to walk in some of this glory. Jesus, who had/has an Abba Father relationship with God the Father (Mark 14:36), has opened up for us a similar relationship with the Father (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6).

## ISAIAH CHAPTER 11

**Then a shoot, will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit.** [Isaiah 4:2 is one of many important cross-references, “In that day the Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth *will be* the pride and adornment of the survivors [the remnant] of Israel.” (Messiah is the “Branch of the Lord.” His work will yield much good *fruit*, to say the least.) Also see Isa. 53:2; Jer. 23:5; Zech. 3:8; 6:12, 13; Rev. 5:5; and 22:16,<sup>30</sup> In that Jesse was the father of David, Messiah, the “Son [of God], who was born a descendant of David according to the flesh” (Rom. 1:3), was a descendant of Jesse (cf., e.g., Isa. 9:7 [“the throne of David”]; 11:10; and Acts 13:22, 23). The good fruit that results from the saving work of Messiah will fill the earth in the millennial kingdom and will ultimately bring forth the new heaven and new earth with its new Jerusalem. All the members of true Israel will be saved through His work, as will the elect of the nations (cf. Rev. 21:27).] **(2) The Spirit of the LORD** [In the NASB and some other translations of the Old Testament, the word LORD (with four capitalized letters) shows that the Hebrew has *yhwh* (*Yahweh*).] **will rest on Him** [The names *Messiah* (Hebrew) and *Christ* (Greek) mean “the Anointed [with the Spirit] One.” Compare Isa. 42:1; 48:16; 61:1 (with Luke 4:18); Matt. 3:16; and John 1:29-34. Many men under the old covenant were anointed by the Spirit for various functions, and all true Christians are anointed by the Holy Spirit, but no one has ever been anointed like Jesus Christ: He received the Spirit “without measure” (John 3:34).], **The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.** **(3) And He will delight in the fear of the LORD** [The *fear of the LORD* (which is mentioned at the end of verse 2 and here in verse 3) is a good and a necessary thing. God’s people should be afraid to sin against Him. This attitude of the heart goes with walking humbly before God and making it a top priority to walk in righteousness and holiness in accordance with His Word and by His grace. The need for the fear of the LORD is emphasized in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. This topic is discussed, with many Biblical references, under Phil. 2:12-16, in my paper *The Christian, the Law, and Legalism* (pages 34-36).], **And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear** [Compare John 7:24. Very often the judges among men make wrong judgments because they don’t know all the facts. Another problem is that the judges among men often are biased, and some even take bribes to render unfair decisions. The judgments rendered by Messiah are perfect in every way. Messiah is a man born in the lineage of King David, who is powerfully anointed by the Spirit, but when we take into account all that the Scriptures reveal about Him, we can see that He also is God, God the Son, who was with the Father in the beginning, the One through whom and for whom all things were created. He, for one thing, is the perfect Judge. (Cf., e.g., John 5:22, 27.)]; **(4) But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth** [Cf., e.g., Isa. 9:7; 16:5; 29:17-21; and Psalm 72:2-4, 12-14.]; **And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked.** [His words have power to destroy all who persist in wickedness (cf., e.g., Isa. 49:2; 2 Thess. 2:8; Rev. 1:16; 2:16; and 19:15).

<sup>30</sup> According to the BAGD Greek Lexicon, the Greek noun (*rhiza*) translated “root” in Rev. 5:5 and 22:16 is used in the sense of a “shoot...growing from the root, symbolically *descendant*....”

Christ's judging and removing all who are committed to evil (which includes the devil and his evil hosts along with the men who persist in following the devil in His rebellion against God) is part of what He must do to save His people (true Israel and the elect of the nations<sup>31</sup>) and to establish God's worldwide kingdom. At the end of this age, God's enemies among men will be led by Antichrist, who will be empowered by Satan (Rev. 13:2).] **(5) Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, And faithfulness the belt about His waist.** [Compare, for example, Isa. 9:4-7; 16:5; and Rev. 19:11. *Righteousness* and *faithfulness* will characterize His work of saving and judging. I'll quote part of what John N. Oswalt said under this verse.<sup>32</sup> "The general sense of the verse is clear. The Messiah will bring justice and equity upon the earth because fundamental to his own character will be two essential qualities: uprightness and dependability born of integrity or faithfulness. Fundamentally, these are two characteristics of God upon which the whole biblical understanding of life is built (Isa. 5:16; 65:16; Ps. 40:11 [40:10 in the English Bible]; 119:75, 142; Zech. 8:8). Because he is as he is, the whole universe can be understood in a coherent and consistent way. ... *Righteousness* is that capacity for doing the right thing in all circumstances and frequently involves keeping one's promises, so that there are times when it may be translated by "deliverance" (51:8) or "vindication" (54:17). *Faithfulness* comes from the root which means to be dependable or true. ..."] **(6) And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the young goat, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little boy will lead them. (7) Also the cow and the bear will graze, Their young will lie down together, And the lion will eat straw like the ox. (8) The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den.** [Messiah's overthrow of sin and its consequences will be so thorough that it will, according to these verses, even remove the curse that came on the animal kingdom through sin (cf. Gen. 1:30; Isa. 65:25; Ezek. 34:23-25; Hos. 2:18; and Rom. 8:18-22). This prophecy will apparently be fulfilled literally (at least to some significant extent) in the millennial kingdom.] **(9) They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain [cf. Isa. 65:25], For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD [cf. Hab. 2:14] As the waters cover the sea.** [God's holy mountain centers in Jerusalem (e.g., Isa. 2:2; 65:11), but His kingdom will cover the earth (cf., e.g., Zech. 14:9). (A mountain can be used as a symbol for a kingdom [cf. Dan. 2:35].) Although the devil will be totally restrained throughout the millennium (Rev. 20:3; cf. Isa. 24:21, 22), the potential for sin among the nations will still exist (but not for the members of true Israel, who will all have been glorified by the time the millennial kingdom begins). Compare Dan. 7:12; Isa. 65:20; and Zech. 14:16-19. The great rebellion by a large number of people from the nations at the end of the millennium demonstrates that the potential for sin will still be all too real at that time (Rev. 20:7-10).

By the time we get to the eternal state pictured in Revelation chapters 21, 22, the sin problem will have been fully solved for the elect of the nations. (On the elect of the nations, who are also saved through the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ, see Rev. 21:3, 4; 21:24-22:1-3.) We learn more about God's salvation plans for the nations as we continue with Isaiah chapter 11, and this topic is included to some extent in just about every passage from the book of Isaiah we are considering in this paper. This topic is discussed in some detail in my eschatological paper dated November 1998.

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<sup>31</sup> Zechariah chapter 11 is an important cross-reference that deals with God's end-time judgment of the world. In my verse-by-verse discussion of that chapter (in chapter 14 of *Mid-Week Rapture*), I dealt quite a bit with God's salvation plans for the (afflicted) remnant of the nations.

<sup>32</sup> *Book of Isaiah*, chapters 1-39 [Eerdmans, 1986], pages 281, 282.

The “knowledge of the LORD” here includes knowing (and submitting to the fact) that the God of the Bible, the God of true Israel, is the Creator and the only God, Savior, and Judge, and it includes knowing (and submitting) to His divine order (e.g., His truth, righteousness, holiness, and peace). Note the “spirit of knowledge” in Isa. 11:2.] **(10) Then** [I would translate “And” with the KJV and NKJV or leave the Hebrew (*w* [some call it *v*]) untranslated with the NIV. The word “then” tends to (wrongly) give the impression that the things spoken of in Isa. 11:10 will take place later than the things spoken of in Isa. 11:4-9.] **in that day The nations will resort to the root of Jesse, Who will stand as a signal** [Compare, for example, Isa. 2:2-4. In the margin the NASB has, “or, standard.” I prefer “standard” or the translation “banner” of the NIV. The same Hebrew word (*nes*) is also used in Isa. 11:12; 49:22; and 62:10; it is translated “standard” by the NASB and “banner” by the NIV in those verses.] **for the peoples** [Also see the first line of Isa. 11:12. The “peoples” here (and often) is a parallel expression for the “nations.” The nations/peoples here (and often) are distinct from the people of (true) Israel.]; **And His resting place** [Cf. Psalm 132:14.] **will be glorious.** [It is a very common Biblical theme to speak of (the humbled, repentant remnant of) the nations being saved by Messiah after He judges the world at the end of this age. The fact that the apostle Paul quoted Isa. 11:10 in Rom. 15:12 (he quoted from the Septuagint version, which is somewhat different than the Hebrew) and applied it to Gentiles coming to Christ during New Testament days doesn’t detract from the fact that the primary fulfillment of Isa. 11:10 won’t come to pass until after the second coming of Christ and His judgment of the world (as in Isaiah chapter 2, and often).] **(11) Then** [And] **it will happen on that day that the Lord Will again recover the second time with His hand The remnant of His people, who will remain, From Assyria, Egypt, Pathros** [Upper (southern) Egypt], **Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, And from the islands of the sea.** [“The remnant of His people” here refers to the scattered remnant of Israel/Judah that will remain after God’s end-time judgment of the world. They will be recovered a second time, but this time they will be recovered from a worldwide dispersion, unlike their *first* recovery in the exodus from Egypt. The worldwide dispersion pictured here in Isa. 11:11 goes far beyond the northern kingdom’s being carried into captivity by Assyria in Isaiah’s day and the southern kingdom’s being carried into captivity by Babylon more than a hundred years later. Isaiah’s ministry began by 740/739 BC and continued for some fifty to sixty years. We will discuss these things further as we continue.] **(12) And He will lift up a standard for the nations And assemble the banished ones of Israel, And will gather the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth.** [The “banished ones of Israel” (*Israel* here and *Ephraim* in the next verse refer to the northern kingdom) and “the dispersed of Judah” (*Judah* here and in the next verse refers to the southern kingdom) speak of that part of the end-time remnant of Israel/Judah that will be living in other lands (other than Israel/Judah), who have been scattered across the earth by God’s judgments through the nations (e.g., Assyria, Babylon, and Rome). The nation had split into two parts (the northern and southern kingdoms) after the death of King Solomon in 931 BC.

The assembling/gathering of the end-time remnant of Israel/Judah from the ends of the earth after God’s end-time judgment is a common prophetic theme (e.g., Isa. 10:20-23; 14:2; 49:22; 60:4, 9; 66:20; and Zeph. 3:8-11).<sup>33</sup> As the references just cited demonstrate,

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<sup>33</sup> Isaiah 10:20-23 are discussed in this paper toward the end of the chapter on Isaiah chapter 27. Isaiah chapters 14, 49, and 66:9-24 are discussed verse-by-verse in this paper. Isaiah chapter 60 is briefly discussed on page 102 of my paper dated November 1998 and Zeph. 3:8-11 on pages 103, 104 of that paper.

with the exception of Isa. 10:20-23, the remnant of Israel/Judah is pictured being brought to God at Jerusalem by the humbled, repentant remnant of the nations. Isaiah 10:20-23 include another very important end-time prophetic theme: Far more important than returning to the land of Israel/Judah, the remnant of Israel/Judah must return to God in repentance and faith.<sup>34</sup> Isaiah 10:21 says, “A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob to the mighty God.”

Let’s consider what it will mean for the remnant of Israel/Judah to return to God (whether they are living in the land of Judah/Israel, or scattered across the earth). From our New Testament perspective, we can see that they will submit (in repentance and faith) to the Lord Jesus Christ and the new covenant in His blood (cf., e.g., Zech. 12:10-14; Matt. 23:37-39; Rom. 9:27-29; 11:25-27; Rev. 10:7<sup>35</sup>; 11:13, 19; 12:13-17; and 15:2, 3). When the end-time remnant of Israel submit to Christ, they will be grafted into the tree of God’s true Israel. The New Testament also confirms that God will save the humbled, repentant remnant of the nations after His end-time judgment of the world (cf. Rev. 15:3, 4; 20:3; 21:3, 4, 24-27; 22:1-3).<sup>36</sup>

There is one more detail that we should consider. In Isaiah’s day the northern kingdom fell to the Assyrians, and they were carried into exile. The great majority did not return from exile, and there is no indication that many of them continued to live for God. They were, for the most part, absorbed into the nations. (By contrast, many from Judah did return from the Babylonian exile, and many who stayed in Babylon continued to live for God. They continued to exist as a nation and as a people; and there always was a godly remnant among the people.) By the time Jesus lived on the earth, the people of the northern kingdom had (for the most part at least) ceased to exist as a separate people, with the exception of those individuals who had become part of Judah.

Some Christians believe that the descendants of the ancient northern kingdom will be saved in large numbers in a mysterious way in the last days. God could do this, of course, but I believe there probably is a better way to understand the fulfillment of these prophetic words.<sup>37</sup> In Hos. 1:9 God said to the people of the northern kingdom, “you are not my people and I am not your God,” but He went on to speak of their ultimate restoration (see Hos. 1:10, 11; 2:23). (Hosea 1:1 compared with Isa. 1:1 demonstrates that Hosea was a contemporary of Isaiah.) In Rom. 9:24-27 the apostle Paul applied the words of Hos. 1:10; 2:23 (regarding those who were not God’s people but who were to become God’s people) to the Gentiles who became Christians (and thereby became part of God’s true Israel). From this point of view “the banished ones of Israel” (Isa. 11:12) could include the

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<sup>34</sup> On the need for the humbled, repentant remnant of Israel/Judah to return to God (and not just for those scattered across the earth to return to the land of Israel/Judah), see on Mic. 5:3 on pages 252, 253 of *Mid-Week Rapture* (including the endnotes).

<sup>35</sup> I listed Rev. 10:7 and Rev. 11:19 here because these verses confirm that God will ultimately bring to pass all the saving promises He made to ancient Israel. This does not mean that all the promises will be fulfilled exactly in the manner ancient Israel anticipated, but they will be fulfilled, and often in a manner more glorious than what was anticipated. Israel did not fully understand the glory of salvation through Messiah because, for one thing, they did not understand the full glory of the Person of Messiah. We are dependent on God’s new-covenant revelation to adequately understand the glory of Messiah and His saving work.

<sup>36</sup> The entire book of Revelation has been discussed in a verse-by-verse manner in *Mid-Week Rapture* (Rev. 11:1-14:5) or in my papers dated July 1999 (Revelation chapters 1-10), January 1999 (Rev. 14:6-19:21), and November 1998 (Revelation chapters 20-22).

<sup>37</sup> See the discussion of Zechariah chapter 10 on pages 197-202 of *Mid-Week Rapture*.

Gentiles that become part of God's true Israel through faith in Christ in the last days (in the days after the mid-week rapture).

I believe we can say that all the people of Israel/Judah that are assembled/gathered to God at Jerusalem after His end-time judgment of the world will have become Christians (part of true Israel.) **(13) Then the jealousy of Ephraim** [another name for the northern kingdom] **will depart, And those who harass Judah will be cut off; Ephraim will not be jealous of Judah, And Judah will not harass Ephraim.** [There was much strife and warfare between the northern and southern kingdoms, but after Israel/Judah is saved through Messiah, the saved remnant will coexist in peace as one kingdom, true Israel (cf., e.g., Ezek. 37:15-28). Furthermore, as we learned earlier in this chapter (and in chapters 2, 9), the remnant of the nations will be at peace with the remnant of (true) Israel; they will submit to the God of Israel; and they will be part of His worldwide kingdom.] **(14)** [These next three verses picture the end-time scene before Messiah has totally destroyed His enemies among the nations and left a humbled, repentant remnant of the nations.] **They** [the saved remnant of Israel/Judah] **will swoop down on the slopes of the Philistines on the west; Together they will plunder the sons of the east; They will possess Edom and Moab, And the sons of Ammon will be subject to them. (15) And the LORD will utterly destroy The tongue of the Sea of Egypt; And He will wave His hand over the River With His scorching wind; And He will strike it into seven streams And make men walk over dry-shod. (16) And there will be a highway from Assyria For the remnant of His people who will be left, Just as there was for Israel In the day that they came up out of the land of Egypt.** [The names of the nations listed in Isa. 11:14 were immediate neighbors of ancient Israel/Judah, with whom they often had conflicts. Isaiah 11:15 mentions two major ancient enemies of Israel/Judah, Egypt and Assyria. These ancient kingdoms/nations (all these kingdoms/nations existed in Isaiah's day) represent the kingdoms/nations that will exist in the last days. The "world" kingdom in the last days will be headed up by Antichrist. In God's end-time judgment of the world, He will deal with all His enemies, who are also the enemies of His people, true Israel. In the days of Isaiah, Assyria was a "world" kingdom (one of the seven "world" kingdoms the Bible speaks of); Egypt had been a "world" kingdom in the past, and it still was a substantial nation in the days of Isaiah. For a while Egypt was subdued by the Assyrians and became part of the Assyrian kingdom.

For God to destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt (Isa. 11:15) means that He will destroy all opposition in Egypt (cf., e.g., Isa. 19:16-25). The wording here in Isa. 11:15 builds on the fact that God had judged Egypt in the past, at the time of the exodus, at which time He opened a way through the Sea for the sons of Israel to escape from Egypt (in which the pursuing Egyptians were destroyed) as part of His end-time judgment of Egypt. See Isa. 11:11; 51:9-11. For God to wave His hand over the River (which undoubtedly refers to the Euphrates<sup>38</sup>) with His scorching wind and to strike it into seven streams, which can then be easily crossed by the remnant of Israel on the way back to their land, is a way of saying that God will judge the Assyrian kingdom and remove all opposition to Him and His people. See Zech. 10:9-12, which also speaks of God's end-time judgment of Egypt and Assyria in a similar way. The idea is that God's end-time judgment of the world, which

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<sup>38</sup> Assyria came against Israel from beyond the mighty Euphrates River (cf. Isa. 7:20). The invading, conquering armies of Assyria coming against Damascus and Israel/Judah were poetically described as the overflowing waters of the Euphrates River in Isa. 8:7, 8.

will deal with and remove all His enemies and the enemies of His people (true Israel), will result in a second exodus for His people. As I mentioned, several prophetic verses show that, after the nations have been judged, they will even help the saved, dispersed remnant of true Israel return to Jerusalem and the land of Israel.

Quite a few prophetic passages make the point that the humbled, repentant remnant of the nations will, in some ways, be subject to Israel (cf., e.g., Isa. 45:14-25; 49:23; 60:1-14; 61:4-9 and Dan. 7:17, 22, 27), but it is clear that this will mean blessing for the remnant of the nations in that they will have come to a right relationship with God, being saved through Israel's Messiah. The book of Revelation confirms that true Israel will reign forever, which includes, I believe, reigning over (the elect of) the nations (Rev. 20:1-22:5).]

## ISAIAH 13:6-13

Isaiah chapter 13 starts out (13:1-5), and it ends up (13:14-22), prophesying about God's judgment of ancient Babylon through the Medes (13:17) and Persians. (The fall of ancient Babylon [539/538 BC] through the Medes and Persians took place more than a hundred years after Isaiah died.) In the verses we are discussing in this paper (13:6-13), Isaiah's prophecy clearly goes beyond the judgment of ancient Babylon and prophesies regarding God's end-time judgment of the world (including Israel). God's worldwide kingdom cannot be established in its full sense until the kingdom of the world has been destroyed. Babylon, as in the book of Revelation, is sometimes used as a symbol for the world.

This prophecy includes the familiar theme that God will leave a remnant of mankind (including a remnant of (true) Israel and a remnant of the nations) after His end-time judgment of the world.

**Wail, for the day of the LORD** [cf., e.g., Isa. 2:12; 13:9; 34:2; and Zeph. 1:7, 14] **is near! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. (7) Therefore all hands will fall limp, And every man's heart will melt. (8) They will be terrified, Pains and anguish will take hold of them; They will writhe like a woman in labor, They will look at one another in astonishment, Their faces aflame. (9) Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, Cruel, with fury and burning anger, To make the land** [In this context it would probably be better to translate the Hebrew noun (*erets*) "earth" instead of "land." Earth is a common translation for this noun; the NASB translated it earth 656 times in the Old Testament. Note the word "world" in Isa. 13:11.] **a desolation; And He will exterminate its sinners from it. (10) For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not flash forth their light; The sun will be dark when it rises And the moon will not shed its light.** [On the darkness that accompanies the day of the Lord, see number 9 on pages 14, 15 of *Mid-Week Rapture*.] **(11) Thus I will punish the world for its evil And the wicked for their iniquity** [cf. Isa. 11:4; 26:21]; **I will also put an end to the arrogance of the proud** [cf. Isa. 2:11] **And abase the haughtiness of the ruthless** [cf. Isa. 29:5, 20]. **(12) I will make mortal man scarcer than pure gold And mankind** [scarcer] **than the gold of Ophir** [cf. 1 Kings 9:28; Job 28:16; and Psalm 45:9]. [This verse, which is poetry in the Hebrew, is more pessimistic regarding the number of people that will be left after God's end-time judgment than many other verses (cf., e.g., Isa. 2:2-4), but there are other verses similar to this verse (e.g., Isa. 17:5, 6; 24:6, 13, 14), and Zeph. 1:18 sounds even more pessimistic than this verse (but compare Zeph. 3:8-11, 20). See under Isa. 24:6; 25:3.] **(13) Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, And the earth will be shaken from its place At the fury of the LORD of hosts In the day of His burning anger.** [Compare Isa. 2:19, 21; 24:1, 18-23; 34:4; Hag. 2:6, 21; Heb. 12:26-29; and Rev. 6:12-17.]

## ISAIAH CHAPTER 14

**When the LORD will have compassion on Jacob and again choose Israel** [cf., e.g., Isa. 54:4-17], **and settle them in their own land, then strangers will join them and attach themselves to the house of Jacob.** [The names *Jacob* and *Israel* are used interchangeably here. The setting, as in so many of the prophetic passages we are studying in this paper, is right after God has judged the world at the end of this age. By that time the end-time remnant of Israel/Jacob will have become part of God's true Israel through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The "strangers" are the humbled, repentant remnant of the nations. This remnant of the nations will "join...attach themselves to" true Israel through submitting to the God of true Israel (including God the Son, the Messiah), but as the next verse (and many other verses) demonstrates, they are not fully incorporated into true Israel – the nations remain distinct from true Israel. This is true during the millennial kingdom and in the subsequent eternal state pictured in Revelation chapters 21, 22.<sup>39</sup>] **(2) The peoples will take them along and bring them to their place** [On the (remnant of the) peoples of the nations bringing the dispersed members of true Israel back to the land of Israel, see under Isa. 11:10-12.], **and the house of Israel will possess them as an inheritance in the land of the LORD as male servants and female servants; and they will take their captors captive and will rule over their** [former] **oppressors.** [On the nations being subject to true Israel, see under Isa. 11:14-16.] **(3) And it will be in the day when the LORD gives you rest from your pain and turmoil and harsh service in which you have been enslaved** [cf., e.g., Isa. 40:1, 2], **(4) that you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon, and say, "How the oppressor has ceased, And how fury has ceased!** ["You" here in Isa. 14:3, 4 is true Israel. The end-time remnant of true Israel won't experience the full salvation pictured in Isa. 14:1, 2 until Antichrist (the last ruler of the "world" kingdom) has been destroyed and it is time for the millennial kingdom to be established.

It must also be understood that the salvation pictured in Isa. 14:1, 2 cannot come to pass until the ultimate "oppressor," Satan, the god of this world, has been dealt with (cf., e.g., Isa. 24:21, 22; 27:1; and Rev. 20:1-3, 7-10). (Satan is the ruler behind Antichrist [Rev. 13:2].) Many think that Satan is directly spoken to in Isa. 14:12-14. I agree with the majority that Satan probably is not directly spoken to in those verses. It is clear, however, that the pride and the fall of the "king of Babylon" follows in the footsteps of the pride and fall of the god of this world. Satan is the one behind all the evil rulers of the kingdoms of this world.

Judah (the southern kingdom) had some temporary "rest" when the Medes and Persians (under Cyrus) overthrew the Babylonians, and some of Jews returned from captivity and rebuilt the temple, but they still were under the Medo-Persian "world" kingdom, and they did not have much true rest. True rest can only come through Messiah and His reign, which is pictured, for example, in Isaiah chapters 9, 11.] **(5) The LORD has broken the staff of the wicked, The scepter of rulers (6) Which used to strike the peoples in fury with unceasing strokes, Which subdued the nations in anger with unrestrained persecution.** [The "world" kingdoms like the Assyrians,

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<sup>39</sup> The elect of the nations will be saved through the Lord Jesus Christ (e.g., Rev. 21:27), but, since they are distinct from true Israel, it might be confusing to call them Christians.

Babylonians, and (especially) the revived Roman Empire under Antichrist subdued the nations and struck the peoples.] **(7) The whole earth is at rest and is quiet; They break forth into shouts of joy.** [After God is done judging the world in the last days, the remnant of the peoples/nations will “break forth into shouts of joy” along with the end-time remnant of true Israel. Compare, for example, Isa. 24:13-16a; Psalms 47, 98.] **(8) Even the cypress trees rejoice over you, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying ‘Since you were laid low, no tree cutter comes up against us.’** [The leaders of the “world” kingdoms frequently claimed much of this choice lumber for themselves.] **(9) Sheol from beneath is excited over you to meet you when you come; It arouses for you the spirits of the dead, all the leaders of the earth; It raises all the kings of the nations from their thrones. (10) They will all respond and say to you, ‘Even you have been made weak as we, You have become like us. (11) Your pomp and the music of your harps Have been brought down to Sheol; Maggots are spread out as your bed beneath you And worms are your covering.’** [These words of verses 9-11, which are spoken to “the king of Babylon” (Isa. 14:4), are clearly intended to greatly humiliate this ruler who is so full of pride. These words are spoken, at least for the most part, to the last ruler of the “world” kingdom(s), Antichrist.] **(12) How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning** [The Hebrew noun translated “O star of the morning” is *helel*, which means “shining one.” It refers to Venus, the bright morning star. The following words “the son of the dawn” also refer to the morning star. In Job 38:7 the angels are called “the morning stars” and “the sons of God” (cf. Job 1:6). (In the book of Revelation, stars frequently symbolize angels.) The king of Babylon (a pagan king), in his great pride, is charged with likening himself with the angels of God and the gods of the nations. And as we will see in the following verses, he is also charged with going far beyond that manifestation of pride. Some of the kings of the “world” kingdoms are noted for their great pride, and especially the last king/ruler, Antichrist (cf., e.g., Dan. 4:30; 8:10, 11 [these verses in Daniel chapter 8 refer to both Antiochus IV (a type of Antichrist) and Antichrist]; Dan. 11:36; and 2 Thess. 2:4 [these last two verses speak of Antichrist]).

The Old Testament translated into Latin has the word *lucifer* (which means “light-bearer” in Latin) for *helel*. *Lucifer* “was the Latin name for the planet Venus, the brightest object in the sky apart from the sun and moon, appearing sometimes as the evening, sometimes as the morning star. ... [This name] is applied tauntingly as a title for the king of Babylon, who in his glory and pomp had set himself among the gods.”<sup>40</sup> The KJV and NKJV have “Lucifer” here; this is the only place the word is used in the KJV. The name *Lucifer* for Satan was derived from this verse in that some Christians thought that this verse was addressed to him and that it speaks of his pride and fall (cf. Luke 10:18; 1 Tim. 3:6; Rev. 9:1-11; and 12:7-9). As I mentioned, I agree with the majority that this verse does not directly address Satan. We undoubtedly can and should say, however, that the pride and fall of the king of Babylon fits the pattern of the pride and fall of Satan, the god of this world, the one behind the evil rulers of this world (cf., e.g., 2 Cor. 4:4; Rev. 13:2).], **son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations!** [“you who once laid low the nations!” (NIV)] **(13) But you said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven** [These words, which fit a proud king living on the earth (cf. Ezek. 28:1, 2), don’t fit Satan very well in that he started out in heaven; in our day he still has

<sup>40</sup> D. H. Wheaton, “Lucifer,” *New Bible Dictionary*, second edition [Tyndale House, 1962], page 713.

access to heavenly places, but he will be thrown down to the earth in the middle of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week (Rev. 12:6-17); at the end of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week, he will be cast into the abyss and held there throughout the millennium (Rev. 20:1-3); then after a short release, he will be cast into the eternal lake of fire (Rev. 20:7-10).]; **I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north** ["I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain" (NIV)]. [The king of Babylon, being a man, is charged with not only trying to exalt himself to be among the angels of God and the gods of the nations, but with trying to be above them. The "mount of assembly/sacred mountain," speaking from a common point of view of the ancient world, referred to the mountain of the gods situated in the north. As the next verse shows, the king of Babylon is charged with wanting to be "like the Most High" (cf. Gen. 3:5).] **(14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.** **(15) Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol** [the place where the spirits/souls of men go at death; in Old Testament days even the believers went to Sheol/Hades, but not as a place of torment (cf., e.g., Luke 16:19-31)], **To the recesses** [The NIV has "to the depths [of the pit]." The same Hebrew word translated "recesses" here and in verse 13 by the NASB is translated "utmost heights" by the NIV in verse 13 and "depths [of the pit]" here in verse 14. The king of Babylon aims at the *utmost heights*, but God casts him down to the *depths* of the pit. Pride that is not abandoned through repentance always leads to a great fall.] **of the pit. (16) [The scene here is back on the earth.] Those who see you will gaze at you, They will ponder over you, saying 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, Who shook kingdoms, (17) Who made the world like a wilderness And overthrew its cities, Who did not allow his prisoners to go home?' (18) All the kings of the nations lie in glory, Each** [speaking of their bodies; their spirits/souls are in Sheol/Hades] **in his own tomb. (19) But you have been cast out of your tomb** [Most commentators agree that the idea here is that the king of Babylon is denied a burial in the first place. This manifests a tremendous disrespect for this *great* king; he suffers the ultimate disgrace; he is "like a rejected [literally, abhorred] branch," "like a trampled corpse."] **Like a rejected branch, Clothed with the slain who are pierced with a sword** [The NIV has, "you are covered with the slain." The idea seems to be that instead of being clothed with the honor and glory fitting such a *great* king, he is "clothed/covered" with the bodies of those who were killed around him – not a pretty picture.], **Who go down to the stones of the pit** [The "pit" here seems to refer to the pit of Sheol, as in Isa. 14:15. The spirits/souls of the fallen go down to Sheol/Hades. On going down to Sheol/the pit, cf., e.g., Isa. 38:18; Ezek. 26:20; and Psalm 28:1. Some think the pit here in verse 19 refers to a grave.] **Like a trampled corpse. (20) You will not be united with them in burial** ["Them" here in verse 20 speaks of "the kings of the nations [who] lie in glory, each in his own tomb" mentioned in verse 18.], **Because you have ruined your country, You have slain your people. May the offspring of evildoers not be mentioned forever. (21) Prepare for his sons a place of slaughter Because of the iniquity of their fathers. They must not arise and take possession of the earth And fill the face of the world with cities." (22) "I will rise up against them," declares the LORD of hosts, "and will cut off from Babylon name and survivors, offspring and posterity," declares the LORD.** [Compare Psalms 21:10; 37:28. The cities established by such people would be filled with iniquity. Before God's

kingdom can be fully established, all those who are committed to evil (those who never will repent) must be removed by the judgment of God. *Babylon* is a symbol for the world here, as it is in the book of Revelation.] **(23) “I will also make it a possession for the hedgehog [cf. Isa. 34:11] and swamps of water, and I will sweep it with the broom of destruction [cf. Isa. 13:6; 1 Kings 14:10],” declares the LORD of hosts.** [The kingdom of Babylon/the kingdom of this world will be totally removed by God’s end-time judgment (cf., e.g., Rev. 14:8; 19:2, 3). Ancient Babylon, by the way, was not destroyed when God judged that “world” city and kingdom through the Medes and Persians.] **(24) The LORD of hosts has sworn saying, “Surely, just as I have intended so it has happened, and just as I have planned so it will stand, (25) to break Assyria in My land, and I will trample him on My mountains. Then his yoke will be removed from them and his burden removed from their shoulder.** [Compare Isa. 9:4; 10:27; and Nah. 1:13-15. Assyria was the “world” kingdom in the days of Isaiah. There was at least a partial fulfillment of these prophetic words in 701 BC (see 2 Kings 19:32-37; Isa. 37:33-38). Every partial fulfillment of God’s prophetic word serves to confirm that the complete fulfillment will follow at the right time, God’s time; He *is* in control. Then in 609 BC, Assyria fell to the Babylonians. Quite a few end-time prophecies use “Assyria” as a symbol for the/a “world” power (cf., e.g., parts of Isaiah chapter 10; Isa. 11:16; 19:23-25; Mic. 5:5, 6; and Zech. 10:10, 11). I’ll quote the footnote included in the *Scofield Reference Bible*, which is attached to the words “whole earth” found in the next verse.<sup>41</sup> “This universality is significant and marks the whole passage as referring, not merely to a near judgment upon Assyria, but in a yet larger sense to the final crash of the present world-system at the end of the age. (See ‘Times of the Gentiles,’ Luke 21:24; Rev. 16:14; Dan. 2:44, 45; ‘Armageddon,’ Rev. 16:14; 19:17.) No other such universal catastrophe on the nations is known to Scripture.”] **(26) This is the plan devised against the whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out against all the nations. (27) For the LORD of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?”** **(28) In the year that King Ahaz died** [Compare Isa. 6:1. These last five verses of chapter 14 are rather difficult, and the interpretations of these verses vary substantially. For one thing, the year that King Ahaz (a king of Judah in the days of Isaiah) died is not known with certainty. Some put his death in 727 BC, but the most widely accepted date is 715 BC.] **this oracle came: (29) “Do not rejoice, O Philistia, all of you, Because the rod that struck you is broken; For from the serpent’s root a viper will come out, And its fruit will be a flying serpent.** [The most likely scenario is that Philistia was involved at this time in helping organize a revolt against Assyria. Envoys (messengers) from Philistia had apparently come to Jerusalem (see verse 32) to enlist the support of Judah in this revolt.<sup>42</sup> The fact that the rod that had struck the Philistines

<sup>41</sup> Oxford University Press, copyright 1917. This KJV Bible is the first one I ever bought; I bought it about the time I became a born-again Christian in 1964.

<sup>42</sup> John N. Oswalt (*Book of Isaiah*, chapters 1-39 [Eerdmans, 1986], page 330) mentions an “alliance of Moab, Edom, and the Philistines against Sargon [the Assyrian king at that time] in 714 BC.” J. Alec Motyer (*Isaiah* [Inter-Varsity Press, 1999], pages 122, 123) says, “Throughout the Assyrian period Philistia was a ceaseless agitator for rebellion. In 734 BC Gath [one of the five key Philistine cities, along with Ashkelon, Gaza, Ashdod, and Ekron] refused tribute and was sacked; in 720 Philistia connived with Egypt to rebel, and Sargon II defeated Egypt at Gath and took Ashkelon and Gaza; in 711 Ashdod was somehow central to an unsuccessful west Palestinian revolt; in 705 Ashkelon rebelled and fell to

was broken probably just means that the Assyrians were in a (temporary) weakened position. Assyria was the primary *rod* that God was using to chasten the nations in those days (cf. Isa. 10:5), and He was not done with that rod yet. Assyria continued on as the “world” kingdom for another hundred years, until 609 BC. God also had other *rods* yet planned for the future, including the Babylonians, the Greeks, the Romans, the revived Roman Empire with Antichrist as its leader, and finally the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the world in the last days and establish God’s worldwide kingdom of righteousness. God’s rod was not really broken, and many of the judgments yet to come (including those through the Assyrians) would be more intense, as this verse prophesied.] **(30) Those who are most helpless will eat, And the needy will lie down in security** [cf. Isa. 3:14, 15; 11:4, 10; and Psalm 72]; **I will destroy your root with famine, And it will kill off your survivors.** [God has ways to take care of those who seek refuge in Him throughout the ages (cf. Isa. 3:10), but I believe the words of this verse look forward to the results of His end-time judgment of the world, which is so often mentioned in the passages we are studying in this paper. The humbled, repentant end-time remnant of Israel/Judah will be secure under the ultimate King, the Lord Jesus Christ. Philistia will cease to exist as a nation, but there is room to see a humbled, repentant remnant of the Philistines (the descendants of the Philistines and those living where the Philistines used to live) coming to God’s city and kingdom seeking for and finding refuge as part of the remnant of the nations (see verse 32; cf. Isa. 11:14; Zech. 9:6, 7).

As Isaiah continues in chapters 15, 16 he deals with Moab (another immediate neighbor of Israel/Judah). In Isa. 16:1-5 we see the humbled, repentant end-time remnant of Moab coming to true Israel for salvation; in 16:5 we see that the Lord Jesus Christ will be the King of true Israel at that time. In chapter 17 we see the humbled, repentant end-time remnant of the Arameans along with the humbled, repentant end-time remnant of Israel turning to God. In chapter 18 it is the Ethiopians. In chapter 20 it is the humbled, repentant end-time remnants of Egypt and Assyria.] **(31) Wail, O gate; cry, O city; Melt away, O Philistia, all of you; For smoke comes from the north** [The Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks, Romans, and Antichrist (and there are others) come against Israel and her immediate neighbors “from the north.”], **And there is no straggler in his ranks** [The armies coming against them are organized, committed, and typically brutal]. [The Philistines are to wail because the rod of God’s judgment is not broken after all (cf. 14:29). The rod will continue its work with the Philistines until all the evil has been dealt with and removed (one way or another).] **(32) How then will one answer the messengers** [“envoys” (NIV)] **of the nation** [Philistia]? **That the LORD has founded Zion** [cf. Psalm 87<sup>43</sup>], **And the afflicted of His people will seek refuge in it** [God always is a refuge, one way or another, for those who are faithful to Him (cf. Isa. 25:4; 57:13)].” [As I mentioned, these messengers/envoys apparently came from Philistia to urge Judah to join them in their rebellion against the Assyrians. Isaiah frequently railed against Judah’s looking to the nations to try to solve their

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Sennacherib [an Assyrian king] in his campaign of 701. The death of Ahaz in 715 could well have been the occasion of a Philistine approach to Hezekiah [who reigned in Judah after Ahaz] with a view to joint anti-Assyrian action. ....”

<sup>43</sup> This important psalm, which includes the good news of the ultimate salvation of (the elect of) the nations, is discussed on pages 106, 107 of my November 1998 paper. Philistia is one of the nations specifically mentioned (Psalm 87:4).

problems, and this verse undoubtedly includes that message for Judah. The only real refuge for any people (including the Philistines) is God Himself (the Creator, Savior, and Judge). The time will come when the humbled, repentant remnant of mankind left after God's end-time judgment of the world (including the remnant of Israel/Judah) will turn to Him – they will come to Zion (God's city/kingdom).<sup>44</sup> Individuals from the nations didn't have to wait for God's rod of judgment or for the end of the age; they could turn to God (the God of Israel) in repentance and faith and become part of His true Israel, and some of them did. Today many turn to God through faith in Christ and become part of true Israel.

It is probably best to understand the words "the afflicted of His people" in the sense "the afflicted ones, His people," with "His people" being in apposition with "the afflicted [ones]." Both expressions apparently refer to the humbled, repentant remnant of mankind left after God's end-time judgment of the world (including the remnant of the Philistines [see under verse 30], or the modern day counterpart of the Philistines, and those of Israel/Judah). They will be ready to seek refuge in God and His city/kingdom under His terms and to be faithful to Him. Significantly, God calls the converted end-time remnant of Egypt "My people" in Isa. 19:25. (Isaiah 19:4, 16-25 are discussed in a verse-by-verse manner in this paper.) The fact that the remnant of the nations can be called "God's people" does not change the fact that many verses demonstrate that the nations will be subordinate to true Israel.

God (through foreknowledge) knew who His people were before the foundation of the world. Their names can be found in the Lamb's book of life; the names of the elect (whether part of God's true Israel or part of the nations) have been in the book of life since the foundation of the world (cf., e.g., Rev. 13:8; 17:8; and 21:27).]

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<sup>44</sup> See sections 1 and 2 of the appendix of my November 1998 paper.

## ISAIAH 15:9-16:5

We noted that Isaiah chapter 13 began and ended prophesying about God's judgment of ancient Babylon through the Medes and Persians, but that verses 6-13 of that chapter prophesied about God's end-time judgment of the world. As we discussed, much of Isaiah chapter 14 also looks to the end of the age. The verses we are considering here (Isa. 15:9-16:5) prophesy about the end of the age (like Isa. 13:6-13), while the verses that precede 15:9 (15:1-8) and the verses that follow 16:5 (16:6-14) prophesy about God's judgment of Moab in the days of Isaiah through Assyria (the "world" kingdom in the days of Isaiah).

**(15:9) For the waters of Dimon are full of blood** [This first line (along with 15:1-8) prophesies regarding the overthrow of Moab by Assyria. The waters of Dimon are full of the blood of slain Moabites.]; **Surely I will bring added woes upon Dimon, A lion upon the fugitives of Moab and upon the remnant of the land.** [God's judgments against Moab would not be over then; "added woes" were yet to come. God's work will not be done until Moab ceases to exist and the humbled, repentant end-time remnant of Moab (the end-time counterpart of ancient Moab) submits to the God of true Israel. Moab doesn't exist as a nation in our day, but the nation of Jordan occupies the territory of ancient Moab, and some of the descendants of the ancient Moabites are probably still around.] **(16:1) Send the tribute lamb** [The NIV has "lambs" (cf. 2 Kings 3:4).] **to the ruler [Ruler] of the land, from Sela** [There's widespread agreement that *Sela* refers to the city of Petra.] **by way of the wilderness to the mountain of the daughter of Zion** [cf., e.g., Isa. 2:2]. [The humbled, repentant end-time remnant of Moab will be ready to submit to the Ruler of the land of Israel/Judah. The "tribute lamb(s)" is a sign of submission. (Isaiah 16:6, speaking of the great pride of Moab before they are humbled by God says, "We have heard of the pride of Moab, an excessive pride; *Even* of his arrogance, pride, and fury; His idle boasts are false.") Isaiah 16:5 helps confirm that the Ruler will be the Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah 16:4 confirms that the time setting for these verses is at the end of this age, about the time of the end of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week: At that time God will have established complete peace in the land of Israel that will expand to cover the earth. Some individual Moabites, like Ruth, submitted to God in Old Testament days and became part of His true Israel.] **(2) Then, like fleeing birds or scattered nestlings** [The NIV has, "Like fluttering birds pushed from the nest."], **the daughters** [The NIV has "women."] **of Moab will be at the fords of the Arnon.** [Although the women of Moab are mentioned here, the end-time remnant of Moab will not be limited to women.] **(3) "Give us advice, make a decision** [The words of verses 3, 4 are spoken to true Israel. Israel will have already been saved through the Lord Jesus Christ at that time (about the end of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week). If the word *us* is retained, which was added by the NASB in italics, these words are spoken by the Moabites. It's quite possible that Isaiah spoke all the words of verses 3, 4.]; **Cast your shadow like night at high noon** [Compare Isa. 25:4, 5; 32:2. Like a large rock (for example) casts a shadow and protects from the rays of the sun, the shadow cast by true Israel (with their God and His Son, the Christ and the Ruler of Israel) offers the only effective, lasting protection for any people.]; **hide the outcasts** ["fugitives" (NIV)], **do not betray the**

**fugitive** [“refugees” (NIV)]. **(4) Let the outcasts** [“fugitives” (NIV)] **of Moab stay with you; be a hiding place to them from the destroyer** [cf. 1 Kings 18:4].” **For the extortioner has come to an end, destruction has ceased, Oppressors have completely *disappeared* from the land.** [Compare Isa. 9:4; 14:4; 49:26; 51:13; and 54:14. The NIV has, “The oppressor will come to an end, and destruction will cease; the aggressor will vanish from the land.”] **(5) A throne will even be established in lovingkindness, and a judge** [Judge] **will sit on it in faithfulness in the tent of David; moreover, he** [He] **will seek justice and be prompt in righteousness.** [Compare Isa. 9:6, 7; 32:1; Dan. 7:14; Mic. 4:7; and Luke 1:33. The Lord Jesus Christ, who (as far as the flesh was concerned) was born in the lineage of King David, is the ultimate Ruler and Judge.]

## ISAIAH CHAPTER 17

This chapter of Isaiah starts out (in 17:1-3) prophesying of God's intense judgment of the kingdom of Aram/the Arameans (with the capital city Damascus) and the northern kingdom of Israel (which is called *Ephraim* in 17:3; with the capital city Samaria). Isaiah 7:1-8:4 deal with an alliance by these two kingdoms against Judah in the days of the prophet Isaiah and King Ahaz of Judah (a king who was not faithful to God). Isaiah 7:5-9, 16; 8:4 prophesied (as it came to pass) that these two kingdoms would be overthrown and carried into captivity by the Assyrians.

The rest of Isaiah chapter 17 builds on the judgment of these two kingdoms and looks to the end of the age when God will greatly humble all the nations by His end-time judgment of the world. The humbled remnant of these kingdoms/nations will then submit to God.

**The oracle concerning Damascus. “Behold, Damascus is about to be removed from being a city** [The Hebrew does not have a word here corresponding with the word “about” of the NASB. I would not include this word in the translation; it is not included in the KJV, NKJV, or the NIV.] **And will become a fallen ruin.** [Compare Isa. 25:2, which is a verse that prophesies about God's end-time judgment of the world. Although Damascus fell to the Assyrians in 732 BC, it did not cease being a city or become a fallen ruin at that time. As with the other prophecies concerning the nations that we are studying in this paper, the ultimate fulfillment will take place at the end of the age when God judges the world.

I'll quote part of what Harry Bultema said here.<sup>45</sup> “This prediction [concerning Damascus] has yet to be completely fulfilled, for in Jeremiah's day [Jeremiah's ministry was some one hundred years after Isaiah's] it was a flourishing city, and even today it is said to be the oldest city in the world (cf. Gen. 15:2 [and 14:15] where Damascus is already mentioned).<sup>46</sup> According to 2 Kings 16:9 Tiglath-pileser [an Assyrian king] captured it and killed its king Rezin; but he did not make it a *heap*. This chapter also, however, points to the terrible end times of the Great Tribulation [I wouldn't use the words “the Great Tribulation” here, but I agree with Bultema that this prophecy of Isaiah points to God's end-time judgment of the world.] when all the cities of the Gentiles will fall including Damascus (Rev. 16:19).” **(2) The cities of Aroer are forsaken** [I'll quote what John A. Martin said here.<sup>47</sup> “Since Aroer was a city in Moab, *the cities of Aroer* are difficult to understand. Some Septuagint (Greek) manuscripts read that Damascus and her cities will be ‘abandoned forever.’ ”]; **They will be for flocks to lie down in, And there will be no one to frighten them.** **(3) The fortified city will disappear from Ephraim, And sovereignty from Damascus** [cf. Isa. 7:8, 16; 8:4] **And the remnant of Aram** [As with the remnant of the Philistines (Isa. 14:32) and the remnant of the Moabites (Isa. 16:1-5), the humbled, repentant end-time remnant of the Arameans will come to true Israel and the God of true Israel for refuge and salvation.]; **They** [the remnant of the

<sup>45</sup> *Commentary on Isaiah* [Kregel, 1981; originally published in Dutch in 1923], page 184.

<sup>46</sup> Homer Hailey (*Commentary on Isaiah* [Baker, 1985], page 152) mentions that “Damascus is reported to be the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world.”

<sup>47</sup> *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Old Testament [Victor, 1985], page 1064.

Arameans] **will be like the glory of the sons of Israel** [Israel here undoubtedly refers to Ephraim, the northern kingdom. Samaria, the capital city of Ephraim, fell to the Assyrians in 722/721 BC.],” **Declares the LORD of hosts.** [As verse 4 shows, “the glory” of the remnant of Ephraim (and, according to this verse, the glory of the remnant of Aram will be like the glory of the remnant of Ephraim) will be very thin/faded/low indeed. But the good news is that there will be a humbled, repentant end-time remnant for both nations. And, as verses 7, 8 show, this remnant (along with the remnant of mankind worldwide) will submit to God after His end-time judgment of the world. This fits the pattern established by Isaiah chapters 13-27, and other passages. When the remnant of the Arameans (and other nations) finally submit to God at the end of this age, they will begin to experience the *glory* of God in a very positive way and in a very full dimension. All those from the nations left to enter the millennial kingdom that do not later rebel will have a place in God’s new heaven and new earth (as pictured in Revelation chapters 21, 22).] **(4) Now in that day** [after God’s end-time judgment has been accomplished] **the glory of Jacob** [Jacob here apparently refers to Ephraim, the northern kingdom.] **will fade** [literally, become thin], **And the fatness of his flesh will become lean.** **(5) It will be even like the reaper gathering the standing grain, As his arm harvests the ears, Or it will be like one gleaning ears of grain In the valley of Rephaim.** **(6) Yet gleanings will be left in it like the shaking of an olive tree, Two or three olives on the topmost bough, Four or five on the branches of a fruitful tree, Declares the LORD, the God of Israel.** [In Isa. 24:13 the humbled, repentant end-time remnant of mankind worldwide after God’s end-time judgment is pictured with similar words.] **(7) In that day man will have regard for his Maker** [This wording fits mankind worldwide; it is not limited to those of the northern kingdom of Israel, or to those of Israel and Judah combined. The people of true Israel are the exception; Christians who are living for God do not wait for the day of judgment to have regard for their Maker. They will be raptured from the earth at the time Christ returns to judge the world.] **And his eyes will look to the Holy One of Israel.** **(8) He will not have regard for the altars, the work of his hands, Nor will he look to that which his fingers have made, Even the Asherim** [i.e. wooden symbols of a pagan female deity] **and incense stands.** [Compare, for example, Isa. 2:18, 20. The humbled, repentant end-time remnant of the world will forsake their former gods and false religious practices to worship the one true God.

I’ll quote part of what Bultema said here.<sup>48</sup> “Not only Israel will see Him; thus, the text speaks of a *man* in the most general sense of the word. [Bultema is following the KJV with the translation “a man.” It is better to translate “man” with the NASB. The Hebrew has the definite article with the word for man (*adam*).] This glorious Messiah [God the Father cannot be excluded here.] will take such a great place in the heart of all men that they will no longer look at the work of their own hands, but they will forget them, despise them, and cast them away. ‘And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one’ (Zech. 14:9). In [Isa.] 2:20 we saw that at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ all idolatry will be abolished and all false religions put away to make place for the one religion of King Jesus.”] **(9) In that day their strong cities** [Isaiah is apparently prophesying about the strong cities of Ephraim, but it is to be understood that the strong cities of the Arameans and of the rest of mankind will suffer a similar fate through

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<sup>48</sup> *Commentary on Isaiah*, page 186.

God's end-time judgment of the world.] **will be like forsaken places in the forest, Or like branches which they abandoned before the sons of Israel; And the land will be a desolation.** [I'll quote part of what J. Alec Motyer said here.<sup>49</sup> "The Hebrew, taken in order, reads 'their strong cities will be like the forsaken thing of forest and height which they left because of the sons of Israel.' Doubtless the ruins of the long-deserted, overgrown fortresses of the pre-Israelite inhabitants of Canaan were still visible." The idea seems to be that the cities of Ephraim will become desolate (through God's judgments) just like the cities of those who lived in that land before Israel became desolate when Israel conquered them.] **(10) For you have forgotten the God of your salvation And have not remembered the rock of your refuge.** [These words are apparently spoken to backsliden Ephraim. On God as the Rock of refuge for His people, compare Deut. 32:4, 18; Psalm 18:2; and Isa. 26:4.] **Therefore you plant delightful plants And set them with vine slips** [According to Webster's Dictionary, a "slip" is "a stem, root, twig, etc. cut or broken off a plant and used for planting or grafting."] **of a strange god. (11) In the day that you plant it you carefully fence it in, And in the morning you bring your seed to blossom; But the harvest will be a heap In a day of sickness and incurable pain.** [All the pagan practices that Ephraim (or Judah, or the Christian church) pick up from the nations/world (with at least most of them ultimately coming from the devil and his demons) constitute rebellion against God and ultimately lead to a harvest of judgment.] **(12) Alas, the uproar of many peoples Who roar like the roaring of the seas, And the rumbling of nations Who rush on like the rumbling of mighty waters! (13) The nations rumble on like the rumbling of many waters, But He will rebuke them and they will flee far away, And be chased like chaff in the mountains before the wind, Or like whirling dust before a gale.** [Cf., e.g., Psalms 1:4-6; 9:5 (with all of Psalm 9); 83:9-18; Isa. 29:5-8; and 41:11-16.] **(14) At evening time, behold, there is terror! Before morning they are no more.** [God's partial judgment of Assyria in Isaiah's day (see 2 Kings 19:32-37; Isa. 37:36-39) fits the wording here, and it foreshadows God's end-time *night* of judgment.] **Such will be the portion of those who plunder us And the lot of those who pillage us.** [These last three verses fit well with the theme of this chapter. The nations roar on, doing their own thing; they attack the people of God (true Israel), especially looking to the end-times under Antichrist (cf., e.g., Psalm 2; Rev. 12:13-19:21); but they will be judged by God, and they will cease to exist as peoples independent of God or as enemies of the people of God. The good news for the nations, though it is not mentioned in these last three verses, is that the humbled, repentant end-time remnant will submit to God.]

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<sup>49</sup> *Isaiah* [Inter-Varsity Press, 1999], page 133.

## ISAIAH CHAPTER 18

This chapter of Isaiah, which apparently shows the submission of (the end-time remnant of) the Ethiopians to God, has a different emphasis than many of the chapters we are looking at. This chapter doesn't directly mention the judgment of the Ethiopians that will reduce them to a humbled, repentant remnant; that point must be inferred – it is an easy inference to make with the subject matter of this chapter and in context with all of chapters 13-27. The primary judgment pictured in this chapter is God's judgment of the "world" kingdom (after He has used that kingdom to judge many nations, including Ethiopia). We can see God's judgment of Assyria here, the "world" kingdom that was causing such great havoc for so many nations (including Judah and Ethiopia) in the days of Isaiah, but the more important fulfillment of this prophecy will take place at the end of this age, when God destroys the final, super-evil "world" kingdom that is headed up by Antichrist.

Having been humbled by God's end-time judgment of the world won't be the only factor that leads the end-time remnant of the nations to turn to God. Another important factor that will lead to their conversion is their learning what God is really like. For one thing, He keeps His Word. He will save His people, true Israel, and He will destroy His enemies and the enemies of His people who persist in rebellion (cf., e.g., Isaiah chapters 25, 26). The end-time remnant of the nations will be ready to admit that the God of true Israel is God, the only God, and that His ways are right, including His judgments. They will be thankful that He has destroyed the evil "world" kingdom, and they will be thankful that He has spared them as a remnant.

There was an important foreshadowing of God's judging a "world" kingdom (Assyria) in the incident recorded in Isa. 37:8-38; 2 Kings 19:8-37; and 2 Chron. 32:9-23 when God fought for Judah (in the days of King Hezekiah) and overthrew the Assyrian army that threatened Jerusalem in 701 BC. But that defeat did not overthrow Assyria, which continued as the "world" kingdom until it was overthrown by Babylon in 609 BC. The comments under Isa. 18:2 (also see Isaiah chapter 20) show that the Ethiopians were defeated by the Assyrians and that their problems did not end in 701 BC.

**Alas, oh land of whirring [or, buzzing] wings** [The most common view is that the whirring/buzzing wings speak of a particular flying insect, or of all the flying insects of Ethiopia. The NIV also translates "whirring wings," and in the margin it has "or, of locusts." In Deut. 28:42 the Hebrew noun (*tselatsal*), which is very similar to the Hebrew noun (*tsiltsal*) translated "whirring" here in Isa. 18:1, was translated "swarms of locusts" by the NIV.<sup>50</sup> I assume that those commentators are correct who see more than literal flying insects here. J. Alec Motyer, for example, comments that the "whirring suggest[s] a busy restless world."<sup>51</sup> The Ethiopians were apparently engaged

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<sup>50</sup> Both of these Hebrew nouns, which were derived from the same Hebrew verb, were used just once in the Old Testament. The BDB Hebrew Lexicon gives "whirring, buzzing" as the meaning of the noun used here in Isa. 18:1 and "whirring locust" for the noun used in Deut. 28:42. The NASB has "the cricket" in Deut. 28:42.

<sup>51</sup> *Isaiah* [Inter-Varsity Press, 1999], page 135.

in frantic activities (trying to prepare to face the Assyrians through such things as sending out envoys to establish alliances [18:2] and raising and training armies). The whirring/buzzing activity on the part of man, which is to be contrasted with the restful, patient activity of God pictured in 18:4-6, will never solve the real problem(s) of mankind. The major problem is that they have left God out of the equation. Eventually the humbled, repentant remnant of the nations will wake up to that fact. Nothing that the nations do to try to stop the “world” kingdom that is being used by God to humble them can succeed. This was true regarding the Assyrian “world” kingdom back then, and it will be true regarding the revived Roman Empire headed up by Antichrist in the last days (see, for example, Isa. 10:5-34; Jer. 25:17-38).] **Which lies beyond the rivers of Cush** [In the margin the NASB has, “or, [rivers of] Ethiopia.” Instead of “beyond the rivers of Cush,” the NIV has “along the rivers of Cush,” which is possible, but the translation of the NASB is quite reasonable (cf. Zeph. 3:10). According to John A. Martin, “Cush included modern-day southern Egypt, Sudan, and northern Ethiopia.”<sup>52</sup> Merrill F. Unger agrees with the widespread viewpoint that this prophecy is directed to Ethiopia. I’ll quote a sentence from what he said here.<sup>53</sup> “Ethiopia corresponded roughly with modern Sudan, and its capital was at Napata beyond the Blue Nile, White Nile, and the Athbara – ‘the rivers of Ethiopia.’ ”], **(2) Which sends envoys by the sea, Even in papyrus vessels on the surface of the waters.** [Ethiopia had apparently sent envoys to Jerusalem (and other places) to discuss/plot how they might defeat the Assyrians (cf., e.g., Isa. 14:32).<sup>54</sup>] **Go, swift messengers, to a nation tall and smooth,<sup>55</sup> To a people feared far and wide, A powerful and oppressive nation Whose land the rivers divide.** [See Isa. 18:7. The apparent meaning here is that the envoys of Ethiopia should return to their own nation. Isaiah 18:3 shows that the message of this chapter is intended for all nations. What happens to Ethiopia is representative of what happens to all nations. Men are not to look to the arm of the flesh to solve their problems. They are to look to God, the only real God, the One who will judge the nations (including Judah and Ethiopia) through the “world” kingdom(s) and who will, at the right time, judge the “world” kingdom(s) too. God’s plans cannot be overturned. True salvation, security, and peace can only be found in Him.

I’ll quote a few sentences from Gleason L. Archer that give some historical background for the Ethiopians in those days.<sup>56</sup> “Under Piankhi the Ethiopians had established the Twenty-fifth Dynasty in Egypt [They had conquered Egypt in 715 BC; the Egyptians eventually regained control of Egypt (at least by 633 BC).], and Piankhi’s son Shabaka (called ‘So’ in 2 Kings 17:4) had encouraged Hoshea of Israel [the northern kingdom]

<sup>52</sup> *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Old Testament [Victor Books, 1985], page 1065.

<sup>53</sup> *Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 2 [Moody Press, 1981], page 1190.

<sup>54</sup> This is a very common viewpoint with the commentators, including Martin (*Bible Knowledge Commentary*, page 1065), but he adds, “Nothing is known elsewhere in the Bible or from extrabiblical sources about any contacts of this nation with Israel in a joint venture against Assyria.”

<sup>55</sup> It is not of crucial significance for us to know what was meant by “smooth” here, but I’ll quote what Edward J. Young gave as the likely meaning (*Book of Isaiah*, Vol. 1 [Eerdmans, 1983 reprint], page 476). “...smooth because the hair has been removed. It may be then that there is some reflection upon a custom of removing the hair from the body [or parts of the body]. Herodotus (2:37) claims that on every third day the Egyptian priests shaved the entire body.” G. W. Grogan (*Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6 [Zondervan, 1986], page 122, 123) mentions “the general admiration felt in antiquity for the tall, handsome, clean-shaven Nubians of Cush.”

<sup>56</sup> *Wycliffe Bible Commentary* [Moody Press, 1962], page 623.

in the last unsuccessful revolt against Assyria. Shabaka also leagued with Merodach-baladan of Babylon, and was later an encouragement to Hezekiah [king of Judah] to rebel against Sennacherib [king of Assyria], who finally crushed the Ethiopian forces at Eltekeh in 701. So's nephew Tirhakah [cf. 2 Kings 19:9; Isa. 37:9], led a new Egyptian effort but was finally crushed by Ashurbanipal [a later king of Assyria] in 667." ] **(3) All you inhabitants of the world and dwellers on earth, As soon as a standard is raised on the mountains, you will see it And as soon as the trumpet is blown, you will hear it.** [There was some application of these words for Isaiah's generation, and subsequent generations, but the primary fulfillment of these prophetic words will come to pass at the end of this age when God judges and destroys the final "world" kingdom headed up by Antichrist, after He has used Antichrist to destroy Babylon the great (which is a symbol for the world) and to reduce the nations to a humbled, repentant remnant. On the "trumpet" see under 18:7 below.] **(4) For thus the LORD has told me, "I [God] will look from My dwelling place quietly** [The NIV has, "I will remain quiet and will look on from my dwelling place." ] **Like dazzling** [The BDB Hebrew Lexicon has "glowing" here, which apparently refers to the effect of the sun when the sky is clear.] **heat in the sunshine, Like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest."** [This verse seems to be quite important, but the meaning is not so obvious that it jumps out at you. Isaiah 26:21 says, "For behold, the LORD is about to come out from His place To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; And the earth will reveal her bloodshed And will no longer cover her slain." God will leave His place (heaven) to judge the world at the end of this age. (This is not to say, of course, that the only time God decisively acts is at the end of this age.) One of the primary sins that God will judge is the innocent blood that has been shed.

Until it is time for God to act, He remains relatively quiet (but He is very far from being uninvolved or inactive/passive). (This is like Isa. 45:15, "Truly, You are a God who hides Himself, O God of Israel, Savior!" Also compare 1 Kings 19:11, 12.) That is one reason that God's people must walk by faith, not by sight. But God is *not* being inactive throughout those periods when He is *hiding* Himself. Like the heat and light of the sunshine on a clear day and the cloud of dew quietly (slowly but steadily) make their necessary contributions to the growth that takes place in the fields of the earth, so too God is continuously working, often in imperceptible ways, doing the necessary things. At the right time He will intervene to overthrow the end-time "world" kingdom (as He intervened to raise up and then to put down the other "world" kingdoms, etc.). Before God destroys the final "world" kingdom, He uses that kingdom to judge and humble the nation of Israel (which leads to the salvation of the remnant of the nation) and the nations (which leaves a humbled, repentant remnant of the nations, that will be ready to submit to God).

In the days of Isaiah his hearers/readers would be thinking of God's judgment of Assyria (and God did overthrow Assyria at the right time, and then ancient Babylon, etc.), but as I mentioned (and as is common in these prophecies we are studying), this prophecy is looking forward to the time when God will destroy the last "world" kingdom. The things spoken of in Isa. 18:5-7 will not come to pass in any full sense until the end of this age.] **(5) For before the harvest, as soon as the bud blossoms And the flower becomes a ripening grape, Then He will cut off the sprigs with pruning knives And remove *and* cut away the spreading branches.** [That is, at the

right time (His time), God will destroy the evil kingdom, thereby saving His people from destruction and leaving a thankful, ready-to-submit-to-Him remnant of the nations.] **(6) They [the armies/peoples of the “world” kingdom] will be left together for mountain birds of prey, And for the beasts of the earth; And the birds of prey will spend the summer *feeding* on them, And all the beasts of the earth will spend harvest time on them.** [As I mentioned in the last paragraph of the introduction to this chapter, there was a partial fulfillment of this prophecy when God judged the Assyrian army threatening Jerusalem, but that event, as significant as it was, did not save the Ethiopians (or other nations) from the Assyrians. The primary fulfillment of these prophetic words will take place when the Lord Jesus Christ destroys Antichrist and his armies that have been gathered to Armageddon (see Rev. 14:17-20; 16:12-16; and 19:17-21<sup>57</sup>). At that time the remnant of the nations will turn to God as pictured, for example, in Psalm 76:11; Isa. 2:2-4; 11:10; and Rev. 15:3, 4; cf. Rev. 20:3.] **(7) At that time a gift of homage will be brought to the LORD of hosts From a people tall and smooth, Even from a people feared far and wide, A powerful and oppressive nation, Whose land the rivers divide—To the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, *even* Mount Zion.** [See Isa. 18:2. There may have been a partial fulfillment of this prophecy in the past (see 2 Chron. 32:20-23), but, as I mentioned, the primary fulfillment will be at the end of this age (see Psalm 68:31; 87:4; Isa. 45:14; and Zeph. 3:10 [These verses all look to the end of this age, and, significantly, they all mention (the remnant of) Ethiopia/the Ethiopians]).

I'll quote what Herbert M. Wolf said regarding this verse.<sup>58</sup> “The Lord’s rescue of Hezekiah from Sennacherib [in 701 BC] led many nations to bring gifts to the King of Judah (2 Chron. 32:23). [2 Chron. 32:23 mentions “bringing gifts to the LORD at Jerusalem.”] Ethiopia may have been one of those nations, but the broader meaning of verse 7 involves the future submission of Ethiopia to the God of Mount Zion (cf. Zeph. 3:10). Moab had been instructed to send tribute to Zion ([Isa.] 16:1-5). In [Isa.] 45:14 the subjection of Egypt and Ethiopia is discussed again.”

I'll quote part of what John A. Martin said under this verse.<sup>59</sup> “Whether this [the bringing of a gift of homage to God at Jerusalem] occurred after the fall of Assyria is not known. Possibly Isaiah was speaking of the millennial kingdom when peoples from around the world will worship the LORD (cf. Zech. 14:16) because of His gracious acts.”

I'll quote a few sentences from what Merrill F. Unger said under verses 5 and 7.<sup>60</sup> “The ‘harvest’ [mentioned in 18:5]...look[s] beyond the Assyrian menace of Isaiah’s day to the Tribulation of the last days preceding...the Kingdom, when the wicked enemies of the LORD and His people shall be destroyed (Rev. 14:15-20). ... [In the Kingdom age] *all* nations will serve Him and bring their gifts of adoration to Him who will dwell on Mount Zion (Psalms 2:6-12; 72:15; Isa. 60:6; Zech. 14:16-21). Isaiah’s prophetic vision glimpsed God’s saving grace eventually going out to the entire world and, in the Kingdom age, embracing all nations (cf. Gen. 12:3).” Unger mentions that the prophetic words of verse 7 about bringing a gift to God at Jerusalem undoubtedly included bringing a gift to God after His overthrow of the Assyrian army mentioned in 2 Kings 19:35.

<sup>57</sup> Revelation 19:17-21 mention that the birds will be assembled to eat the flesh of the armies that are gathered to Armageddon to be destroyed.

<sup>58</sup> *Interpreting Isaiah* [Zondervan, 1985], page 122.

<sup>59</sup> *Bible Knowledge Commentary – Old Testament*, page 1065.

<sup>60</sup> *Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament*, page 1191.

I'll also quote part of what Harry A. Bultema said under these verses.<sup>61</sup> "...at the return of Christ, God will terminate His silence [mentioned in verse 4] and annihilate His and Israel's enemies. He will arise and do battle against all those who hate Him. ... Regarding the blowing of a *trumpet* [mentioned in verse 3], compare 27:13; Zechariah 9:14 and Matthew 24:31, where this sound is connected with the gathering and return of Israel. [The trumpet of Isa. 27:13; Matt. 24:31; 1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:16; and Rev. 11:15, which also apparently is the trumpet of Isa. 18:3; Zech. 9:14, will sound, I believe, right in the middle of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week. At that time the Lord Jesus Christ will return, the rapture of the Christian church will take place, the day of judgment will officially begin and the Lord Jesus will destroy His enemies and the enemies of His people (Babylon the great harlot and then Antichrist and his forces after gathering them to Armageddon). This trumpet will also signal the gathering of the end-time remnant of Israel, who will not submit to the Lord Jesus Christ until after the rapture (see Isa. 27:12, 13, which are discussed in this paper; Matt. 24:31).<sup>62</sup>] Until that time God will quietly consider all the vain activity of the nations. 'He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision (Ps. 2:4).'

... Finally, *in that time* [referring to the first three words of Isa. 18:7, which the NASB translates "At that time"], *i.e.*, after Armageddon, a present will be brought to Jehovah Sabaoth in Jerusalem. ... The bringing of gifts, of which we read in 2 Chronicles 32:23, was but a faint example and prelude. ... The verb for bringing of a present is used elsewhere in connection with Israel's restoration (Ps. 45:15; 68:29; 86:9)."]

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<sup>61</sup> *Commentary on Isaiah* [Kregel, 1981 reprint], pages 192, 193.

<sup>62</sup> Matthew 24:31 is discussed along with all of Matthew chapter 24 in my eschatological paper dated November 1998.

## ISAIAH 19:4, 16-25

The earlier verses of this significant prophetic chapter of Isaiah, which I will not quote (with the exception of verse 4), deal with God's judgments of Egypt and their effect on the Egyptians. These judgments, understood in the fullest sense, include His judgments through the "world" kingdoms of Assyria (who reigned in Isaiah's day and afterwards), through Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Rome, plus the attacks of other nations and the strife of Egyptian against Egyptian mentioned in 19:2, not to mention the other ways God has to judge nations, but the primary fulfillment will take place at the end of this age through the revived Roman Empire and its ruler, Antichrist. He is the ultimate "cruel master...a mighty king [who] will rule over them" (Isa. 19:4).

There is much good news in this chapter for the humbled, repentant, end-time remnant of Egypt. "The LORD will strike Egypt [with judgment], striking but healing; so they [the humbled, repentant remnant] will return to the LORD, and He will respond to them and will heal them" (Isa. 19:22). They will submit to their Creator and God; they will become His people. One of the most important passages in the Bible that demonstrates that God will save a remnant of the nations (including Egypt) after His end-time judgment of the world is Rev. 15:3, 4. Revelation 20:3 is also very important in that it confirms that (a remnant of) the nations will be left by God after His end-time judgment to enter the millennial kingdom.<sup>63</sup>

All the people that submit to God from the nations, including Egypt, with the exception of those who subsequently rebel against Him (cf. Rev. 20:7-10), will have a place in His eternal kingdom (after the millennial kingdom and the great-white-throne judgment [Rev. 20:11-15]), which is spoken of in the last two chapters of the book of Revelation.

**(4) "Moreover, I will deliver the Egyptians into the hand of a cruel master, And a mighty king will rule over them," declares the Lord God of hosts.** [Regarding Antichrist as the ultimate "cruel master" and the "mighty king [that] will rule over them," see Dan. 7:7-27; 8:23-26; 9:27; 11:36-45 (Daniel 11:42, 43 specifically mention Egypt); Zech. 11:9-17; 2 Thess. 2:3-12; Rev. 13:1-18; and 17:8-18. The devil will give Antichrist "his power and his throne and great authority," but the Bible makes it clear that ultimately it is God who uses Antichrist in His end-time judgment of the world. (See Dan. 11:36 [note God's "indignation"; cf. Dan. 8:19]; Zech. 11:16; Rev. 13:5 [This "authority" of Antichrist ultimately comes from God]; and Rev. 17:16, 17.)] ... **(16) In that day** [cf. Isa. 19:18, 19, 21, 23, and 24] **the Egyptians will become like women** [cf. Jer. 50:37; 51:30; and Nah. 3:13], **and they will tremble and be in dread because of the waving of the hand of the LORD of hosts, which He is going to wave over them.** [Compare Isa. 9:4-7; 11:1-15 (God's end-time judgment of Egypt is mentioned in 11:15). "That day" will not come in the full sense spoken of in these verses until God judges the world in the last days through His Son Jesus Christ. I listed some verses under Isa. 19:4 which demonstrate that the Lord Jesus will use Antichrist in His end-time judgment of the world. At the end of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week, Christ will destroy

<sup>63</sup> The entire book of Revelation has been discussed in a verse-by-verse manner in *Mid-Week Rapture* or my eschatological papers.

Antichrist and his armies after gathering them to Armageddon.]; **(17) The land of Judah will become a terror to Egypt; everyone to whom it is mentioned will be in dread of it, because of the purpose of the LORD of hosts which He is purposing against them.** [By the end of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week, the humbled remnant of the Egyptians will be ready to submit to the King of (true) Israel/Judah, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will be reigning on the earth (reigning includes judging) from the time of His mid-week return. I don’t believe He will be visibly present throughout much of the forty-two months of the second half of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week,<sup>64</sup> but He will be visibly present at the time of His return with the clouds and the rapture (e.g., Matt. 24:30, 31; Rev. 1:7), and He will undoubtedly be visibly present when He comes to the Mount of Olives at Jerusalem not long after the rapture.<sup>65</sup> I assume that it will be understood that He has claimed Jerusalem as His city from the time of His mid-week return.<sup>66</sup> Whether He is visibly present when He destroys Antichrist and his forces at the end of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week (Rev. 19:11-21), or not, He will certainly be visibly present at the time the millennial kingdom begins and the remnant of the nations submit to Him, as pictured, for example, in Isa. 2:2-4; 19:18-25.] **(18) In that day five cities in the land of Egypt will be speaking the language of Canaan and swearing allegiance to the LORD of hosts** [It isn’t clear why this verse mentions *five* cities in the land of Egypt. John A. Martin commented that “the ‘five cities in Egypt’ no doubt represented the rest of the nation.”<sup>67</sup> It seems clear that all the people in Egypt that remain after God’s end-time judgment will submit to Him (cf., e.g., Isa. 45:23; 66:23); the following verses in the chapter we are studying speak of (the remnant of) the entire nation turning to God. Any people that do not submit to Him will surely be dealt with immediately. Whether the remnant of Egypt will literally speak Hebrew, or not, they *will* submit to the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel.]; **one will be called the City of Destruction.** [The margin of the NASB mentions that “some ancient manuscripts and versions read [the City of] *the Sun,*” instead of “the City of Destruction.”<sup>68</sup> This reading seems more probable than “the City of Destruction”; it would seem somewhat surprising that one of the cities of the converted remnant of Egypt would be called “the City of Destruction.” It is also possible that the reading suggested by the Septuagint is the correct (the original) reading, “the City of Righteousness/Justice.”] **(19) In that day there will be an altar to the LORD** [cf. Isa. 56:7; 60:7; and Ezek. 43:13-27] **in the midst of the land of Egypt** [Since verse 21 speaks of worshipping God “with sacrifice and offering,” I assume we are to think of a sacrificial “altar” here in verse 19. I assume, however, that this is only a way of communicating the fact that the remnant of Egypt will be worshipping God, using language appropriate for worship under the old covenant. In that *the* Lamb of God has now been slain, there no longer is room for sacrificial offerings (cf. Heb. 10:1-18; 13:7-16).], **and a pillar** [monument] **to the LORD near its border.** [The NIV has

<sup>64</sup> See number 15 on page 17 of *Mid-Week Rapture*.

<sup>65</sup> See number 14 on page 17 of *Mid-Week Rapture*.

<sup>66</sup> See the subsection titled “The Lord Jesus Christ Will Claim Jerusalem as His City” on page 70 of *Mid-Week Rapture*.

<sup>67</sup> *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Old Testament [Victor Books, 1985], page 1066.

<sup>68</sup> John N. Oswalt (*Book of Isaiah*, Chapters 1-39 [Eerdmans, 1986], page 378) points out that “about fifteen Hebrew manuscripts and 1QIs<sup>a</sup> [which is a Dead Sea Scroll manuscript of Isaiah] have *heres*, ‘sun,’ instead of *heres*, ‘destruction.’ This reading is supported by Symmachus, the Targum, the Vulgate, and the Arabic version.”

“monument” instead of “pillar,” which seems better in the light of the next verse. And the translation of the NIV, “at its border,” seems better than “near its border.” The next verse apparently speaks of this monument and explains its purpose.] **(20) It will become a sign and a witness to the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they [the Egyptians] will cry to the LORD because of oppressors, and He will send them a Savior and a Champion, and He will deliver them.** [The monument at the border of the land of Egypt will commemorate the fact that the LORD has delivered Egypt (the remnant of Egypt) from oppressors, especially from Antichrist and his evil “world” kingdom (cf. Isa. 19:4) and that the nation is now devoted to Him. The Lord Jesus Christ (the mighty King spoken of, for example, in Isa. 9:4-7; 11:1-16) will prove to be their “Savior and Champion.” There is no other Savior (e.g., Isa. 43:11; 45:15, 21). It is true, of course, that the Lord Jesus will do a whole lot more than just deliver the remnant of Egypt from Antichrist: He will deliver them from sin and spiritual death and from the ultimate evil taskmaster, Satan.] **(21) Thus the LORD will make Himself known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the LORD in that day. They will even worship with sacrifice and offering, and will make a vow to the LORD and perform it.** [The remnant of Egypt will know the Lord after His end-time judgment of the world along with the remnant of the other nations. As I mentioned under verse 19, I don’t believe that they will worship God with literal animal sacrifices. The wording of Isaiah is apparently written in terms of worship appropriate for the old covenant.] **(22) The LORD will strike Egypt, striking but healing; so they will return to the LORD** [They will return to the Lord in repentance and faith. In that God is the Creator, Judge, and God of all men, they will be *returning* to Him, and to divine order. The Hebrew verb translated “they will return” could also be translated “they will turn” with the NIV.], **and He will respond to them and will heal them.** [The words “strike” and “striking” speak of God’s chastening judgments of Egypt that will contribute to the conversion of the humbled, repentant remnant of Egypt after His end-time judgment of the world. It’s common for the Bible to speak of God’s chastening judgments of His people (Israel/Christians), but it isn’t common for this concept to be applied to another nation or the nations. As I mentioned in the second paragraph of the introductory comments to Isaiah chapter 18, there are other factors that will help wake up the end-time remnant of Egypt besides His judgments.] **(23) In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrians will come into Egypt and the Egyptians into Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians.** [As Isa. 2:4, for example, informs us, even former enemies (like Egypt and Assyria) will be at peace when God reigns over the nations in the millennial kingdom.] **(24) In that day Israel will be the third party with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth** [The word “blessing” here seems to refer to all three nations. The fact that they will be “a blessing in the midst of the earth” apparently means that they, being blessed by God (see verse 25), will be a blessing to the other nations.], **(25) whom the LORD of hosts has blessed, saying, “Blessed is Egypt My people [cf. Isa. 19:22; 14:32], and Assyria the work of My hands [cf. Psalm 100:3<sup>69</sup>; Isa. 29:23<sup>70</sup>], and Israel My inheritance.”** [These last two verses of Isaiah chapter 19 are remarkable in that they leave the

<sup>69</sup> This significant psalm is briefly discussed on page 107 of my eschatological paper dated November 1998.

<sup>70</sup> Isaiah 29:17-24 are discussed in this paper.

impression that the status of the remnant of Assyria and Egypt will be equal with the status of (true) Israel. They speak of (true) Israel being a *third party* with Egypt and Assyria. We typically expect the preeminent status of true Israel to be mentioned. These verses speak of Israel, Egypt, and Assyria being a blessing in the midst of the earth. We expect Isaiah to say that (true) Israel will be a blessing in the midst of the earth through their glorious King and Savior.<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, these verses use terms normally reserved for (true) Israel (“My people” and the “work of My hands”) for Egypt and Assyria. These unusual verses were undoubtedly designed to emphasize the glorious plans that God has for the saved remnant of the nations.

I believe we must balance out what these verses say regarding the status of Egypt and Assyria vis-a-vis (true) Israel with what many other verses say regarding this topic (including the passages we are studying in this paper and the book of Revelation; also see, for example, Isa. 45:14; Zech. 14:16-18 [passages that specifically speak of the end-time remnant of Egypt]). Many passages confirm that Jerusalem/Israel will be God’s center of blessing for the earth (including the new earth). The Bible makes it clear that true Israel will reign forever (especially see Revelation chapters 21, 22, the last two chapters of the Bible). But the elect of the nations won’t have any complaints; they will be glorified and blessed forever in God’s new earth.

It’s quite possible that in the eternal state, which will follow the millennium and the great-white-throne judgment (see Revelation chapter 20-22), some of the Assyrians that lived on the earth thousands of years ago will be included as part of the elect of the nations; if so, their names will be found in the book of life at the great-white-throne judgment.<sup>72</sup> As I discussed in some detail in my eschatological paper dated November 1998, I consider it probable (in agreement with many) that the names of some of the dead that are judged at the great-white-throne judgment will be found in the Lamb’s book of life. Some of the people of ancient Nineveh (the capital of Assyria) who repented at the preaching of Jonah might be good candidates for ultimate salvation through Christ Jesus as part of the nations. (For a start, see the Introduction of my paper dated November 1998, and see under Rev. 20:12-15; 21:24-27 in that paper, and there is much more information on this topic in that paper, including most of the Appendix.) I will have more to say regarding this interesting (but somewhat controversial) topic when we come to Isa. 25:6-8; 26:18, 19 in this present paper. There’s no need to be dogmatic regarding a topic like this one, but I believe it deserves our consideration.]

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<sup>71</sup> These words probably build on Gen. 12:1-3: In these verses God told Abraham that He would bless him and make him a blessing, “in you [Abraham] all the families of the earth will be blessed.” (Also see Gen. 18:18; 22:18; and 49:10.) All the families of the earth will be blessed through the offspring of Abraham, the Lord Jesus Christ. True Israel is saved through the Lord Jesus Christ, and ultimately, at the end of the age, (the remnant of) the nations will be saved by Him. Based on what the Bible typically says, we would have expected Isaiah to say that (true) Israel, because of their mighty King and Savior, will be a blessing in the midst of the earth, not Israel, Egypt, and Assyria.

<sup>72</sup> We can also think of a remnant of the descendants of ancient Assyria that will be living on the earth in the last days, and we can think of an end-time remnant of the people now living in the territory of ancient Assyria (modern Iraq).

## ISAIAH 21:6-12

The first ten verses of this chapter prophesy about God's overthrow of Babylon. As with Isaiah chapter 13, the first verses prophesy regarding God's overthrow of ancient Babylon through the Medes and Persians (and others) in 539/538 BC. Verses 6-10 have much application for God's judgment of ancient Babylon, but they also apparently anticipate His end-time overthrow of the world, using Babylon as a symbol for the world (as in Isaiah chapter 13 and the book of Revelation). The judgment of ancient Babylon allowed Israel (and other nations) to return from captivity. God's judgment of the world system in the last days will result in the exaltation of true Israel and the salvation of the remnant of the nations.

Verses 11, 12 apparently include the prophetic message that salvation will eventually come for the end-time remnant of ancient Edom.

**For thus the Lord says to me, "Go, station the lookout, let him report what he sees. (7) When he sees riders, horsemen in pairs, A train of donkeys, a train of camels, Let him pay close attention, very close attention."** [Compare Isa. 21:9. These words emphasize the importance of God's judgment of Babylon (ancient Babylon and, more importantly, end-time Babylon). Until Babylon (the world kingdom) has been judged and destroyed by God, His kingdom cannot be fully established.] **(8) Then the lookout called, "O Lord, I stand continually by day on the watchtower, And I am stationed every night at my guard post. (9) Now behold, here comes a troop of riders, horsemen in pairs." And one said, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon** [It is significant that Rev. 14:8; 18:2 build on these words.]; **And all the images of her gods are shattered on the ground."** [Although this prophecy was undoubtedly fulfilled to some extent when ancient Babylon was overthrown by the Medes and Persians, the primary fulfillment of these prophetic words will come to pass in the last days when God takes away all the gods and idols that men have been looking to, and living for, instead of Him. (Cyrus, the king of the Medes and Persians at the time they overthrew ancient Babylon, was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ [cf., e.g., Isa. 44:28-45:13<sup>73</sup>].) The remnant of the nations will worship God, and Him alone. Interestingly, one major way that God will remove the false gods in His end-time judgment of the world is through Antichrist, who will not tolerate any other gods or objects of worship (see Dan. 11:36, 37; 2 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 13:11-18; and 17:16-18).

The fact that the policy of Cyrus was one of toleration toward other nations and their religions helps confirm that these prophetic words were not completely fulfilled in God's judgment of ancient Babylon. The Medes and Persians would not have tried to destroy all the images of Babylon's gods and the religions of Babylon when they conquered them; furthermore, they helped Israel return to rebuild the temple.

I'll quote part of what F. Delitzsch said under this verse.<sup>74</sup> "In Rev. 18:1, 2, the same words ["Fallen, fallen, is Babylon!"] form the shout of triumph raised by the angel, the

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<sup>73</sup> One of the significant features of this important prophetic passage is that Cyrus was mentioned by name over one hundred years before he was born (see Isa. 44:28; 45:4-6).

<sup>74</sup> *Commentary on the Old Testament* by Keil and Delitzsch, Vol. 7 [Eerdmans, 1976 reprint], pages 382, 383.

antitype [the fall of Babylon spoken of in the book of Revelation] being more majestic than the type [the fall of ancient Babylon]....”] **(10) O my threshed people and my afflicted of the threshing floor! What I have heard from the LORD of hosts, The God of Israel, I make known to you.** [First we should think of the threshed people of ancient Israel, who had been devastated (including the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and their being carried into captivity by the Babylonians). After the overthrow of ancient Babylon (539/538 BC), they were permitted to return and rebuild the temple. The greater fulfillment of these prophetic words, however, will take place for (true) Israel at the end of this age after God has overthrown His enemies and the enemies of His people. Furthermore, as we have already seen in this study, the words *God’s people* are sometimes used in a fuller sense that includes the afflicted/threshed remnant of the nations left after God’s end-time judgment of the world (cf. Isa. 14:32; 19:25).

I’ll quote a sentence from what Harry Bultema said regarding these verses.<sup>75</sup> “To understand this burden [or, oracle] correctly, one must also read Jeremiah [chapters] fifty and fifty-one, and Revelation seventeen and eighteen.” Jeremiah chapters 50, 51 prophesied about God’s judgment of ancient Babylon and how this would result in freedom and blessing for His people (Israel/Judah) and for the other nations taken captive by Babylon (cf. Jer. 50:8, 16, 34; 51:9, 44, 45). As with so many other prophecies, the primary fulfillment of these prophecies of Jeremiah won’t take place until the end of this age when God judges the world system symbolized by Babylon. (See Jer. 50:2-5, 20, 39, 40; 51:17-23, 37, 42-44; and 59-64; compare Rev. 18:21 with Jer. 51:63. The ancient city of Babylon was not destroyed, by the way, when it was conquered by the Medes and Persians.) Revelation chapters 17, 18, which were mentioned by Bultema, deal with God’s end-time judgment of Babylon, using Babylon as a symbol for the world.] **(11) The oracle concerning Edom. One keeps calling to me from Seir** [*Seir* is another name for Edom (cf. Gen. 32:3).], **“Watchman, how far gone is the night? Watchman, how far gone is the night?”** [The NIV has, “what is left of the night?”] **(12) The watchman says, “Morning comes but also night. If you would inquire, inquire; Come back again.”** [The “night” in verses 11, 12 refers to the darkness/affliction that comes to nations like Edom through the “world” kingdoms (like Babylon and the revived Roman Empire of the last days). Edom was another country that suffered at the hands of the Assyrians, the Babylonians, etc. They too would be anxious to hear of the overthrow of ancient Babylon, but (as with Isa. 21:6-10) I believe we are to see much more than that here. These verses apparently anticipate the ultimate salvation of the humbled, repentant remnant of Edom (the end-time counterpart of ancient Edom) after God’s end-time judgment of the world. The answer of verse 12 can be understood more than one way, but I assume this answer informs Edom that the “morning” of God’s kingdom and blessing for the remnant of the nations is coming in due time (in God’s time); but before that happens, there is much left of the night.

God’s answer to Edom through the prophet seems to show His concern for, and His interest in, the people of Edom—for one thing, He invites them to inquire again. He knows the hearts of the people of Edom; He knows who will ultimately submit to Him from their hearts; He knows which names have been written in the book of life since the foundation of the world. Some other verses that anticipate the ultimate conversion of the

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<sup>75</sup> *Commentary on Isaiah* [Kregel, 1981 reprint, originally published in Dutch in 1923], page 208.

remnant of Edom are Isa. 11:14; Jer. 49:11 (with 49:7-10); and Amos 9:12 (Edom is specifically mentioned in each of these verses).

I didn't quote the last five verses of this chapter (Isaiah chapter 21) that deal with Arabia because those verses deal mostly with the judgments of past days (through the Assyrians, etc), but I should mention that the way the last verse is written, it lends itself to the familiar concept of a converted remnant of the nations after God's end-time judgment of the world, specifically a remnant of Kedar (a tribe of Ishmael [Gen. 25:13; 1 Chron. 1:29]; in northern Arabia): "and the remainder [this noun is often translated *remnant*; the NIV has *survivors*] of the number of bowmen, the mighty men of the sons of Kedar, will be few; for the LORD God of Israel has spoken" (Isa. 21:17). Isaiah 42:10-13; 60:1-9 strongly confirm this interpretation; Kedar is specifically mentioned in 42:11; 60:7.]

## ISAIAH CHAPTER 24

There is widespread agreement that Isaiah chapters 24-27 prophesy about God's end-time judgment of the world. These four chapters are frequently called "Isaiah's [Little] Apocalypse." (The Greek name for the book of Revelation is *The Apocalypse*.) A primary feature of these prophecies, as with the prophecies we have already studied in this paper, is the remnant of Israel and the remnant of the nations that will be left after God's end-time judgment of the world. These chapters build on the prophecies already studied in this paper, and they help confirm the interpretation given for those prophecies. For one thing, they help confirm that many of those prophecies deal with the end of the age. As we have discussed, some of those passages deal exclusively with the end of the age, and some of them will have their primary fulfillment at the end of the age.

I'll quote a short paragraph from what Geoffrey W. Grogan said regarding chapter 24.<sup>76</sup> "This chapter is fundamental to the three that follow it. It speaks of a judgment that is universal. Not only does it make no reference to particular nations or specific historical events, it does not even restrict the judgment to the earth. This means that it sums up all the judgments on the particular nations, as predicted in chapters 13-23, and goes beyond them."

**Behold, the LORD lays the earth waste, devastates it, distorts its surface and scatters its inhabitants.** [The end-time judgment pictured here is worldwide (cf., e.g., Isa. 2:12-22; 13:6-13; and 24:12-21).] **(2) And the people will be like the priest, the servant like his master, the maid like her mistress, the buyer like the seller, the lender like the borrower, the creditor like the debtor.** [Judgment will fall on sinful mankind worldwide<sup>77</sup>; no class will be spared, whether people or priest/minister, servant or master, maid or mistress, buyer or seller, lender or borrower, creditor or debtor, etc. The only ones left will be the remnant spared by God.] **(3) The earth will be completely laid waste and completely despoiled, for the LORD has spoken this word.** **(4) The earth mourns and withers, the world fades and withers, the exalted of the people of the earth fade away.** [As Isa. 2:11-22 show, a major aspect of God's day of judgment will be to remove everyone (including the devil and his angels and demons) that is proud and unrepentant.] **(5) The earth is also** [This last word is not included in the Hebrew, and I wouldn't include it; the NIV does not have it.] **polluted by its inhabitants, for they transgressed laws, violated statutes, broke the everlasting covenant.** [Sin pollutes. One of the major sources of pollution (one the Bible frequently mentions) is the shedding of innocent blood. The "everlasting covenant" apparently refers to the covenant that God made with all mankind after the flood (Gen. 9:1-17). I refer the reader to the discussion regarding the everlasting covenant when discussing

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<sup>76</sup> *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6 [Zondervan, 1986], page 151.

<sup>77</sup> The day of judgment will begin (in most senses) when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in the middle of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week. Those Christians that are ready for His coming (and all Christians are required to always be ready for His coming) will be raptured from the earth at the time of His return.

Zech. 11:10<sup>78</sup>; that verse apparently speaks of this same covenant with the words “my covenant which I had made with all the peoples.”

All men know quite a bit about God’s laws/statutes in their hearts/minds/consciences. Compare, for example, Rom. 1:18-32; 2:14-16.] **(6) Therefore, a curse devours the earth, and those who live in it are held guilty. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left.** [The Bible frequently speaks of God’s use of fire in His end-time judgment of the world, but it also speaks of His use of shaking/earthquakes, large hail, etc. It is very clear that all men will not be “burned” (with fire) and suffer death by literal fire. Being “burned” with fire is used here as a symbol that covers all forms of judgment. On the eternal fire of God’s judgment, see under Isa. 66:24 in this paper.

The “few men” left after God’s end-time judgment (about the time of the end of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week) can be called the remnant. We see this same remnant in Isa. 24:7-16a (especially see 24:13-16a) and in many other verses that we are studying in this paper (and in many other verses we are not studying in this paper). Regarding the extremely pessimistic “few men” that will be left as a remnant, see under Isa. 13:12. Also, there is another very important fact that I didn’t mention under 13:12: At least most of the prophecies of Isaiah (like the Old Testament prophecies in general) know absolutely nothing of the existence of the Christian church as an entity separate from the nation Israel.<sup>79</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that these prophecies know essentially nothing of the rapture that will remove all true Christians from the earth when Christ returns in the middle of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week to judge the world. When we add that large number of people (who will be kept out of the hour of testing [Rev. 3:10]) to the picture given here it looks a lot more optimistic.

I’ll make a few comments about those that will become Christians after the rapture of the Christian church.<sup>80</sup> Many verses make it clear that many of those Christians will be martyred during the second half of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week (cf., e.g., Dan. 7:21, 25; Rev. 12:12-13:18; and 20:4). Technically speaking, those martyrs will not be part of the remnant left alive on the earth at the end of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week. Dying as a martyr for Christ, however, is not defeat, it is victory, and those who are put to death during that period will be glorified and reigning with the rest of the members of true Israel when the millennial kingdom begins (see Rev. 20:4).

I’ll quote a short paragraph from what Grogan said under Isa. 24:4-6.<sup>81</sup> “These verses are characterized by a strong moral tone. The true and living God carries out his judgments on moral principles, not as the expression of an arbitrary will. If human kings [and men in general] experience his righteous wrath, it is because their actions and their way of life are

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<sup>78</sup> See under Zech. 11:10 on pages 211-213 of *Mid-Week Rapture*. That discussion also deals with polluting the earth by shedding innocent blood; some important cross-references that deal with shedding innocent blood are included there.

<sup>79</sup> By the time we get to the millennial kingdom, the Lord Jesus Christ will have saved all the end-time remnant of the nation Israel. I assume that from that time on (throughout the millennial kingdom and on in to the eternal state), there will be no distinction between those who are citizens of the nation Israel and other members of God’s true Israel. All will be glorified; all will be reigning; all will be members of God’s special kingdom that can be called true Israel.

<sup>80</sup> The end-time remnant of Israel will become Christians in the last days, but not in time to be taken in the rapture. And many Gentiles will become Christians after the rapture.

<sup>81</sup> *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, page 152.

contrary to his will.” When God determines who will be left as a remnant, or when He judges men according to their works, He does not make mistakes. He knows what is in the hearts of all men; He knows who will repent and submit to Him; He knows whether faith is genuine and if it will persist; and He knows those who would not want to be in His eternal kingdom (heaven) on His terms (not that they will want the alternative). Many verses, Isa. 11:1-5, for example, point out that God’s judgments are always fully informed and fully righteous.] **(7) The new wine mourns, The vine decays, All the merry-hearted sigh. (8) The gaiety of tambourines ceases, The noise of revelers stops, The gaiety of the harp ceases.** [Compare Rev. 18:21-24. All the things that people who are not living for God are doing will come to an end when He judges the world at the end of this age. All the things listed here in verse 8 and in Rev. 18:21-24 are not wrong in themselves, but there is no basis for blessing or joy when God is left out of the picture and people are living in sin and rebellion against Him (cf. Isa. 24:5, 6; Rev. 18:23, 24).] **(9) They do not drink wine with song; Strong drink [The NIV has “beer.”] is bitter to those who drink it. (10) The city of chaos is broken down** [The NIV has, “The ruined city lies desolate.” The BDB Hebrew Lexicon (under *tohu*, the Hebrew noun translated “chaos” by the NASB) has, “city of chaos (of ruined city).” Compare Isa. 34:11.<sup>82</sup> I assume *ruined* is the right way to understand *chaos* here, but it would also be accurate to say that God judged the city because it was a city of *chaos* (a city of confusion, unreality, formlessness, and emptiness; a city that had rejected God and His divine order, truth, and reality). The city of chaos can be understood here as a symbol for the world (as in Isa. 25:2; 26:5; and as with *Babylon* in the book of Revelation), or it can be understood as a city representative of all cities; it doesn’t make much difference.]; **Every house is shut up so that none may enter. (11) There is an outcry in the streets concerning the wine** [“In the streets they cry out for wine” (NIV).]; **All joy turns to gloom** [literally, “is darkened”]. **The gaiety of the earth is banished. (12) Desolation is left in the city And the gate is battered to ruins. (13) For thus it will be in the midst of the earth among the peoples** [“So will it be on the earth and among the nations” (NIV).], **As the shaking of an olive tree, As the gleanings when the grape harvest is over.** [Compare Isa. 17:6; 27:12. This is the worldwide remnant (apparently including the remnant of the nation Israel) left after God’s end-time judgment of the world. This humbled, repentant remnant raise their voices/sing to the glory of God in Isa. 24:14-16a.] **(14) They raise their voices, they shout for joy; They cry out from the west concerning the majesty of the LORD. (15) Therefore glorify the LORD in the east, The name of the LORD, the God of Israel, In the coastlands of the sea. (16) From the ends of the earth we hear songs, “Glory to the Righteous One [cf., e.g., Isa. 25:3; 42:10-12; 51:4, 5; Mal. 1:11],” But I say, “Woe to me! Woe to me! Alas for me! The treacherous deal treacherously, And the treacherous deal very treacherously.”** [After speaking from the point of view of the day of judgment being over in 24:6-16a, with the emphasis being on the humbled, repentant remnant, Isaiah now speaks from the point of view back before the day of judgment begins (24:16b), during the day of judgment (24:17-22a), and then after the day of judgment is over (24:22b, 23 and on into chapter 25). Isaiah 24:16b reminds us why a day of judgment is needed.] **(17) Terror and pit and snare**

<sup>82</sup> The word translated “desolation” in Isa. 34:11 is *tohu*. In the margin of 34:11, the NASB has, “or, formlessness.”

**Confront you** [In the margin the NASB has, “literally, are upon you.” Compare Jer. 48:43. As the next verse shows, the “pit” and “snare” symbolize God’s judgments.], **O inhabitant of the earth. (18) Then it will be that he who flees the report of disaster** [literally, “sound of terror”] **will fall into the pit, And he who climbs out of the pit will be caught in the snare; For the windows above are opened, and the foundations of the earth shake.** [The last line of this verse (starting with “For”) pictures the day of judgment with words reminiscent of God’s judgment of the flood (cf. Gen. 7:11; 8:2; and Matt. 24:37-39). See above under Isa. 24:5.] **(19) The earth is broken asunder, The earth is split through, The earth is shaken violently.** [Compare Isa. 2:19, 21; 13:13; and 24:1. See under Isa. 2:19. It’s clear that there will be literal earthquakes in the last days, but more importantly, the shaking of the earth in the day of judgment has a strong symbolic component.] **(20) The earth reels to and fro like a drunkard And it totters like a shack** [or, hut, speaking of a very feeble, unstable structure], **For its transgression** [The emphasis here is on the *penalty for transgression*.<sup>83</sup>] **is heavy upon it, And it will fall, never to rise again.** [This present world system will be destroyed, and God’s worldwide kingdom will be established. After the millennial kingdom, God will bring forth the new heavens and new earth with its new Jerusalem, having totally and permanently removed all unrepentant transgressors (very much including the devil and his hosts).] **(21) So it will happen in that day, That the LORD will punish the host of heaven on high** [The NIV has, “the powers in the heavens above.” Compare Isa. 13:13; 27:1.], **And the kings of the earth on earth. (22) They** [This word “they” apparently includes both the “host of heaven on high” and the “kings of the earth on earth” just mentioned in 24:21. Although the *kings of the earth* are singled out in 24:21, the Bible makes it clear that God will deal with mankind worldwide in His end-time judgment of the world. Only a remnant of mankind will be left alive on the earth when Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week is over (e.g., Isa. 24:6, 13-16a).] **will be gathered together Like prisoners in the dungeon, And will be confined in prison; And after many days they will be punished.** [This verse rather strongly confirms the existence of an intermediate kingdom (or a preliminary stage of the eternal kingdom) before the eternal state (cf., e.g., Isa. 65:20, 22; Dan. 7:12; and Zech. 14:16-19). Revelation chapters 20-22 make it clear that the millennial kingdom will precede the eternal state.

The devil (who is the primary leader behind all the rebellion taking place on the earth) and his angels will be cast down to the earth (from their privileged position in heavenly places) at the time of Christ’s mid-week return (Rev. 12:7-12; cf. Eph. 6:12); at the end of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week, the devil will be cast into the abyss for the duration of the millennium (Rev. 20:1-3); at the end of the millennium, he will be cast into the eternal lake of fire (Rev. 20:10). Satan’s evil hosts will certainly be restrained along with him throughout the millennial kingdom (cf. Luke 8:31), and it is clear that they will end up in the eternal lake of fire with him (e.g., Matt. 25:41; Matt. 8:29).

As discussed under Rev. 20:4,<sup>84</sup> I assume that all the members of God’s true Israel will have been glorified and begun to reign by the time the millennial kingdom begins.

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<sup>83</sup> The Hebrew noun used here (*pasha*) includes within its range of meaning the *penalty for transgression*. See Extended Note A in *Holiness and Victory Over Sin*.

<sup>84</sup> Revelation chapters 20-22 are discussed in a verse-by-verse manner in my eschatological paper dated November 1998.

The “rest of the dead” (Rev. 20:5), very much including those who will be put to death during God’s end-time judgment of the world, will continue to dwell in Sheol/Hades until they are raised/resurrected at the end of the millennium to stand before God at the great-white-throne judgment. Those whose names are not found in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:5, 6, 11-15), which is the ultimate *punishment*. This is not to say that they don’t experience any punishment while being “confined in prison” in the days before the great-white-throne judgment (cf., e.g., Luke 16:23-26).]

**(23) Then** [It probably would be better to translate the Hebrew *w* as *And* (instead of “Then”), or to leave it untranslated with the NIV (both are common translations for the Hebrew *w*).] **the moon will be abashed and the sun ashamed, For the LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem** [cf., e.g., Isa. 2:2-4; Zech. 14:8-11], **And His glory will be before His elders.** [Revelation 21:23 (cf. Isa. 60:19) informs us that the sun and moon will not exist in God’s eternal kingdom, with its new heaven and new earth. Here in Isa. 24:23 the idea just seems to be that the sun and moon (which will apparently still be here during the millennial kingdom) will be ashamed in the sense that the glory of God will shine so much brighter than they will. God’s “elders” apparently speaks of, or at least includes, His angelic elders in heaven. On these elders, see under Rev. 4:4, 6 on pages 27-30 of my eschatological paper dated July 1999, including the footnotes. It is also true that all the members of God’s true Israel will be glorified and will be reigning with God the Father and God the Son (e.g., Rev. 2:26, 27; 5:10; 12:5; 20:4; and 22:5), and they could be included here as part of God’s elders.]

## ISAIAH CHAPTER 25

**O LORD, You are my God; I will exalt You, I will give thanks to Your name; For You have worked wonders, Plans *formed* long ago, with perfect faithfulness.** [This verse (and the following verses) was written from the point of view that the end-time day of judgment is over. Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week has come to an end. Isaiah thanks God for what He has accomplished through His end-time acts of saving and judging. God had made His plans known (they were made known in some detail through prophets like Isaiah), and He has now done—with perfect faithfulness—all that He said He would do (and more).] **(2) For You have made a city into a heap, A fortified city into a ruin; A palace of strangers is a city no more, It will never be rebuilt.** [This city/fortified city is a symbol for the world system (as in Isa. 24:10; 26:5; cf. 32:19), whose god is the devil. God’s kingdom cannot be established as the only kingdom until the city of this world has been totally removed by His end-time judgment. On never being rebuilt, compare Isa. 24:20; Rev. 18:21; and 19:2, 3.] **(3) Therefore a strong people will glorify You** [cf. Isa. 24:13-16a]; **Cities** [The Hebrew noun is singular; the KJV has “the city”; the NKJV has “The city.” It seems far better to translate “The city”; this fits perfectly with the idea that this city (as in Isa. 24:10; 25:2; and 26:5) is a symbol for the world. The same Hebrew noun for *city* is used in Isa. 24:10; 25:2 (for the second use of the word *city* of the three uses in that verse); 25:3; and 26:5.

I’ll quote part of what J. Alec Motyer said under 25:2, 3.<sup>85</sup> “The people of God have been dominated by *foreigners, strong and ruthless* power groups. ... *Peoples...cities* are both singular [in the Hebrew] and this must be restored [in the translation]. [Motyer was using the NIV, which has both *peoples* and *cities* in the plural.] Isaiah is speaking of the city of 24:10, the world structured without reference to God. The citizens of this world city are one people though composed of many *nations*, for they are one in ideology: the ‘I can cope’ syndrome that marks a fallen race, coupled with the ‘Who needs God?’ of the self-sufficient.”] **of ruthless nations will revere You.** [This entire chapter is poetry in the Hebrew, as is much of the book of Isaiah. The format of the NASB (and the NIV, NKJV, and some other translations) shows that this is poetry by printing each line separately. I’m not able to print each line separately with the format I’m using in this paper, but the fact that the word *Cities* is capitalized by the NASB helps show that this word starts a new line in the NASB. The two lines of verse 3, in a way that is very common with Hebrew poetry, say essentially the same thing using different words. The “strong people” are the same as the people of the “[City] of ruthless nations.” *Glorifying* God is parallel in meaning with *revering* Him.

These people are the remnant of the city of ruthless nations (not that all the people of the nations had been ruthless) that will be left after God’s end-time judgment of the world. The people of the nations that are left by God as a remnant were *formerly* ruthless (at least some of them were), but now, through His end-time acts of saving and judging, they have been humbled and have repented of their former ruthlessness; so too regarding their former pride (cf., e.g., Isa. 2:11-22; 13:11; and 26:9). Revelation 15:3, 4

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<sup>85</sup> *Isaiah* [Inter-Varsity Press, 1999], page 170.

are verses of key significance regarding the humbled, repentant remnant of the nations glorifying God after His righteous acts of saving and judging have been manifested.<sup>86</sup>

Verses like the one we are discussing (Isa. 25:3) and Rev. 15:3, 4 sound quite a bit more optimistic regarding the number of people that will be left as a remnant of the nations than verses like Isa. 24:6, 13-16a.

I'll quote two paragraphs from what Geoffrey W. Grogan says under Isa. 25:1-5.<sup>87</sup> "In our comment at 24:10-13, we accepted the view that references to a city of destruction in chapters 24-27 do not have any particular city in view but are general designations of society organized apart from any reference to God, a concept not unlike 'the world' as it so often appears in a depreciatory sense in the NT. ..." (pages 158, 159).

"The logical word 'therefore' in v. 3 should be especially noted. God's judgment of these cities [The NIV, which Grogan was using, has "cities" in Isa. 25:3, as does the NASB.] leads the strong and ruthless nations to honor and revere the Lord. Young (*Book of Isaiah*, in loc.) comments, 'We must not overlook the profound theological teaching that if the Gentiles are to worship God their own united power must be destroyed. As long as the Gentile nations, represented in Isaiah's day by the Assyrians and Babylonians, sought to control the world and to incorporate the theocracy within their own kingdom, there could be no hope for their salvation. Babylon and all that it represented must first be destroyed.' The destruction of every hope in man makes way for penitent hope in God" (page 159).] **(4) For You have been a defense for the helpless, A defense [The NIV translates the Hebrew noun *maoz* "refuge" here and earlier in this verse, which seems better in this context.] for the needy in his distress, A refuge ["shelter" NIV] from the storm, a shade from the heat; For the breath of the ruthless Is like a rain storm against a wall. (5) Like heat in drought, You subdue the uproar of aliens [or, foreigners.]; Like heat by the shadow of a cloud, the song of the ruthless is silenced.** [Note that the word *storm* (Hebrew *zerem*) is used twice in verse 4; the two uses help explain one another. So too for the word *heat* (Hebrew *choreb*), which is used once in verse 4 and twice in verse 5. And note that the word *shade* in verse 4 is matched by the word *shadow* in verse 5. (The same Hebrew noun, *tsel*, is translated *shade* and *shadow*.) The words *the ruthless* are also used twice in these verses. Like a refuge/wall protects from the driving storm, and like a cloud blocks out the heating rays from the sun, so God becomes a refuge/wall and a cloud that stops the ruthless oppression through His end-time judgment of the world.

God will completely subdue and totally remove all (unrepentant) ruthless oppressors from the earth in His end-time judgment. The remnant of the nations will understand that one major reason that God has done this is for the good of His people, who were, in some ways, "helpless" and "needy in [their] distress" before the nations. The people who were "helpless" and "needy in [their] distress" are to be contrasted with the "strong" and "ruthless." (Looking at it from the point of view of Isaiah's day, God's people would be the believers of the nation Israel. Most of the ruthless oppressors were "aliens/foreigners." Looking at it from a New Testament point of view, God's people are the believers from all nations, true Israel.) This prophecy may include the idea (many prophecies do include this idea) that God, by destroying the ruthless oppressors, is working for the good of all those being wrongly oppressed, not just the oppressed

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<sup>86</sup> These verses are discussed in my paper on Revelation 14:6-19:21 dated January 1999.

<sup>87</sup> *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6 [Zondervan, 1986].

believers (cf., e.g., Isa. 11:4; 29:19-21).<sup>88</sup> Many such people will apparently be part of the end-time remnant of the nations.] **(6) The LORD of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples on this mountain** [On “this mountain,” compare Isa. 2:2; 24:23.]; **A banquet of aged wine, choice pieces with marrow, And refined, aged wine.** [Compare Matt. 8:11; 26:29; Luke 22:18, 29, 30. In context with Isa. 24:1-25:5 and 25:9-12, we expect this banquet for all peoples (for true Israel and the remnant of the nations) to take place about the time the millennial kingdom begins.] **(7) And on this mountain He will swallow up the covering which is over all peoples, Even the veil which is stretched over all nations.** [I agree with the widespread viewpoint that “the covering which is over all peoples, even the veil which is stretched over all nations” refers to death. The next verse says, “He will swallow up death for all time.” Although it is true that all people (not just the elect) will be resurrected,<sup>89</sup> Isa. 25:7, 8 just speak of the people that will be resurrected unto *life* to have a place in God’s eternal kingdom (true Israel and the elect of the nations).] **(8) He will swallow up death for all time, And the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces** [Isaiah 25:7, 8 with Isa. 26:18, 19 complicate the picture substantially—but it is a glorious complication—by mentioning that God will swallow up death for all time. The book of Revelation shows that death won’t be swallowed up for (the elect of) the nations until after the millennial kingdom. It isn’t all that surprising that verses dealing with things that will take place after the millennium are included with verses that deal with things that will happen about the time the millennial kingdom begins. God’s revelation is progressive. The prophets could only prophesy what God gave them, and they could only know and understand what He chose to reveal to them. There were many details that He didn’t fully reveal to the Old Testament prophets.<sup>90</sup> They didn’t understand (at least they didn’t fully and adequately understand) that there is to be an intermediate kingdom before God establishes His eternal kingdom.<sup>91</sup> So, although it is true that most of the things mentioned in Isaiah chapters 24, 25 relate to the time of God’s end-time judgment of the world and the beginning of the millennial kingdom, the *covering of death* which is over all peoples will not be swallowed up for the elect of the nations (who are distinct from the people of true Israel) until after the millennial kingdom.

In a separate section at the end of this study of Isaiah chapter 25, I’ll quote Isa. 65:17-25 and comment on those important prophetic verses. Those verses are quite relevant to our present discussion because, for one thing, they speak of the continuance of death (but with increased longevity) in God’s new heaven and new earth that follow His end-

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<sup>88</sup> Zechariah chapter 11 is an important prophecy that deals with God’s end-time judgment that includes this point. See my discussion of Zechariah chapter 11 on pages 203-219 of *Mid-Week Rapture*. I’m not suggesting, of course, that being oppressed ensures that a person will be included in God’s salvation plans. God knows the hearts of all men; He knows, for one thing, who will truly repent and submit to Him from their hearts.

<sup>89</sup> See, for example, Dan. 12:2; John 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15; and Rev. 20:5, 6, 13.

<sup>90</sup> For example, the Old Testament prophets didn’t understand that the Messiah was to be God (God the Son) and man. (Nor did they understand that the Son of God/the Logos eternally existed as a Person distinct from God the Father.) And they didn’t understand that Christ was to have two very different comings to the earth. Sometimes His two comings are included in one passage with no apparent recognition that there would be two (very different) comings (e.g., Isa. 9:6, 7; 61:1-3; and Zech. 9:9, 10). It was necessary for God to keep some things hidden or at least somewhat obscure (cf., e.g., 1 Cor. 2:8). This same principle applies to some of His plans that are still future for us.

<sup>91</sup> See the last paragraph under Isa. 2:1 in this paper, and see under Isa. 24:22.

time judgment of the world. Those verses also speak of the continuance of the bearing of children. The discussion there, which includes some quotations from other commentators, will help confirm the important point that the Old Testament prophets didn't clearly distinguish between the millennial kingdom and the eternal state.

As I mentioned in the last paragraph under Isa. 19:25 in this paper (see that paragraph, including the cross-references), I believe it is quite probable that the names of some of the people of the nations (who will be resurrected to be judged at the great-white-throne judgment after the millennium) will be found in the book of life of the Lamb.<sup>92</sup>

Assuming that there will be such people, they will join the remnant of the nations that were left at the end of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week (along with their offspring, who were born during the millennium) in God's eternal kingdom. That remnant and their offspring (excluding, of course, those that rebel against God [cf. Rev. 20:7-10]) will be transformed (glorified) to a state appropriate for living in God's eternal kingdom of glory when they enter that kingdom.

In 1 Cor. 15:54 the apostle Paul said that when we Christians have been resurrected/transformed into the fullness of eternal life at the last trumpet, these prophetic words regarding death being swallowed up will be fulfilled. They will be fulfilled for all the members of true Israel at that time, except for those who will become Christians after the mid-week sounding of the last trumpet. Those who become Christians after the rapture will be glorified and will start to reign with Christ and the other members of true Israel by the time the millennial kingdom begins. Both spiritual death and physical death will have been totally swallowed up for those who have been glorified. Death, "the last enemy" (1 Cor. 15:26), won't be cast into the lake of fire until the great-white-throne judgment after the millennium (Rev. 20:14).

Revelation 21:1-22:5, verses that speak of the eternal kingdom that will begin after the great-white-throne judgment at the end of the millennium, are a very important cross-reference for Isa. 25:7, 8. Those verses in Revelation have a lot to say about (the elect of) the nations having a place in God's eternal kingdom.<sup>93</sup> I'll quote Rev. 21:2- 4 and briefly comment on these verses (see the reference mentioned in footnote 93 for a fuller discussion). *"And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. (3) And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them and they shall be His people(s), and God Himself will be among*

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<sup>92</sup> We probably shouldn't be too surprised that the New Testament has so little to say regarding God's salvation plans for the nations (the nations being distinct from true Israel). For one thing, it would have tended to dilute the message of the gospel if the apostle Paul (for example) had called the Gentile world to repent and submit to the gospel, but also carried the message that many Gentiles will ultimately be saved as part of the nations. I'm not speaking of people who were clearly confronted by God with the gospel and rejected it. Revelation 21:27 makes it clear that all the elect of the nations will be saved through the Lord Jesus Christ and His atoning death.

<sup>93</sup> Those verses are discussed in a verse-by-verse manner in my eschatological paper dated November 1998. As discussed there, I believe the "peoples/nations" pictured in those verses are to be distinguished from true Israel. (All the members of true Israel will have been glorified and will be reigning with Christ by the time the millennial kingdom begins. As I understand it, true Israel will reign over the nations throughout the millennial kingdom and in the eternal state.) Revelation 20:14, 15, and many other verses, make it clear that the names of many people of the nations will *not* be found in the book of life, which has the names of the elect in it. Revelation 21:27 shows that the elect of the nations (as with true Israel) are saved by the grace of God in Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God.

*them* [The *tabernacle of God*, as the words are used in Rev. 21:2, is new Jerusalem; new Jerusalem is the city of God and of true Israel—they reign there.<sup>94</sup> When God comes to dwell among the nations (as pictured in Rev. 21:2-4), He comes in/with new Jerusalem. At the time He comes to the nations, all the members of true Israel will have been glorified and reigning with Him for the duration of the millennium; the people of true Israel are to be distinguished from the peoples of the nations that God comes to dwell among in Rev. 21:2-4. (It is probably better to translate “peoples” than people in Rev. 21:3.) The people of true Israel will not need to receive the things mentioned in Rev. 21:4; they will have received these things long before (cf. Rev. 7:16, 17<sup>95</sup>; 15:2<sup>96</sup>; and 20:4-6).], (4) *and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.*’ ”

It is significant that the two things mentioned here in the first two lines of Isa. 25:8 (God’s swallowing up death and His wiping tears from all faces) are both mentioned in Rev. 21:4., **And He will remove the reproach of His people [true Israel] from all the earth** [Throughout the history of mankind, since the fall (starting with Cain against Abel), there has been rather consistent reproach against the people of God (cf., e.g., Matt. 5:11, 12; 1 Pet. 4:14). Those from the nations who will have a place in God’s eternal kingdom (the elect of the nations) will no longer have any inclination to reproach true Israel. They will know the truth; they will have been humbled and will have repented; they will know that the God of true Israel *is* God, the only God. From the time the millennial kingdom begins, there will be no more reproach for God’s people, except for those times when there is brief rebellion. (We know that there will be a major rebellion at the end of the millennium [Rev. 20:7-10].)]; **For the LORD has spoken.** [What Yahweh has spoken *will* come to pass.] (9) [The words of verses 9-12 fit best with a time after God’s end-time judgment of the world has begun, not long before the beginning of the millennial kingdom.] **And it will be said in that day, “Behold, this is our God for whom we have waited that He might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; Let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation.”** [On *waiting* for God, compare, for example, Gen. 49:18; Psalms 25:3, 5, 21; 37:9; Prov. 20:22; Isa. 26:8; 40:31; 49:23; Rom. 8:23, 25; Gal. 5:5; Phil. 3:20; 1 Thess. 1:10; and Jude 1:21. God’s people must wait (in faith, with a trusting, confident expectation) for His predetermined time(s) to arrive. The believers from Old Testament days had to wait for God to raise up Moses to deliver Israel from Egypt; they had to wait for Him to overthrow Babylon and set the captives free; they had to wait for Messiah to come and

<sup>94</sup> We could say that (in some ways) new Jerusalem in Rev. 21:2 is a symbol for true Israel (cf. Rev. 3:12; 13:6; and 21:9, 10). True Israel is the bride of Christ (cf., e.g., 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:22-33; and Rev. 19:7-9); note that it says new Jerusalem is “made ready as a bride adorned for her husband” in Rev. 21:2, and that after saying “I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb” in 21:9, the angel showed him “the holy city, Jerusalem” in 21:10. Revelation chapters 21, 22 use a lot of symbolic language.

<sup>95</sup> Revelation 7:16, 17 speak of the members of true Israel who will be raptured from the earth in the middle of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week. It is significant that Rev. 7:17 mentions that “God will wipe every tear from their eyes.” And although Rev. 7:17, 18 do not mention that there will no longer be any death for them, Rev. 7:18 does mention the equivalent with the words about the Lamb of God “[guiding] them to the springs of the water of life [cf. Rev. 21:6].”

<sup>96</sup> Revelation 15:2 speaks of the members of true Israel who will become Christians after the mid-week rapture. We see them in heaven in this verse, having been glorified. I assume that all of them will be there, those who had been martyred and those who remained alive at the end of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week.

then for Him to complete His mission. And now, even though new-covenant salvation has become available through the death and resurrection of Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, we believers must still wait for Christ to return and complete His work of saving and judging. We are waiting for God to do the things He said He will do (in accordance with His *plans*, which He has made known to us [see Isa. 25:1]).] **(10) For the hand of the LORD will rest on this mountain, And [I would translate “But” with the NIV.] Moab will be trodden down in his place As straw is trodden down in the water of a manure pile. (11) And he will spread out his hands in the middle of it As a swimmer spreads out his hands to swim, But the Lord will lay low his pride [cf. Isa. 2:10-22] together with the trickery of his hands. (12) The unassailable fortifications of your walls He will bring down, Lay low and cast to the ground, even to the dust.** [God’s hand of blessing will rest upon His holy mountain (His city/kingdom), but His hand of judgment will rest on Moab. Moab represents all the proud, unrepentant enemies of God and of His people, true Israel. The walls of Moab will come down when the walls of the city of the world come down (cf. Isa. 24:10, 12; 25:2; and 26:5). There will, however, be room for a humbled, repentant remnant of Moab in God’s eternal kingdom (cf. Isa. 11:14; 16:1-5; and Jer. 48:47).]

#### A Study of Isaiah 65:17-25

These are important prophetic verses. I’ll comment on all these verses to some extent, but the primary reason we are considering these verses here is because they speak of God’s people continuing to experience death (even though there is longevity) and continuing to have children in the new heavens and new earth.

**“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth** [On these words see under Isa. 66:22 in this paper. The words “new heavens and a new earth,” as they are used here in Isa. 65:17, apparently include a preliminary stage (a stage that follows God’s end-time judgment of the world) that will have a partially glorified new heavens, new earth, and new Jerusalem. After the preliminary stage, which (based on Revelation chapter 20) can be called the millennial kingdom, the fully glorified new heavens, new earth, and new Jerusalem of the eternal state will be created. The Old Testament prophets (very much including Isaiah) didn’t clearly distinguish between the eternal state and the millennial kingdom.<sup>97</sup>]; **And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind. (18) But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing And her people for gladness. (19) I will also rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in My people** [God’s people here at least includes true Israel, but based on verses like Isa. 19:25 (cf. Rev. 21:3), we could see the end-time remnant of the nations included here too. The remnant of the nations will come to Jerusalem (e.g., Isa. 2:2-4); Jerusalem will be the center of God’s worldwide kingdom. That point of view would make these verses much easier to understand in that the bearing of children and the potential for sin and death will still be a reality for the nations during the millennial kingdom, but not for glorified true Israel. We will discuss these things further as we continue with these verses.]; **And there will no longer be heard in her The voice of**

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<sup>97</sup> See below under Isa. 65:20; see the last paragraph under Isa. 2:1 in this paper; and see under Isa. 25:8; 66:22-24.

**weeping and the sound of crying.** [The voice of weeping and the sound of crying are part of the “former things” (Isa. 65:17) that will pass away (cf. Rev. 21:4).] **(20) No longer will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, Or an old man who does not live out his days; For the youth will die at the age of one hundred And the one who does not reach the age of one hundred will be thought accursed.** [First I’ll quote the *Amplified Bible* on the second half of this verse; I believe it better communicates the intended meaning: “for the child shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner who dies when only a hundred years old shall be [thought only a child, cut off because he is] accursed.”

The important information contained in Isa. 25:6-8, that death will be swallowed up in God’s coming kingdom, has not been incorporated here in Isa. 65:20 (and 65:22). Isaiah 65:20, 22 speak of great longevity, but death still is a reality. (Isaiah may have received the prophetic revelation contained in Isa. 25:6-8 later than the one he received here in 65:17-25.) Those verses in Isaiah chapter 25 even include the elect of the nations, along with true Israel, in that glorious promise that there will be no more death.

As I have discussed in some detail in my previous writings,<sup>98</sup> I believe the book of Revelation shows that all the members of true Israel will be glorified and reigning with Christ by the time the millennial kingdom begins. Assuming this viewpoint is accurate, the people of true Israel won’t be subject to sin or death from that time on, and they won’t continue to bear children (see Luke 20:34-36). Isaiah 65:23 (and Isa. 60:22) also seem to say that the members of true Israel will continue to bear children in the kingdom that follows God’s end-time judgment of the world. Although Isa. 65:20, 23 could be understood to include the remnant of the nations, Isa. 65:17-25 give the impression that these verses deal first and foremost with the people of (true) Israel. Also, Isa. 60:22 seems to speak of the people of true Israel themselves (in the midst of the peoples of the nations) continuing to have children (see 60:15-22).

As I mentioned (see above under 65:17), the Old Testament prophets didn’t clearly distinguish between the millennial kingdom and the fully glorified eternal state that is to follow. Although the book of Revelation shows that death will have already been swallowed up for all the members of true Israel by the time the millennial kingdom begins, it also shows that death won’t be swallowed up for the nations until after the millennial kingdom, and there is nothing in the book of Revelation to suggest that the nations won’t continue to bear children throughout the millennial kingdom (see Revelation chapters 20, 21).

I’ll quote part of what John A. Martin said under Isa. 65:17-25.<sup>99</sup> “In these verses the Lord described the millennial kingdom, which is seemingly identified here with the eternal state (‘new heavens and a new earth’). In Revelation, however, the new heavens and new earth (Rev. 21:1) follow the Millennium (Rev. 20:4). Most likely Isaiah did not distinguish between these two aspects of God’s rule; he saw them together as one. After all, the Millennium, though 1,000 years in duration, will be a mere pinpoint of time compared with the eternal state.”

I’ll quote part of what Gleason L. Archer said under Isa. 65:17-25.<sup>100</sup> “Here is given a foreview of the Millennial felicity of earth after it has been purged of unbelievers. The

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<sup>98</sup> See under Rev. 20:4 in my eschatological paper dated November 1998. One of the most important passages where we can see *true Israel* in her entirety is the *woman* and her *offspring* of Revelation chapter 12. (Revelation chapter 12 is discussed verse-by-verse in *Mid-Week Rapture*.)

<sup>99</sup> *Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament* [Victor Books, 1985], page 1120.

<sup>100</sup> *Wycliffe Bible Commentary* [Moody Press, 1962], page 653.

designation *new heavens and a new earth* is applied to the Millennial kingdom only as a stage preliminary to the eternal glories of heaven (the New Jerusalem of Rev. 21; 22)....”

I’ll quote part of what H. C. Leupold said under Isa. 65:20.<sup>101</sup> “Verse 20 is concerned with another blessing that shall stand forth prominently – longevity on this new earth. This passage as such does not rise to the level of maintaining that there will be an eternal life, but merely a long continuation of life on this earth enabling man to taste to the full this pleasant existence. Therefore the level of 25:8 [where death is swallowed up] is not achieved here. The truth concerning the eternal blessedness of God’s children was, in the providence of God, but slowly revealed through the centuries. ... With the light on this whole issue glowing but dimly, a new measure of long life is promised.”

And I’ll quote two sentences from what F. Delitzsch said under Isa. 65:20 and then part of what he said under 65:25.<sup>102</sup> “We cannot maintain with Hoffmann (*Schriftbeweis*, ii. 2 567), that it is only in appearance that less is here affirmed than in chapter 25:8. The reference there is to the ultimate destruction of the power of death; here it is merely to the limitation of its power” (page 490). “But to what part of the history of salvation are we to look for a place for the fulfillment of such prophecies as these of the state of peace prevailing in nature around the church, except in the millennium? ... The prophet here promises a new age, in which the patriarchal measure of human life will return, in which death will no more break off the life that is just beginning to bloom, and in which the war of man with the animal world will be exchanged for peace without danger. And when is all this to occur? Certainly not in the blessed life beyond the grave [for those who have been resurrected/glorified], to which it would be both absurd and impossible to refer these promises, since they presuppose a continued mixture of sinners with the righteous, and merely a limitation of the power of death, not its utter destruction.<sup>103</sup> ... But one objection may be made to the supposition, that the prophet is here depicting the state of things in the millennium; viz. [namely] that this description is preceded by an account of the creation of a new heaven and a new earth. The prophet appears, therefore, to refer to that Jerusalem, which is represented in the Apocalypse [Rev. 21:2, 10] as coming down from heaven to earth after the transformation of the globe. But to this it may be replied, that the Old Testament prophet was not yet able to distinguish from one another the things which the author of the Apocalypse separates into distinct periods. From the Old Testament point of view generally, nothing was known of a state of blessedness beyond the grave.<sup>104</sup> Hades lay beyond this present life; and nothing was known of a heaven in which men were blessed. Around the throne of God in heaven there were angels and not men. And, indeed, until the risen Saviour ascended to heaven, heaven itself was not open to men, and therefore there was no heavenly Jerusalem whose descent to earth could be anticipated then. Consequently in the prophecies of the Old Testament the eschatological idea of the new Cosmos does

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<sup>101</sup> *Exposition of Isaiah* [Baker, 1971], page 367.

<sup>102</sup> *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 7 [Eerdmans, 1976 reprint].

<sup>103</sup> Delitzsch’s comments under Isa. 26:19 show that he understands that in the millennial kingdom the resurrected saints will “form one glorious church with those who are still in the [natural] body” (page 452). Delitzsch certainly understands the words of Isa. 65:20 about longevity (and the words about bearing children) to refer to those who are still “in the body.” Some Christians believe that the end-time remnant of the nation Israel, speaking of those that will still be alive at the end of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week, will enter the millennial kingdom in their natural bodies, along with the end-time remnant of the other nations. I assume that Delitzsch held that viewpoint.

<sup>104</sup> Even with his word “generally,” Delitzsch overstates this point; so too for his next sentence (cf., e.g., Gen. 5:24; 2 Kings 2:9-11; Psalm 23:6; Isa. 25:6-9; 26:19; Dan. 12:2, 13; John 8:56; Acts 23:6-8; 24:14, 15; and Hebrews chapter 11), but God’s revelation is progressive, and they didn’t know nearly as much in the days of Isaiah, or even in the days that Jesus was born, as we know now.

unquestionably coincide with the millennium.<sup>105</sup> It is only in the New Testament that the new creation intervenes as a party-wall between this life and the life beyond<sup>106</sup>; whereas the Old Testament prophecy brings down the new creation itself into the present life, and knows nothing of any Jerusalem of the blessed life to come, as distinct from the new Jerusalem of the millennium. We shall meet with a still further illustration in chapter 66 of this Old Testament custom of reducing the things of the life to come within the limits of this present world.”<sup>107</sup> ]

**(21) They will build houses and inhabit them; They will also plant vineyards and eat their fruit. (22) They will not build and another inhabit, They will not plant and another eat** [Compare Isa. 62:8, 9. Things like these are contrasted with what had often happened in their former state (before God’s end-time judgment of the world).]; **For as the lifetime of a tree, so will be the days of My people, And My chosen ones will wear out the work of their hands. (23) They will not labor in vain, Or bear children for calamity; For they are the offspring of those blessed by the LORD, And their descendants with them** [“for they will be a people blessed by the LORD, they and their descendants with them” (NIV).]. **(24) It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear. (25) The wolf and the lamb will graze together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox** [cf. Isa. 11:6-8]; **and dust will be the serpent’s food** [Compare Gen. 3:14; Mic. 7:17. Revelation 20:1-3 show what will happen to Satan, the serpent, throughout the millennial kingdom; Rev. 20:7-10 show what he will do for a short time at the end of the millennial kingdom and then of his eternal destiny in the eternal lake of fire.]. **They will do no evil or harm in all My holy mountain,” says the LORD.** [Isaiah 11:9 says, “They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.” God’s holy mountain will be centered in Jerusalem (cf. Isa. 2:2), but His millennial kingdom will be worldwide. A mountain can symbolize a kingdom (cf. Dan. 2:35). The city, etc. that Ezekiel was shown was on a very high mountain (Ezek. 40:2), and (based on Rev. 21:10) new Jerusalem of the eternal state can be pictured the same way.]

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<sup>105</sup> But we must remember (and Delitzsch agrees) that God did reveal more than this through his prophets, even if they didn’t have a full understanding of these things (cf., e.g., Isa. 25:7, 8; 26:19; and Dan. 12:2).

<sup>106</sup> A “party-wall” between two buildings is a wall common to both buildings. What Delitzsch apparently means is that we new-covenant believers have already been born again and in a very real sense we (unlike the old-covenant believers) already participate to some extent in the eternal life of the world to come.

<sup>107</sup> I’ll quote part of what Delitzsch said on this topic under Isa. 66:24 in this paper.

## ISAIAH CHAPTER 26

**In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah** [The time setting for singing this song will be right after God has completed his end-time judgment of the world, about the time the millennial kingdom begins. God will have removed all the enemies of His people (including their enemies in the spiritual dimension, starting with Satan [cf. Isa. 24:21, 22; 27:1; and Rev. 20:1-3]). Although it is not especially clear from the prophecies of Isaiah (though there are quite a few verses in Isaiah that fit the idea<sup>108</sup>), I believe (based on the New Testament, especially the book of Revelation<sup>109</sup>) that all the members of true Israel will have been glorified and begun to reign with Christ by the time the millennial kingdom begins. All the members of true Israel will have begun to experience salvation in the full dimension.]: **“We have a strong city; He sets up walls and ramparts for security [or, salvation].** [The “strong city” is glorified Jerusalem, the city of God.<sup>110</sup>] **(2) Open the gates, that the righteous nation may enter, The one that remains faithful.** [Compare Psalm 118:19-21. Taken in the fullest sense (incorporating what we know from the New Testament), the “righteous nation” embraces all the members of true Israel of all generations. Each of them remained faithful to God (at least to some significant extent) in their generation. This verse and the next few verses (along with a multitude of other verses) serve to encourage the people of God of all generations to remain faithful to Him at all times (by His grace)—His day of judgment is coming, and He will make things right (and much more) for those who are faithful to Him. He always takes care of those who are faithful to Him; they will have a place in His eternal city (new Jerusalem), reigning with Him forever.

The remnant of the nation Israel will be converted and submit to the Lord Jesus Christ in the last days after intense judgment (cf., e.g., Zech. 13:8-14:4 with 12:10; Rom. 9:27-29; 11:25-27; and Rev. 11:13).<sup>111</sup> They will remain faithful to Christ/God (by the grace of God) throughout the very difficult days of the second half of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week. (They won’t be converted in time to be taken in the mid-week rapture.)] **(3) The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace** [The Hebrew behind the translation “perfect peace” is *shalom shalom*.], **Because he trusts in You.** [“Those of steadfast mind you keep in peace—in peace because they trust in you” (NRSV). I believe it is better to understand the words of verse 3 (and verse 4) as applying to the people of God in the days *before* God has fully saved them and judged their enemies and made everything right at the end of this age. God keeps His people in peace in the midst of very difficult circumstances as they look to Him and trust Him (cf. Phil. 4:6, 7). The hearts and minds of God’s people are fixed on Him; they are not divided in their loyalties. They have faith in Him; they trust Him. His truth and righteousness are top priorities for them. These characteristics go with the being *righteous* and *faithful*

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<sup>108</sup> Cf., e.g., Isa. 25:6-8; 26:18, 19; 60:1, 2, 19; and 66:7, 8.

<sup>109</sup> For a start, see under Rev. 20:4 on pages 63, 64 of my eschatological paper dated November 1998.

<sup>110</sup> It’s clear that Jerusalem will be glorified to some extent in the millennial kingdom, but its glory then will undoubtedly be far less than the glory of new Jerusalem of the eternal state (that follows the millennial kingdom) as it is pictured in Revelation chapters 21, 22.

<sup>111</sup> Zech. 12:10; 13:8-14:4; and Rev. 11:13 are discussed in *Mid-Week Rapture*. The verses from Romans are discussed in this present paper toward the end of the chapter dealing with Isaiah chapter 27.

mentioned in the last verse.] **(4) Trust in the LORD forever** [We shouldn't need much exhortation to trust in the LORD after we are glorified, but knowing what He is going to do in the future is an anchor for our souls now. It's also true that our confidence in God is based in part on what He has already done.], **For in GOD the LORD, we have an everlasting Rock** [a Rock of salvation, of protection, of refuge; cf. Isa. 44:8]. [God is worthy of our *trust!*] **(5) For He has brought low those who dwell on high, the unassailable [cf. Isa. 25:2, 12] city; He lays it low, He lays it low to the ground, He casts it to the dust.** [As we have seen in these chapters, God will totally bring down the proud, ungodly city of this world in His end-time judgment of the world, the city that seemed so strong, the city that seemed so unassailable. All the unrepentant will be removed in judgment when the city is judged and destroyed. All that will remain of that city after God's end-time judgment of the world will be the humbled, repentant remnant of the nations, who will no longer have any loyalty to that city. Instead of being against God and His people, they will be submitted to Him.] **(6) The foot will trample it, The feet of the afflicted, the steps of the helpless.**" [The NIV has, "trample it down." The apparent viewpoint of this verse is that these feet will trample this city *after* God has already destroyed it and reduced it to dust (note that the emphasis of this chapter is on God's saving work in behalf of His people; compare verses 5, 20, 21). It is also true, however, that many verses show that God's people (true Israel) will play a role in the judging of the city of this world (cf., e.g., Psalm 110:3; Mic. 4:11-13; 5:4-9; Zech. 12:3-9; 14:14; Rom. 16:20; Rev. 2:26, 27; 12:5; 17:14; and 19:14, 19).<sup>112</sup> Most of the warfare by the people of true Israel against Satan's kingdom will take place after Christ's mid-week return, after they have been glorified and begun to reign with Him.] **(7) The way of the righteous** [The believers under the old covenant were *righteous*, but only in a relative sense. The most righteous of them will be quick to admit (along with all Christians) that they are dependent on the righteousness of God (the imputed righteousness and the imparted righteousness of God) that comes to believers through Jesus Christ. They are saved by God's grace in Christ Jesus, not through their works or merit.] **is [will be] smooth; O upright One, make [You will make] the path of the righteous level.** [This verse isn't easy, and the translations and interpretations differ substantially. This verse, which speaks of the *way* and *path* of God's righteous people, probably builds on the *foot/feet* of His righteous people trampling the city of this world in the preceding verse. I assume that this verse (along with verse 6) is looking to the future when God (after His end-time judgment) will make their *way/path smooth* and *level*. With this viewpoint we should translate "will be" (instead of "is") and "You will make level."<sup>113</sup> The righteous (the believers) look forward to the day of judgment; they know that the judgments of that day are not coming against them [cf. Rev. 3:10; Isa.

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<sup>112</sup> The verses listed here from the Old Testament are discussed in chapters 15, 17, 19 of *Mid-Week Rapture*. The entire book of Revelation has been discussed in a verse-by-verse manner in my previous writings.

<sup>113</sup> There is no verb in the Hebrew corresponding with "is" here; a verb must be supplied in the English translation. I would supply "will be." The Hebrew verb translated "make level" by the NASB and "you make smooth" by the NIV is the imperfect "tense," which would most often be translated "You will make level." A very relevant example of a Hebrew verb in the imperfect "tense" (which is a very common "tense") is close at hand: the Hebrew verb at the beginning of verse 6 that was translated "will trample it."

26:20, 21) and that the day will work for the glory of God and for their good – they pray for that day to come (e.g., Matt. 6:10).

In Isaiah’s day (and often in old-covenant days and the days of the new covenant) the righteous frequently suffered at the hands of the city of this world (including at the hands of the unrighteous [unbelievers] of Judah/Israel and of the Christian church). In the days before God saves them by His end-time judgment, they are often oppressed by the nations (and other ways too). The ways/paths they walk are often difficult roads to travel, far from being *smooth, level, or easy*. But they are not complaining (I don’t mean that they are never tempted to complain, or that no believer ever [temporarily] yields to such temptation); they know what the end result is going to be (based on God’s revelation); they believe that all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose.] **(8) Indeed, while following the way** [The Hebrew noun translated *way* in the preceding verse is used here too.] **of Your judgments** [Apparently the idea here is that the righteous of the nation Israel (the believers/those who were part of true Israel) suffered (to some extent at least) God’s chastening *judgments*, which came on a rather consistent basis, along with the nation.<sup>114</sup> God used these judgments to help maintain a righteous, believing remnant in the nation. (God also chastens Christians when/if chastening is required [cf., e.g., Heb. 12:4-13].<sup>115</sup>) Israel had a covenant with God, which included having His laws; when they were unfaithful to Him (which happened on a rather consistent basis), they were chastened (very often they were chastened by Him through the nations/the city of this world). God dealt much more severely with Israel than He did with the nations; He had given Israel much more, and He expected much more of them. (This same reality applies even more for new-covenant believers, Christians.) God has judged the peoples of the nations to some extent throughout the ages, but much of their judgment is reserved for the future.

Much Scripture confirms that Israel was “*following* the way of [God’s] judgments” (cf., e.g., Isa. 26:6 (“afflicted” and “helpless”), 8, 9a, 13a, 16; and 40:1, 2). But the righteous knew that this way/path would not last forever; they knew that their faithfulness would be rewarded when God judges the world at the end of this age. The people of true Israel (Jews and Gentiles) that become Christians before the mid-week return of Christ will be rewarded *before* His end-time judgments fall on the world.], **O LORD, We have waited for you eagerly; Your name, even Your memory, is the desire of our souls.** [God’s people continue to live for Him and to eagerly wait for His coming and His promised salvation (cf. Isa. 25:9). He is the desire of their souls/hearts,

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<sup>114</sup> Chapters like Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 in the Mosaic Law made it clear that Israel would suffer greatly for being unfaithful to God; they would have curses instead of blessings. But Leviticus chapter 26 (in agreement with many other passages) made it clear that God wouldn’t forget His covenant with Israel and totally destroy the nation. The time would come when He would save the humbled, repentant nation.

<sup>115</sup> I certainly don’t want to leave the impression that the trials and hard places of Christians always fall in the category of God’s chastening judgments. Many of the trials of Christians come because of spiritual warfare and the attacks of Satan and his kingdom (cf., e.g., 2 Cor. 2:11; 11:13-15; Eph. 6:10-20; 1 Thess. 2:12; 2 Tim. 2:26; Rev. 2:9, 10; and 12:3-13:12). God is glorified when Christians stay faithful through trials; Christians grow and come out of trials better than they entered them as they stay faithful through the trials (cf. Rom. 5:3-5; James 1:2-4); they are proved genuine, to the glory of God, and they will be rewarded (cf. Matt. 5:10-12; 1 Pet. 1:3-9). These things were also true, at least to some extent, for the believers of Old Testament days.

and they live like it (by His grace).] **(9) At night my soul longs for You, Indeed, my spirit within me seeks You diligently** [The *night* corresponds with the time of God’s judgments against His people (chastening, trials, affliction, persecution, etc.) that were spoken of in the first part of verse 8 (cf. Isa. 21:11, 12).]; **For when the earth experiences Your judgments the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.** [The remnant of the nations that will be left after God’s end-time judgment of the world will *have learned righteousness*. They will repent and turn to God; they will forsake their former unbelief and unrighteousness and begin to live for God. All the unrighteous that persist in unrepentance and unbelief will be removed in God’s end-time judgment of the world.] **(10) Though the wicked is shown favor, He does not learn righteousness; He deals unjustly in the land of uprightness, And does not perceive the majesty of the LORD.** [Though the “favor” of God doesn’t bring about the conversion of the nations, His end-time judgment (and the salvation of His people, true Israel, in the last days) will bring about the conversion of the remnant of the nations (cf., e.g., Rev. 15:3, 4 with Rev. 20:3). Isaiah chapter 24 (for example) shows that the end-time remnant of the nation Israel will also repent and *learn righteousness*.

The way the words *the wicked* are used here they apparently include all but the *righteous* of true Israel; *the wicked* can repent (cf. Isa. 55:7; Ezek. 3:18, 19; and 18:21-29).<sup>116</sup>] **(11) O LORD, Your hand is lifted up yet they do not see it. They see Your zeal for the people and are put to shame** [The NIV has, “Let them see your zeal for your people and be put to shame,” and the margin of the NASB is essentially the same. This sounds better; the second sentence of this verse looks to the day of judgment, when God will save His people and judge the world.]; **Indeed, fire will devour Your enemies** [and the enemies of Your people]. [Cf. Isa. 10:17; 24:6; and 66:15, 24.] **(12) LORD, You will establish peace for us** [In this context Isaiah is speaking of the peace (cessation of persecution, oppression, bondage, etc.) that will come to His people (true Israel) when their enemies have all been removed or transformed through God’s end-time judgments.], **Since You have also performed for us all our works.** [Everything good that had happened to Israel in the days before Isaiah wrote these words (including the righteousness of those who were [relatively] righteous) had come through the intervention and work of God. So too, the end-time salvation of true Israel and the judgment and removal of their enemies will come through the intervention and work of God. Believers are happy to acknowledge that they are totally dependent on God and His grace that is extended to them in all its manifestations (His plans, His forgiveness, His making righteous and holy, His intervention in their behalf by His almighty power, His guidance, His truth, etc.).] **(13) O LORD our God, other masters besides You have ruled us** [Isaiah is undoubtedly thinking of *masters* like the Egyptians, Assyrians, and Babylonians.]; **But through You alone we confess Your name.** [The NIV has, “but your name alone do we honor”; the *Jerusalem Bible* has, “but we acknowledge no one other than you, no other name than yours.” Even when Israel was under the rule of the “world” kingdoms/nations (which they frequently were), the believers of Israel stayed faithful to God. Even when it was far from easy, they knew that God could be trusted. They knew that He is committed to save those who are faithful to Him and to judge and

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<sup>116</sup> All these verses use the same Hebrew word for “[the] wicked” used here in Isa. 26:10. All men are sinners, but all men are not so enslaved to sin and committed to sinfulness that they cannot be brought to repentance, faith, and righteousness.

remove those who persist in rebellion against Him – *He will have the last word*; and He always intervenes on time, even if He waits for what seems to be a very long time.] **(14) The dead will not live, the departed spirits will not rise; Therefore You have punished and destroyed them, And You have wiped out all remembrance of them.** [This speaks of the unrepentant, wicked dead from all generations, including those that God will remove in His end-time judgment of the world (the prime examples being Antichrist and the false prophet [Rev. 19:20]). The righteous won't have to be concerned with further problems caused by these people.<sup>117</sup> It is also true, and very significant, that God will totally remove all His enemies and the enemies of His people in the spiritual dimension, starting with Satan (cf., e.g., Isa. 24:21, 22; and 27:1).] **(15) You have increased the nation, O LORD, You have increased the nation, You are glorified; You have extended all the borders of the land.** [Compare Isa. 54:1-3; Zech. 14:9. The NIV has, “You have enlarged the nation,” which fits better with “You have extended the borders of the land.” God will have *added* many people to His worldwide nation/kingdom.<sup>118</sup> He will *add* the resurrected, glorified members of true Israel from all generations. (As I mentioned, I believe all the members of true Israel will be glorified and reigning by the time the millennial reign begins.) He will also *add* the converted remnant of the nations left after His end-time judgment of the world to His worldwide kingdom. (They won't be glorified until after the millennial kingdom. Those among them that rebel will be removed by judgment.) He will also ultimately *add* the elect people of the nations that will be resurrected at the end of the millennium and whose names will be found in the book of life (assuming that there will be such people).] **(16) O LORD, they [the believers] sought You [cf. 25:9; 26:8, 9] in distress; They could only whisper a prayer, Your chastening was upon them. (17) As the pregnant woman approaches the time to give birth, She writhes and cries out in her labor pains, Thus were we before You, O LORD. (18) We were pregnant, we writhed in labor, We gave birth, as it seems, only to wind. We could not accomplish deliverance for the earth, Nor were [the] inhabitants of the world born.** [As we discussed under verses 8, 9, God chastened the people of Israel on a rather consistent basis, and the righteous, believing remnant of the nation suffered (at least to some significant extent) along with the nation. (It's also true that some of their suffering came at the hands of the unbelievers in Israel. It's important to know that much of the suffering that comes to believers doesn't come because of their sin, or because they are being chastened along with the people of God [see footnotes 115, 119].) This chastening was one means God used to keep a righteous remnant in Israel. The next two verses show that the chastening of the people of God, even if we include the chastening and suffering<sup>119</sup> of the new covenant saints (although it plays an important role in the outworking of God's plan of salvation), cannot overthrow death and bring forth the

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<sup>117</sup> The unrepentant wicked dead will be resurrected bodily, but it won't be a resurrection to *life*. See under Isa. 25:7.

<sup>118</sup> The BDB Hebrew Lexicon gives *add* as the basic meaning of the Hebrew verb (*yasaph*) translated “You have increased” by the NASB and “You have enlarged” by the NIV.

<sup>119</sup> Compare Rom. 8:17-30. (Romans 8:16-23 are discussed in a verse-by-verse manner in my paper dated July 2000.) The suffering spoken of in Rom. 8:17, 18 doesn't deal, at least not for the most part, with God's chastening of Christians.

*birth* into the fullness of eternal life.<sup>120</sup> The people of true Israel cannot even save themselves, so they certainly cannot bring forth salvation and deliverance for (the elect of) the nations. What the people of true Israel cannot accomplish through their travail (or by any other means), God can and does accomplish through the travail of His Son, the Messiah, the Lamb of God and through His subsequent work of saving and judging. For a start, see Isa. 52:12-54:3.<sup>121</sup>

God Himself (through the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Holy Spirit) is the only One who can bring forth this *birth* into the fullness of eternal life. Jesus Christ was the firstborn from the dead (Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5); He was the first man (though He was and is much more than just a man) to be born into the fullness of eternal life (when He was resurrected and glorified). He is the “firstborn among many brethren” (Rom. 8:29); His brethren, the members of true Israel, will all follow Him in the birth into the fullness of eternal life at the end of this age. After speaking of Christ’s being the first one raised from the dead (into eternal life) in 1 Cor. 15:20, the apostle Paul went on to mention that those who are Christ’s will be made alive at His coming (1 Cor. 15:23). “Behold, I tell you a mystery; we [believers] will not all sleep [die], but we will all be changed [we will all be glorified; we will all be born into the fullness of eternal life]” (1 Cor. 15:51).

All the elect (the elect of true Israel and the elect of the nations) are saved and born into eternal life through the atoning death (and subsequent work) of the Lamb of God. All the elect are *born* into the fullness of eternal life through the Lamb of God; they are the *offspring* of Him and His saving work. Isaiah 53:10 mentions “*His offspring*.”

A major part of the fulfillment of the prophetic words regarding the *birth* of Isa. 26:18, 19 will take place when the members of true Israel converted before Christ’s mid-week return are born into the fullness of eternal life.<sup>122</sup> By the time the millennial kingdom begins, the members of true Israel converted after the rapture will have also

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<sup>120</sup> The birth into the fullness of eternal life involves a lot more than being born-again by the Spirit when one becomes a Christian, as important as that birth is. The new birth is a preliminary stage of the birth into the fullness of eternal life, which includes the resurrection and glorification for those that will have died and the glorification for those still alive that will enable them to live in God’s eternal kingdom. All the members of true Israel will be glorified. So will the elect of the nations pictured in Revelation chapters 21, 22, but the glory for the nations will be lower than the glory for Israel. For one thing, true Israel will reign.

<sup>121</sup> Many of the key verses of this very important passage are discussed in *Holiness and Victory Over Sin*. See the Contents at the front of that book.

<sup>122</sup> This glorious birth is specifically mentioned (it is even spoken of as a *birth*) in Rev. 12:5; Psalm 2:7; Isa. 66:7; and Mic. 5:3. These verses are all discussed in detail in *Mid-Week Rapture*. See pages 314-316; 258-262; 239, 243; and 251-253. For other references to the birth into the fullness of eternal life that will take place in the middle of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week, see number 13 on page 16 of *Mid-Week Rapture*. Most of the verses listed there are discussed in that book.

Revelation 12:5 is a verse of key importance. It is probably the most important verse to demonstrate that the resurrection and rapture (the birth into the fullness of eternal life for the saints converted before that time) will take place in the middle of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week. Revelation 12:2 is an important cross-reference for the travail of the people of true Israel pictured in Isa. 26:8, 9, 13, and 16-18. The *woman* of Revelation chapter 12 represents true Israel (cf. Rev. 12:1). Isaiah 26:18 starts out “We were with child, we writhed in pain” (NIV); Rev. 12:2 has, “She [true Israel] was with child; and she cried out [was crying out], being in labor and in pain to give birth.” The travail pictured in Rev. 12:2 covers all the travail experienced by the people of true Israel from the beginning, probably starting with the murder of Abel. All of Revelation chapter 12 is discussed in a verse-by-verse manner in chapter 21 of *Mid-Week Rapture*.

been *born* into the fullness of eternal life.<sup>123</sup> Finally, after the great-white-throne judgment at the end of the millennium, the *birth* into the eternal life of God's eternal kingdom (as that kingdom is pictured in the last two chapters of the Bible) will become a full reality when the elect of the nations are *born* into eternal life. See under Isa. 25:7, 8 in this paper.

The whole creation is in labor and “groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body” (Rom. 8:22, 23). The creation knows that it “will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the [glorified] children of God [all the members of true Israel]” (Rom. 8:21) at the end of this age.

John 3:6 is an important verse that deals (in large part) with the *birth* into the yet-future eternal life of God's eternal kingdom. I'll quote John 3:5, 6, *Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water<sup>124</sup> and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (6) That which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”* These verses (with all of John 3:1-8) include the very important teaching that we must be *born* of the Holy Spirit (to become Christians and) to enter the kingdom of God. We enter the kingdom of God in a preliminary sense when we are born again through Christ by the Spirit (cf., e.g., Rom. 14:17; Col. 1:13), but we won't enter the kingdom of God in its full and final sense until the end of this age when we are glorified and *born* into the fullness of eternal life (cf., e.g., Luke 19:11; Acts 14:22; 1 Cor. 6:9; 15:50; Gal. 5:21; James 2:5; and Rev. 12:10).

The word *flesh* in the words *that which is born of flesh* (John 3:6) refers to the fact that fallen man is in spiritual death, having been separated from God and His life – separated from His life-giving *Spirit*. Man in the *flesh* can only give birth to offspring that are in the *flesh* (spiritually dead/without the *Spirit*). For spiritual (by the Spirit) life to come, God (who is the only source of life) must transmit life by His Spirit. When Christians (through faith) are born again by the Spirit (through the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ and by His saving work), they only receive the first installment of what it means to be born into God's eternal kingdom. At the end of this age, we will be born into eternal life in the full sense. This ultimate birth (this completed birth) will include receiving a glorified body, a body suited for life in God's heavenly kingdom (cf. 1 Cor. 15:42-57). “Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable” (1 Cor. 15:50).

It is only after this birth into the fullness of eternal life by the Spirit that the birth spoken of with the words *that which is born of Spirit is spirit* (John 3:6) will be

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<sup>123</sup> See above under Isa. 26:1. Isaiah 66:8 prophesies regarding the birth into the fullness of eternal life for these members of true Israel who will not be converted until after the mid-week rapture with the words “gives birth to her children” NIV. (Isaiah 66:8 is discussed in chapter 16 of *Mid-Week Rapture*.) Although many Gentiles will apparently become part of true Israel through submitting to the gospel after the rapture, the spotlight will be on the conversion of the remnant of the nation Israel.

<sup>124</sup> I agree with the widespread viewpoint that *water* here refers to water baptism. In the New Testament baptism in water, a baptism of repentance and faith, was typically preliminary to the coming of the Holy Spirit to dwell in believers with His life-giving presence. He brings life, which starts with the new birth. See the discussion on water baptism on pages 10, 11 of my paper dated November 1998 (including the cross-reference to *Holiness and Victory Over Sin*).

completed. Then we will have become *spirit* in the full sense with which this word is used at the end of John 3:6. The idea isn't that we will then be a spirit without a body, but that our entire being (including our glorified body) and our entire existence will have been glorified in a manner appropriate for citizens of heaven, and not citizens only, but even those reigning with Christ. We *will* have bodies; that is what the resurrection of the body is all about, but they will be bodies suited for heaven, not bodies made of the material of this world and for this world. In 1 Cor. 15:44 the apostle Paul called the resurrection body a "spiritual body." Adam (before the fall) was created with a "natural body" (1 Cor. 15:44); his body was designed for life on the earth (cf. 1 Cor. 15:47-50).

I'll comment briefly on the important idea that is assumed in these verses of Isaiah, that the people of God are (in some ways) responsible to bring deliverance/birth to the nations and the earth. Consider, for example, the promises made to Abraham (Gen. 12:3; 22:18; 26:4; and 28:14). Although the people of true Israel (Abraham is the father of true Israel [Rom. 4:11-17]) cannot bring to pass the things promised, a descendant of Abraham does bring all these things to pass, namely the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God (cf., e.g., Gal. 3:15-22). It is interesting and significant that the Lord Jesus is called *Israel* in Isa. 49:3; He will accomplish all the will of God through His work of saving, judging, and glorifying.

I'll quote part of what John N. Oswalt said under Isa. 26:16-19.<sup>125</sup> "Here Isaiah turns back to the present [from the future pictured in 26:14, 15], as in vv. 7-11 [or at least verses 8 through 11a]. As Delitzsch points out, this oscillation between the present and the future is typical of this section (chapters 24-27). ...." It is a great and necessary blessing for us to be convinced of our total need for God and His enabling grace, but we must also be convinced that His grace *is* sufficient, and we must submit to that grace in humble, persistent faith.] **(19) Your dead will live** [The word "Your" could refer to God, but I prefer the view that it refers to true Israel.]; **Their corpses will rise.** [At the time of Christ's mid-week return, the members of true Israel who will have died before that time will be resurrected to eternal glory (cf. Psalm 2:7-9; Isa. 66:7; Mic. 5:3; Matt. 24:31; Mark 13:27; 1 Cor. 15:20-23, 50-53; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17; and Rev. 12:5).<sup>126</sup>] **You**

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<sup>125</sup> *Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39* [Eerdmans, 1986], pages 482, 483.

<sup>126</sup> The members of true Israel who will be converted *after* the mid-week rapture that are martyred during the three and one-half year reign of Antichrist (during the second half of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week) will be resurrected at the end of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week (Rev. 20:4). I believe those members of true Israel who will still be alive at the end of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week will be glorified and begin to reign with the rest of the members of true Israel at that time. For a start see under Rev. 20:4 in my paper dated November 1998.

Revelation 20:5 shows that the "rest of the dead" (which speaks of the people who have lived and died throughout the history of man until the time that the millennial kingdom begins who aren't part of God's true Israel) won't be resurrected until the end of the millennium. Then they will be resurrected to stand before God at the great-white-throne judgment (Rev. 20:11-15). I assume that the names of some of those people will be found in the book of life when they are judged. In other words, they are elect of God. For such people their resurrection at the end of the millennium will prove to be a resurrection that will result in eternal life; all such persons will experience eternal life (as part of the elect of the nations) in God's new earth with its new Jerusalem. For the others, their resurrection at the end of the millennial kingdom will prove to be a resurrection that will result in the second death, the lake of fire, when their names are not found in the book of life (Rev. 20:14, 15). (This footnote continues on the next page.)

**who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, For your dew** [The “dew” here symbolizes God’s life-giving work.] **is as the dew of the dawn, And the earth will give birth to the departed spirits.** [The only spirits (we’re dealing with the spirits of men) excluded will be the unrepentant wicked/the non-elect (cf. Isa. 26:14).] **(20)**

**Come, my people, enter into your rooms And close your doors behind you; Hide for a little while Until indignation** [cf., e.g., Isa. 34:2; 66:14-19; Dan. 8:19; and 11:36] **runs its course.** [God always takes care of those who trust Him and are faithful to Him, one way, or another (cf. Isa. 3:10). These words (of Isa. 26:20, 21) apparently build on the incident where God protected Israel at the time of the last of the ten plagues in the exodus from Egypt. See Ex. 12:22, 23. Even as the people of Israel were protected from the death of the firstborn by the blood of the Passover lamb that had been applied to the doors of their dwellings (they were not permitted to leave their dwellings until the next morning), the believers of the last days (true Israel) will be protected from God’s wrath that is poured out during the day of judgment through the blood of the Passover lamb that has been applied to their hearts and lives.

Noah and his family’s being protected from the wrath of God by entering the ark with its rooms during the judgment of the flood (God even closed the door of the ark for them [Gen. 6:16; 7:16]) also serves as a type for God’s protective care of His people in the last days. Jesus said (in Matt. 24:37-41) that His coming “will be just like the days of Noah. For in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away.” The believers (true Israel) of the last days correspond with those who entered the ark; God will protect them while His flood of judgment falls on the earth.

The primary fulfillment of these prophetic words will come to pass when God raptures the saints from the earth at the time of Christ’s mid-week return. They will be raptured from the earth at the same time the day of judgment begins on the earth, at the sounding of the seventh and last trumpet of the book of Revelation. Those who are faithful in the days before Christ returns will be kept out of that hour of very intense testing (cf. Rev. 3:10).<sup>127</sup> It is also true that the members of true Israel who will be converted after the rapture and will live on the earth during the second half of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week will know something of God’s protective care (Rev. 12:6, 14-16); but they will also know great travail, and there will be many martyrs (cf. Dan. 7:21, 25; Rev. 13:7, 15-17; and 20:4). God’s *indignation* will have run its course (cf. Isa. 26:20) by the end of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week. It is also true, however, that His end-time judgments will not be totally finished until after His judgment of the rebels at the end of the millennial kingdom and the great-white-throne judgment at the end of the millennium (Rev. 20:7-15).] **(21) For behold, the LORD is about to come out from His place** [Compare Mic. 1:3; Isa. 13:11. I would translate these last words with the NIV, “the LORD is coming out of His dwelling,” or the equivalent. There’s no word in the Hebrew here

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The (elect of the) nations are pictured in eternal glory in Revelation chapters 21, 22. (If I understand the picture, they are distinct from true Israel.) Revelation 21:27 demonstrates that (the elect of) the nations gain entrance to that glorified state through the Lamb of God. Significantly, the wording of Isa. 26:18, 19 (along with the important cross-reference, Isa. 25:6-8) fits the idea that those being resurrected to life includes (the elect of) the nations.

<sup>127</sup> Isaiah 66:7 is an important cross-reference that helps confirm this interpretation. On Isa. 66:7 see footnote 15 in this present chapter.

corresponding with “about” of the NASB.] **To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; And the earth will reveal her bloodshed And will no longer cover her slain.** [On the serious sin of shedding innocent blood, see under Isa. 24:5 in this paper.]

## ISAIAH CHAPTER 27

**In that day the LORD will punish Leviathan [cf. Job 3:8; 41:1; Psalms 74:14; and 104:26] the fleeing serpent, With His fierce and great and mighty sword, Even Leviathan the twisted serpent; And He will kill the dragon who lives in the sea.**

[There's widespread agreement that this verse goes with chapter 26. This viewpoint makes it even easier to see that Leviathan is a symbol for Satan here (or, Satan and his kingdom). In this context (with Isa. 26:20, 21; 27:2-13, verses that deal with end-time judgments that will be completed by the time the millennial kingdom begins), we tend to expect that the judgment spoken of in this verse will also be completed at that time, but this is not the case.<sup>128</sup> God will cast Satan into the abyss at the end of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week and keep him there for the duration of the millennium; He won't cast him into the eternal lake of fire until after the millennium. See Gen. 3:1-15; Isa. 24:21, 22; Rev. 12:3-13:4; 16:13; and 20:1-3, 7-9.] **(2) In that day** [The time setting here (for verses 2-6) is at the end of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week, right after God's end-time judgment of the world, in which He will save the remnant of His people (true Israel) and leave a remnant of the nations. As in Isa. 2:2-4, for example, it is now time for the remnant of the nations to submit to God.], **"A vineyard of wine, sing of it!** [The "vineyard" here refers to God's people, (true) Israel (cf. Isa. 5:1-7; 26:8; Psalm 80:8-19; and Jer. 2:20-25).] **(3) I, the LORD, am its keeper; I water it every moment. So that no one will damage it, I guard it night and day.** [Contrast God's former judgment/chastening of the people of His vineyard because of their sinfulness in Isa. 5:3-7; Psalm 80:12, 13, 16.] **(4) I have no wrath.** [It's time for peace, but the potential for rebellion will still exist for the remnant of the nations left after God's end-time judgment of the world (cf. Dan. 7:12; Zech. 14:16-19; and Rev. 20:7-10).] **Should someone give me briars and thorns in battle, Then I would step on them, I would burn them completely.** [God will have no more wrath against His people (Israel); there is no more basis for wrath; all the members of true Israel will be walking before Him in truth, righteousness, and holiness. But the idea here is that God isn't holding any enmity against the remnant of the nations. He is inviting them to submit to Him (also in verse 5), but there is a strong warning here in verse 4 against further rebellion by trying to attack His vineyard. Formerly, when God was chastening Israel, His judgments led to "briars and thorns [coming up in His vineyard]" (Isa. 5:6; cf. Isa. 32:13). Any attack against His vineyard now by those with "briars and thorns" will lead to God's quickly crushing any such attack.] **(5) Or let him rely on My protection** ["come to me for refuge" NIV], **Let him make peace with me, Let him make peace with me."** **(6) In the days to come Jacob will take root, Israel will blossom and sprout, And they will fill the whole world with fruit.** [Compare Isa. 35:1, 2; 37:31; and Hos 14:5-7. In other words, the kingdom

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<sup>128</sup> As I have mentioned (see under Isa. 25:8), it is common for these prophetic chapters (chapters 24-27), and for many other prophetic passages, to not distinguish (or, in some cases, to not carefully distinguish) between things that will come to pass at the end of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week and the beginning of the millennial kingdom and things that will come to pass at the end of the millennium. The concept of the millennial kingdom was not clearly taught before the book of Revelation. I'll list the verses from Isaiah chapters 24-27 that mention things that won't come to pass, or won't fully come to pass, until the end of the millennium: Isa. 24:22, 23; 25:6-8; 26:17-19; and 27:1.

of God (which will be centered in Jerusalem throughout the millennial kingdom and forever), with its worship of the one true God, will expand to fill the earth as the remnant of the nations worldwide submit to Him (cf., e.g., Isa. 2:2-4; 11:10; 19:23-25; 24:13-16a; 25:6; 26:9; 42:10-16; 49:6-23; 60:3-17; and 66:18-24).] **(7) Like the striking of Him who has struck them, has He struck them? Or like the slaughter of His slain, have they been slain?** [I believe the translation of the NIV better communicates the intended meaning of this verse, “Has the LORD struck her [Israel] as he struck down those who struck her? Has she been killed as those who were killed who killed her?” God’s striking (His chastening judgments) of the nation Israel/Judah will result in the salvation and exaltation of the remnant of His people. His striking (cf. Isa. 11:4) of the city of this world, which had been striking His people, is different: The city of the world will be totally destroyed in God’s end-time judgment, leaving only a humbled, repentant remnant that will submit to God.<sup>129</sup> God will totally destroy the wicked end-time kingdom headed up by Antichrist with all his followers and forces (cf. Rev. 14:9-11; 19:10-21) even as He will totally destroy Babylon the great harlot (cf. Rev. 14:8; 16:17-19:3) in His end-time judgment of the world.] **(8) You contended with them [Israel/Judah] by banishing them, by driving them away. With His fierce wind He has expelled them on the day of the east wind** [cf. Job 27:21; Psalm 48:7; Ezek. 19:12; and 27:26]. [Compare Isa. 50:1; 54:7 with 54:1-7; Jer. 18:17; and Hos. 13:15. These words speak of God’s chastening of Israel/Judah. The judgments in view start with the overthrow of the northern kingdom (sometimes called *Israel*) and the exile of many of its people at the hands of the Assyrians and the subsequent overthrow of the southern kingdom (sometimes called *Judah*) and the exile of many of its people at the hands of the Babylonians. But the primary judgments in view here are the end-time judgments (much of this end-time judgment will come through Antichrist and the revived Roman Empire) that will reduce Israel/Judah to a humbled, repentant remnant.<sup>130</sup>] **(9) Therefore through this Jacob’s iniquity will be forgiven; And this will be the full price of the pardoning of his sin: When he [He] makes all the [pagan] altar stones like pulverized chalk stones; When Asherim [In the margin the NASB has, “i.e. wooden symbols of a female deity.”] and [pagan] incense altars will not stand** [cf. Ex. 34:13; Deut. 12:3]. [The result of God’s judgments that is emphasized in this verse is the removal of the sinful idolatry and worship of pagan gods by the people of Israel/Judah. Although this very serious sin is singled out here, God will remove all sin from the end-time remnant of Israel/Judah. His chastening of Israel/Judah plays an important role in the sanctifying of His people, but the Bible makes it very clear that new-covenant salvation (which is centered in the atoning death of the Lamb of God and the work of the Holy Spirit) is required to fully remove the sin from the hearts and lives of men (cf., e.g., Isa. 32:14-18; 53:4-12; Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:26, 27; Zech 12:10-13:2; Matt. 1:21; Rom. 11:26, 27; 1 Pet. 1:13-25; and Rev. 1:5 [and there are many more such verses]).

<sup>129</sup> Isaiah chapter 19 shows that God’s end-time striking of Egypt will lead to healing in that the remnant of Egypt will return to God (especially see 19:22). What will be true for Egypt will also be true for other nations.

<sup>130</sup> Several other factors (besides God’s chastening judgments) that will lead to the repentance of the end-time remnant of Israel/Judah are the convicting and enlightening work of the Spirit, the ministry of the two prophets of Rev. 11:1-13; seeing the mid-week rapture of the saints; and seeing the Lord Jesus Christ Himself at the time of His return (mid-week).

I'm not satisfied with the translation "will be forgiven." I'll quote what the BDB Hebrew Lexicon (under *kaphar*) said regarding the meaning here, "by *this* shall the iniquity of *Jacob* be covered over...namely by the destruction of the idolatrous objects." The iniquity will be *covered over* in the sense it will be removed—the remnant of God's people will no longer be committing iniquity. I could be satisfied with the KJV's "shall be purged." Compare Isa. 1:25.

I'm even less satisfied with the translation "this will be the full price of the pardoning of his sin." I believe the translation of the NIV is far better, "And this will be the full fruitage of the removal of his sin: When he makes all the altar stones to be like chalk stones crushed to pieces, no Asherah poles or incense altars will be left standing." In the margin the NASB comments that "all the fruit" is the literal translation of the Hebrew words used here, not "the full price" and that "removing" is the more literal translation of the Hebrew word used here, not "pardoning." When God is done there will not be any pagan altars, Asherim, or pagan incense altars left in Israel/Judah; the end-time remnant of Israel will not be sinning against God through pagan religious practices or any other way.] **(10) For the fortified city is isolated, A homestead forlorn and forsaken like the desert; There the calf will graze, And there it will lie down and feed on its branches.** [This verse and the next verse picture Israel/Judah after God has poured out His threatened judgments upon them. Compare Isa. 32:13, 14.] **(11) When its limbs are dry, they are broken off; Women come and make a fire with them, For they are not a people of discernment** [cf. Deut. 32:28; Isa. 1:3; 5:13; and Jer. 8:7], **Therefore their Maker will not have compassion on them. And their Creator will not be gracious to them.** [That is, God will not have compassion on Israel/Judah and be gracious to them until He saves the humbled, repentant remnant of the nation in the last days through the Lord Jesus Christ. This verse skips over those times that God had compassion on the Israel/Judah by restoring them from the Babylonian captivity, by giving them victory in the days of the Maccabees, by sending the Messiah to them at His first coming, etc.] **(12)** [The format of the NASB and NIV indicate that Isa. 27:1-11 are poetry in the Hebrew, but that 27:12, 13 (the last two verses of the chapter) are prose. Isaiah 27:12, 13 look to the end of the age when God will be gracious to the humbled, repentant remnant of Israel/Judah. It seems that we have enough information in these two verses to locate the time of transition from God's chastening judgments of Israel/Judah to His beginning to gather and save them to the middle of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week. They, in repentance and faith, will begin to submit to the Lord Jesus Christ about the time of His mid-week return. In the month preceding His mid-week return (this month will start with the abomination of desolation), the nation of Israel/Judah will experience a period of unprecedented shaking during the short great tribulation, which will leave a humbled, repentant remnant. See Isa. 10:20-23 and Rom. 9:27-29; Isa. 59:20, 21 and Rom. 11:25-27<sup>131</sup>; Dan. 12:1; Zech. 12:10-13:1, 8; 14:1-5; and Matt. 24:15-22.<sup>132</sup>

Although the gathering of the end-time remnant of Israel/Judah will begin when Christ returns in the middle of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week, we can probably say that the scene

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<sup>131</sup> Isaiah 10:20-23 and Rom. 9:27-29; Isa.59:20, 21 and Rom. 11:25-27 are discussed in this present chapter, starting on the following page.

<sup>132</sup> Daniel 12:1 and Zechariah chapters 12-14 are discussed in chapters 10 and 15 of *Mid-Week Rapture*. Matt. 24:15-22 are discussed on pages 30-33 of my eschatological paper dated November 1998.

pictured in Isa. 27:13 (where the scattered end-time remnant of Israel/Judah come to Jerusalem to worship God) will not come to pass in any full sense until the end of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week (after their enemies have all been overthrown).] **In that day the LORD will start His threshing** [The Hebrew verb (*chabat*) translated "will start His threshing" by the NASB here was used in Deut. 24:20 of harvesting (gathering) olives by knocking them off the tree with a stick (cf. Isa. 17:6; 24:13). ("When thou beatest thine olive tree..." [Deut. 24:20 KJV].) Apparently that is the idea here, instead of threshing. See the KJV translation of Isa. 27:12.] **from the flowing stream of the Euphrates to the brook of Egypt** [The boundaries mentioned here, within which God will gather up the sons of Israel, are interesting: These are the expansive boundaries for the land of Israel mentioned in Gen. 15:18; Ex. 23:31, boundaries far beyond what the nation typically realized. The boundaries realized in the days of King Solomon were the exception (cf. 1 Kings 4:21, 24).], **and you will be gathered up one by one, O sons of Israel.** [The next verse mentions the LORD's gathering the (humbled, repentant) sons of Israel/Judah living beyond the boundaries mentioned here in verse 12, from Assyria and Egypt. I assume we are to also see the remnant's being gathered worldwide (that is, from beyond Assyria and Egypt too). Compare Deut. 30:1-5; Isa. 11:11; 17:6; 24:13; and 56:8.] **(13) It will come about also** [I would skip the word "also," which is not included in the Hebrew; it is not included in the KJV, NKJV, or the NIV.] **in that day that a great trumpet will be blown, and those who were perishing in the land of Assyria and who were scattered in the land of Egypt will come and worship the LORD in the holy mountain at Jerusalem.** [I assume this "great trumpet" is to be equated with the "great trumpet" of Matt. 24:31.<sup>133</sup> This trumpet will sound in the middle of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week; it will signal the resurrection, glorification, and rapture of the saints; it is the same trumpet as the trumpet of 1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:16; and Rev. 11:15 (and apparently also of Isa. 18:3; Zech. 9:14). This same trumpet will also signal the time that God begins to gather and save the remnant of the nation Israel/Judah on the earth – that is what is in view here in Isa. 27:12, 13. The end-time remnant of Israel will not be converted in time for the rapture. This trumpet will also signal the beginning of God's day of judgment of the world (when Christ returns in the middle of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week).

This verse speaks of the scattered remnant of Israel/Judah coming to Jerusalem to worship, but as we have seen in many other prophetic passages in this paper, the remnant of the nations will also come. Quite a few verses even speak of the remnant of the nations bringing the remnant of Israel to God at Jerusalem (see under Isa. 11:12).]

#### Isaiah 10:20-23 and Romans 9:27-29

In Rom. 9:27, 28 the apostle Paul loosely quotes Isa. 10:22, 23 from the Septuagint (the Old Testament translated into Greek), which is somewhat different than the Hebrew of those verses. In Rom. 9:29 he quotes Isa. 1:9 from the Septuagint, which is quite close to the Hebrew of that verse.

**Isaiah 10:20-23. Now in that day the remnant of Israel, and those of the house of Jacob who have escaped** ["Those of the house of Jacob who have escaped [escaped the end-time judgment of God, which comes through the "world" kindgom/nations (cf. Isa.

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<sup>133</sup> See the discussion of Matt. 24:31 on pages 36, 37 of my paper dated November 1998.

10:1-19, 24-27)] equals “the [end-time] remnant of Israel.”], **will never again rely on the one who struck them** [The one(s) who had struck Israel was (were) the “world” kingdoms/nations like Assyria, Babylon, Greek, Roman, and the revived Roman Empire.], **but will truly rely on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel.** [This verse demonstrates that these verses, like so many other verses in the prophecies of Isaiah, look to the end of this age.<sup>134</sup> “In that day” (which will start about the time of Christ’s mid-week return), the humbled, repentant remnant of Israel will begin to look to God (including God the Son/the Messiah), and to Him alone. Israel was often guilty of looking to other nations (and to some extent to their gods) to save them (cf., e.g., 2 Kings 16:5-16; Isa. 30:1-5). For Israel to rely on other nations (Assyria, for example, which is spoken of in Isaiah chapter 10 and 2 Kings 16:5-16) constituted unfaithfulness to God. Furthermore, it was to “rely on the one who struck them.”] **(21) A remnant shall return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God. (22) For though your people, O Israel, may be like the sand of the sea, Only a remnant within them** [I prefer the KJV, NKJV’s “remnant of them,” or the translation of the NIV, which does not include the last two words (“within them”).] **will return** [Some important cross-references that speak of this humbled remnant of Israel returning to God are Joel 2:32; Micah 5:3; Zech. 12:10-13:1; and Rev. 11:13.<sup>135</sup>]; **A destruction is determined, overflowing with righteousness. (23) For a complete destruction, one that is decreed, the Lord GOD of hosts will execute in the midst of the whole land.** [This “destruction” will reduce Israel to the repentant remnant. The land of Israel is in view here, but God’s end-time judgment will cover the earth. The NASB, NIV, KJV, and NKJV all translate “land” here, and I prefer this translation, but the Hebrew noun (*erets*) is also often translated “earth.”]

*Romans 9:27-29. Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, “THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL BE LIKE THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED; (28) FOR THE LORD WILL EXECUTE HIS WORD UPON THE EARTH* [The Greek noun (*gē*) with the definite article, which was translated “the earth” here, could also be translated “the land.” (See under Isa. 10:23 above.) The spotlight will be on the land of Israel (where the abomination of desolation and many other prophesied events will take place), but we can also think of the remnant of the Israelites worldwide, not limiting the remnant to those who live in Israel. (The Jews were scattered across the world in Paul’s day, as they are today.) It is the remnant of Israel (not the remnant of all nations) in view here in Rom. 9:27-29 (and in Isa. 10:20-23).] **THOROUGHLY AND QUICKLY.” (29) And just as Isaiah foretold, “EXCEPT THE LORD OF SABAOTH HAD LEFT TO US A POSTERITY, WE WOULD HAVE BECOME LIKE SODOM, AND WOULD HAVE RESEMBLED GOMORRAH.”** [There was no remnant for Sodom and Gomorrah when God judged those ancient cities (unless you count Lot and his two daughters). “The [end-time] remnant [of Israel] that will be saved” (Rom. 9:27) are the humbled, repentant remnant that become Christians in the last days, but not in time to

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<sup>134</sup> Assyria is the “world” kingdom mentioned in Isaiah chapter 10, but a “world” kingdom like Assyria or Babylon can, and often does, represent the final “world” kingdom of Antichrist.

<sup>135</sup> These verses are discussed on pages 157, 158, 251-253, 223-225, and 288, 289 of *Mid-Week Rapture*.

be taken in the mid-week rapture. (See above under Isa. 27:12, 13, and see the cross-references cited above under Isa. 10:22.)

The apostle Paul (in Romans chapters 9-11) didn't speak *only* of the *end-time* elect *remnant* of Israel (though his "quotations" from Isaiah in Rom. 9:27-29 deal with the end-time remnant, and his important summarizing verses, Rom. 11:25-32, also look to the end-time remnant). He also made the point that God had always kept a faithful remnant for Himself throughout the history of the nation. He pointed out that those sons of Israel (including Paul himself) who had submitted to the Lord Jesus Christ constituted the faithful remnant of his day (see Rom. 11:1-7, especially verse 5).

It's clear that Paul knew about Antichrist and his abomination of desolation in the temple at Jerusalem (see 2 Thess. 2:3-12, especially verses 3, 4), and he undoubtedly knew that this event would signal great end-time destruction for the people of Israel (as taught in Daniel, Zechariah, and in Matthew chapter 24, for example).]

#### Isaiah 59:19-21 and Romans 11:25-27

The apostle Paul's "quotation" in Rom. 11:26, 27 comes from a combination of Isa. 59:20, 21a and 27:9. His "quotation" follows the Septuagint (with one notable exception that will be pointed out below), which is somewhat different than the Hebrew of these verses. "Quotations" in the ancient world, unlike the exact quotations of our day, were often quite loose.

*Isaiah 59:19-21. So they will fear the name of the LORD from the west And His glory from the rising of the sun* [that is, from the east; cf., e.g., Mal. 1:11], *For He will come like a rushing stream Which the wind<sup>136</sup> of the LORD drives.* [The ones who will fear the name of the LORD and His glory are the remnant of the nations left after His end-time judgment of the world (cf., e.g., Isa. 24:13-16a). Those who worship God must have a proper fear of Him (and of His name). Since the end-time remnant of Israel are mentioned in the next verse, they probably aren't included here in verse 19. The preceding verses, which I didn't quote (Isa. 59:15b-18), speak of God's end-time judgment of the world, including Israel. The words "He will come like a rushing stream Which the wind [breath, Spirit] of the LORD drives" picture God's judging the world with awesome power. His "rushing stream" will sweep away all opposition to Him and to His truth and righteousness.] **(20) "A Redeemer** [God (very much including God the Son) is the Redeemer of Israel. Here the "Redeemer" could be limited to the Lord Jesus Christ.] **will come to** [or, for] **Zion** ["Zion" here is another name for Jerusalem/Israel. The Lord will come to/for the humbled, repentant remnant of Zion/Israel.], **And to** [or, for] **those who turn from transgression in Jacob** [another name for Israel (Jacob's name was changed to Israel)], **declares the LORD.** ["Those who turn from transgression in Jacob" speaks of the humbled, repentant remnant of Israel that will be left after God's end-time shaking of Israel that will start with the abomination of desolation; see above under Isa. 27:12, and see under the subsection "Isa. 10:20-23 and Rom. 9:27-29.""] **(21)** [There is some discontinuity between the rest of Isaiah chapter 59 and verse 21 (the last verse of the chapter) in that the rest of Isaiah is poetry in the

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<sup>136</sup> This Hebrew noun (*ruach*) could also be translated *breath*, or *Spirit*.

Hebrew but verse 21 is prose.<sup>137</sup>] **“As for Me, this is My covenant with them,” says the LORD: “My Spirit which is upon you [You], and My words which I have put in your [Your] mouth shall not depart from your [Your] mouth, nor from the mouth of your [Your] offspring, nor from the mouth of your [Your] offspring’s offspring,” says the LORD, “from now on and forever.”** [I prefer the viewpoint that the words of verse 21 are addressed to the Messiah,<sup>138</sup> but they could be addressed to the saved end-time remnant of Israel. If Messiah is addressed we would put the words “You” and “Your” in capital letters.<sup>139</sup> Quite often in the book of Isaiah, words are addressed to the Messiah (cf. Isa. 8:8; 42:6-9; 48:16; 49:3, 5-10; 51:16<sup>140</sup>; and 63:2). He is the Servant of God, Immanuel, born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23), who is deity with the Father (e.g., Isa. 9:6, 7), and who will come to judge the world (e.g., Isa. 9:4, 5; 11:1-10). Also, Christ certainly is the primary one who has the Spirit upon Him (cf., e.g., Isa. 11:2; 42:1 [“Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one *in whom* My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.”]; 48:16; 61:1 [with Luke 4:18]; Matt. 3:16, 17; Mark 1:10, 11; Luke 3:21, 22; John 1:29-34; and 3:34). The very names *Messiah* [from the Hebrew] and *Christ* [from the Greek] mean *The Anointed One*. And He is the primary one who has God’s word in His mouth (cf., e.g., Deut. 18:18; Isa. 51:16 [discussed in footnote 11]; and John 3:34).

The “covenant” of Isa. 59:21 (cf., e.g., Jer. 31:31-34) that God makes with the end-time remnant of Israel (and with all the members of true Israel) is established in the Person and work of the Messiah (with an emphasis on His atoning work as the Lamb of God). Through Christ and His work, all the members of true Israel receive God’s Spirit and His word into their hearts and into their mouths (cf., e.g., John 14:23, 24; 17:14) – they speak it; they believe it; they live it.

If the words of Isa. 59:21 are addressed to the Lord Jesus Christ, then His “offspring” could refer to true Israel, and His “offspring’s offspring” could refer to the saved remnant of the nations.<sup>141</sup> It can be said that the remnant of the nations will be saved by coming to Jerusalem/true Israel and by the witness of true Israel (cf., e.g., Psalm 87; Isa.

<sup>137</sup> The NASB, NIV, and NKJV demonstrate this difference in the formats they use.

<sup>138</sup> A few commentators take this viewpoint.

<sup>139</sup> The Hebrew behind this “You” is masculine singular, as is the Hebrew behind the four uses of the word “your [Your]” in this verse. This masculine singular obviously fits the Messiah, but it can also be used for Israel.

<sup>140</sup> “And I have put My words into your [Your] mouth and have covered you [You] with the shadow of My hand [cf. Isa. 49:2], to establish the heavens, to found the earth, and to say to Zion, ‘You are My people’ ” (Isa. 51:16). This translation (of the NASB) fits the idea that God the Father is speaking to God the Son (as in Isa. 8:8; 42:6-9; 49:3, 5-10; 59:21; and 63:2). Quite a few commentators adopt this viewpoint regarding Isa. 51:16, including, Fausset, Jennings, Motyer, Oswalt, and Young. The apparent meaning is that God the Son (through whom all things were created [e.g., John 1:1-3]) will also be the One through whom the new heavens and new earth (e.g., Isa. 66:22; Rev. 21:1) will be created, and He will be the Savior of Zion/Israel. The last words of Isa. 51:16 (“to say to Zion, You are My people”) help confirm that this verse was not addressed to the people of Israel. The translations of the KJV, NKJV, and NIV differ from that of the NASB, which I quoted here.

<sup>141</sup> The converted remnant of the nations are frequently mentioned in the book of Isaiah. They are mentioned in the first half of Isa. 59:19. The “offspring’s offspring” could also be understood to refer to the next generation of the people of true Israel (cf. Isa. 60:22; 65:23), but I don’t believe that there will be a next generation of the people of true Israel in that the people of true Israel will all be glorified by this time (about the time the millennial kingdom begins). (See under Isa. 65:20 in this paper; it is located toward the end of the chapter on Isaiah chapter 25.)

2:2-4; 25:6-8; 26:18, 19; 29:17-24; 44:1-5; 45:14-25; 60:1-17; Rev. 21:2-4; and 21:24-22:3).<sup>142</sup> Several of the references just cited include the idea that the saved remnant of the nations will be *born of* or will be the *offspring of* Jerusalem/true Israel (Psalm 87; 44:1-5; 45:14-25; cf. Isa. 29:17-24; 59:21). The elect of the nations will ultimately be born into the eternal life of God’s eternal kingdom (see Revelation chapters 21, 22).

It’s clear that the saved remnant of the nations will be directly saved by/through the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, not by true Israel (cf. Isa. 53:10; Rev. 21:27<sup>143</sup>), except insofar as the Lord Jesus Christ is Himself *true Israel*. (He is the heart of true Israel [cf. Isa. 49:3].)

*Romans 11:25-27. For*<sup>144</sup> **I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation** [As Rom. 11:17-24 demonstrate, the apostle Paul was addressing Gentile Christians here. He didn’t want them to be arrogant toward the unconverted sons of Israel (cf. Rom. 11:18) or ignorant of God’s plan to ultimately save “all Israel” (Rom. 11:26), referring to the end-time remnant of Israel pictured in Isa. 10:20-23; Rom. 9:27-29 (and in many other prophetic verses). In Paul’s day they were thinking in terms of Christ’s returning fairly soon, not after two thousand years.]—**that a partial hardening has happened to Israel** [It was only a *partial* hardening in that some Israelites were becoming Christians in Paul’s day (cf., e.g., Rom. 11:1-24).] **until the fullness** [“full number” NIV] **of the Gentiles has come in** [I assume that Paul was speaking of the “full number” of the elect Gentiles that were to be converted and become part of the body of Christ before the resurrection and rapture at Christ’s (mid-week) return.<sup>145</sup>]; **(26) and so** [Or, “thus.” Based on Rom. 10:19; 11:11-14, and 31, at least part of what the apostle meant by the word “so,” (or “thus”) was that the salvation of the Gentiles would make Israel jealous and contribute to their salvation. As we have seen, the end-time judgment that will reduce Israel to a humble, repentant remnant will be a major factor contributing to the conversion of all Israel.<sup>146</sup>] **all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, “THE DELIVERER WILL**

<sup>142</sup> Psalm 87 is discussed on pages 106, 107 of my eschatological paper dated November 1998, and Isaiah 60:1-17 are briefly discussed on page 102 of that paper. Isaiah chapters 2, 25, 26, 29; and 44:1-5; 45:14-25 are discussed verse-by-verse in this present paper. Revelation chapters 21, 22 are discussed verse-by-verse in my paper dated November 1998.

<sup>143</sup> On Rev. 21:27 see page 83 of my paper dated November 1998. While there you might read the section starting on page 83 titled “A Few Comments Regarding Those Who Constitute the Nations in Rev. 21:24-22:3.”

<sup>144</sup> This “for” (Greek *gar*) at the beginning of verse 25 ties this verse to verse 24, where Paul had just said that the God who has grafted believing Gentiles into (the tree) of true Israel is certainly able to graft the literal sons of Israel into that tree when they repent and submit to Christ in faith.

<sup>145</sup> The book of Revelation shows that the gospel will still be proclaimed after the mid-week return of Christ and the rapture and that more Gentiles, along with the end-time remnant of Israel, will become Christians after the rapture (see Rev. 12:17; 13:7; 14:6, 7, 12, 13; and 20:4). Apparently this detail had not been revealed to the apostle Paul, who died some thirty years before the book of Revelation was given to the apostle John; God’s revelation is progressive. It seems that Paul thought that all who were to be saved (all the elect, whether Jews or Gentiles) would be converted before the resurrection and rapture at the return of Christ (see Acts 17:30-32; Rom. 8:18-25; 11:15; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; 15:20-28, 50-58; Phil. 3:17-21; Col. 3:4-11; 1 Thess. 1:9, 10; 4:13-5:11; and 2 Thess. 1:4-2:15).

<sup>146</sup> The apostle Paul speaks of this end-time shaking of Israel in Rom. 9:27-29 (cf. 2 Thess. 2:3, 4). Knowing what I do from the book of Revelation, I believe I can say with some confidence that the end-

**COME FROM ZION,<sup>147</sup> HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.”**  
**(27) “THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.”** [Note that Paul is dealing with the spiritual deliverance of the end-time remnant of Israel here that is associated with their becoming Christians, not with their physical deliverance (in the overthrow of Antichrist and his forces, etc.). As we have discussed, the humbled, repentant remnant of Israel will be ready to submit to Christ in faith at the time of His mid-week return.<sup>148</sup> Romans 11:15 (cf. Rom. 11:12) seems to indicate that Paul taught that the conversion of all Israel will signal that it is time for the resurrection. Paul apparently thought of Christ’s return and the resurrection and rapture taking place very near the end of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week, when it is time for Him to destroy Antichrist (cf. 2 Thess. 2:8).<sup>149</sup>]

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time remnant of Israel won’t become Christians until after the rapture. Seeing the rapture of the Christian church, which is mostly Gentile, will certainly be a factor in the conversion of Israel.

<sup>147</sup> Note the use of the word *Zion* in Heb. 12:22; 1 Pet. 2:6; note the use of the word *Jerusalem* in Gal. 4:26; Heb. 12:22; the use of the word *Jew(s)* in Rom. 2:28, 29; Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:1; Rev. 2:9; 3:9; and the use of the word *Israel* in Gal. 6:16. The Hebrew of Isa. 59:20 has “to/for Zion.” The Septuagint has “for the sake of Zion.” The apostle may have quoted from a document that had “from/out of Zion,” but it is quite possible that he modified the reading (perhaps under the influence of Psalms 14:7; 53:6 in the Septuagint; those verses in Psalms have the same Greek preposition that Paul used here [*ek*]). As we have seen, there was much liberty permitted with “quotations” in the ancient world.

<sup>148</sup> There is no need to insist that all of the end-time remnant of the Israel will be ready to submit to Christ by the time of His mid-week return.

<sup>149</sup> See pages 347-349 of *Mid-Week Rapture*. I’m not suggesting that Paul necessarily thought in terms of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week. For one thing, Paul didn’t have the privilege of having the book of Revelation, which builds on that final seven year period.

## ISAIAH CHAPTER 29

Isaiah 29:1-16, verses that I'll only briefly discuss here, speak of familiar themes. They speak of the sin of Jerusalem/Israel and God's judgments of that sin, mostly looking to His end-time judgment of Israel through the "world" kingdom/nations. After the end-time remnant of Israel have been humbled (cf. 29:4) and have submitted to the Lord Jesus Christ, God will destroy the ruthless enemies of Israel (29:5-8). It will then be time for the glorious things promised to (true) Israel in Isa. 29:17-24 to come to pass. Isaiah 29:19 includes the familiar theme that God will save a remnant of the nations after His end-time judgment of the world.

**Woe, O Ariel, Ariel the city where David once camped!** [*Ariel*, which is also used in verses 2, 7, is a name for Jerusalem here. In the margin the NASB says that *Ariel* means "Lion of God." Another common view, a more common view, is that it means "altar hearth."<sup>150</sup> Either view could fit the use of *Ariel* in the next verse, but "altar hearth" seems to fit better (Jerusalem/Israel being turned into an altar hearth, so to speak, through God's intense judgments against His people).] **Add year to year, observe your feasts on schedule.** [As in Isaiah chapter 1, for example, God is not interested in sacrifices, feasts, etc. while His people continue to live in sin without repentance.] **(2) I will bring distress to Ariel, And she will be a city of lamenting and mourning; And she will be like an Ariel to me. (3) I will camp against you encircling you, And I will set siegeworks against you, And I will raise up battle towers against you. (4) Then you will be brought low; From the earth you will speak, And from the dust where you are prostrate Your words will come. Your voice will also be like that of a spirit from the ground, And your speech will whisper from the dust.** [The following verses (29:5-8) show that the chastening judgments by God against Jerusalem/Israel (through the "world" kingdoms/nations) that are referred to here are His end-time judgments (at least His end-time judgments are mostly in view) in that those verses show that God will totally destroy the enemies of Israel at that time.] **(5) But the multitude of your enemies will become like fine dust, And the multitude of the ruthless ones like the chaff which blows away; And it will happen instantly, suddenly. (6) From the LORD of hosts you will be punished with thunder and earthquake and loud noise, With whirlwind and tempest and the flame of a consuming fire.** [Apparently the idea here in verse 6 (in context with verses 5-8) is that the power of God (*whirlwind, flame, etc.*) goes forth against the enemies of Israel.] **(7) And the multitude of all the nations who wage war against Ariel, Even all who wage war against her and her stronghold, and who distress her, will be like a dream, a vision of the night.** [For Israel it will be like the blessing of awakening from a bad dream.] **(8) It will be as when a hungry man dreams—And behold, he is eating; But when he awakens, his hunger is not satisfied, Or as when a thirsty man dreams—And behold, he is drinking, But when he awakens, behold, he is faint And his thirst is not quenched. Thus the multitude of all the nations will be Who wage war against Mount Zion.** [For the nations attacking Israel, their desire to

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<sup>150</sup> The Hebrew noun *ariel* is translated "altar hearth" by the NASB, NIV, and NKJV in Ezek. 43:15, 16.

annihilate Israel will be frustrated. Compare, for example, Isa. 17:12-14; 29:20; 66:18, 19; Zech. 14:1-5, 12-15; and Rev. 19:19-21.] **(9)** [The following verses (29:9-16) revert back from days of the ultimate salvation of Israel and the end-time judgment of the nations to the times when much of the nation Israel was backslidden from God, with much application for the nation in the days of Isaiah.] **Be delayed and wait, Blind yourselves and be blind; They become drunk, but not with wine, They stagger, but not with strong drink. (10) For the LORD has poured over you a spirit of deep sleep, He has shut your eyes, the prophets; And He has covered your heads, the seers. (11) The entire vision will be to you like the words of a sealed book, which when they give it to the one who is literate, saying, "Please read this," he will say, "I cannot, for it is sealed." (12) Then the book will be given to the one who is illiterate, saying, "Please read this." And he will say, "I cannot read." (13) Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words And honor me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from me, And their reverence for me consists of tradition learned by rote, (14) Therefore behold, I will once again deal marvelously with this people, wondrously marvelous; And the wisdom of their wise men will perish, And the discernment of their discerning men will be concealed." (15) Woe to those who deeply hide their plans from the LORD, And whose deeds are *done* in a dark place, And they say, "Who sees us?" or "Who knows us?" (16) You turn *things* around! Shall the potter be considered as equal with the clay, That what is made would say to its maker, "He did not make me"; Or what is formed say to him who formed it, "He has no understanding"? (17) Is it not yet just a little while [Sometimes God's idea of a "little while" differs from ours.] **Before Lebanon will be turned into a fertile field, And the fertile field will be considered as a forest?** [The time setting here, starting with 29:17, is after God's end-time judgment of the world. Isaiah 32:12-20 are an important cross-reference for Isa. 29:17-24; those verses in chapter 32 also prophesy regarding the glorious salvation that will come to (true) Israel after God's end-time judgment of the world. I'll quote Isa. 32:15, "Until the Spirit is poured out upon us from on high,<sup>151</sup> And the wilderness becomes a fertile field, And the fertile field can be considered as a forest." Christ is coming to save, to judge, and to glorify. The end-time remnant of Israel will have submitted to the Lord Jesus Christ in faith and they will be glorified (along with all the other members of true Israel) by the time the millennial kingdom begins.**

*Lebanon* is apparently used here (in 29:17) as representative of uncultivated, wooded land (a forest); Lebanon here is apparently comparable in meaning with the "wilderness" of Isa. 32:15. "Lebanon will be turned into a fertile field" through God's end-time work of judging, saving, and glorifying. The last line of Isa. 29:17, which is essentially the same as the last line of 32:15, apparently means that the fertile field of earlier days will seem like an uncultivated forest in comparison with the glory of the fertile field that will exist after God's end-time work of glorification. This change will be manifested to some extent in the millennial kingdom and to a substantially greater extent in the new earth of the eternal state. The whole world will be affected, but the center of the glory will be Jerusalem, the city of God and the city of true Israel.] **(18) On that day the deaf will hear words of a book** [Contrast Isa. 29:11, 12.], **And out of**

<sup>151</sup> There is an important preliminary partial fulfillment of the prophetic words of Isa. 32:15-18 in the outpouring of the Spirit on Christians in the present age.

**their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see.** [Compare Psalm 119:18; Isa. 32:3; 35:5; and 42:7, 16, 18-20. Those that are literally deaf and blind will be healed, but the emphasis here is on being healed of spiritual deafness and blindness. These words will apply to the end-time remnant of Israel but also (as the next verse helps demonstrate) to the end-time remnant of the nations. Also, as it often happens in these prophecies of Isaiah, there is a very important partial fulfillment of these prophetic words in the first coming and present ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.] **(19) The afflicted also will increase their gladness in the LORD, And the needy of mankind will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.** [Compare Isa. 11:4; 14:30, 32. This verse (29:19), along with many other verses mentioned in this paper, shows that God’s salvation plans include a remnant of the nations along with the remnant of Israel. Those afflicted had been afflicted by the ruthless of the world (cf. Isa. 29:5, 20, 21), but it is also true that God humbles His people (including the elect of the nations [cf. Isa. 19:22]) by chastening them through others.] **(20) For the ruthless will come to an end [cf. Isa. 29:5] and the scorner [“mockers” NIV] will be finished, Indeed all who are intent on doing evil will be cut off [in God’s end-time judgment of the world<sup>152</sup>]; (21) Who cause a person to be indicted by a word, And ensnare him who adjudicates at the gate [“who ensnare the defender in court” NIV], And defraud the one in the right with meaningless arguments.** [All sinners that don’t eventually humble themselves before God and repent will be cut off by His end-time judgments.] **(22) Therefore thus says the LORD, who redeemed Abraham** [Compare Isa. 41:8; 51:2; and 63:16. God’s redemption of Abraham, who is the father of the nation Israel and the father of all believers (cf. Rom. 4:16-18), began a process that will culminate in the salvation pictured here in Isa. 29:17-24. This salvation includes (the elect of) the nations, the nations being distinct from true Israel (cf., e.g., Gen. 12:3; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; Rev. 15:3, 4; 20:3; 21:3, 4; and 21:24-22:3).], **concerning the house of Jacob: “Jacob** [*Jacob* here apparently refers to the “house of Jacob [Israel]” that was just mentioned (not to the patriarch *Jacob*). The translation of the words at the end of this verse by the NIV fits the idea that the “house of Jacob” is being spoken of here, “no longer will their faces grow pale.”<sup>153</sup>] **shall not now be ashamed** [or, “be put to shame”; cf., e.g., Isa. 45:17; 49:23; 50:7; and 54:4], **nor shall his face [their faces] now turn pale** [*Now* that the remnant of the house of Jacob/Israel has been saved and glorified after God’s end-time judgment of the world; now that the ruthless and those committed to evil have

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<sup>152</sup> God’s end-time judgment of the world will take place, for the most part, after Christ returns in the middle of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week. Some important preliminary aspects of His end-time judgment will take place in the one-month period (that starts with the abomination of desolation) that precedes Christ’s mid-week return. In most ways God’s end-time judgments will be completed before the millennial kingdom begins, but some important aspects of His end-time judgments won’t take place until after the millennial kingdom: The destruction of the Gog and Magog rebellion with the final judgment of Satan (Rev. 20:7-10) and the great-white-throne judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).

<sup>153</sup> The Hebrew verb translated *grow pale* by the NIV in Isa. 29:22 is plural in the Hebrew, but this, by itself, doesn’t prove that more than one person is being spoken of here. The Hebrew noun translated *face* by the NASB and *faces* by the NIV is unusual in that it always occurs in the plural form in the Old Testament; this plural Hebrew noun can be translated *face* or *faces*. The verb could be plural here to agree with the plural noun even if the translation *face* (singular) was intended. The more significant fact is that this sentence continues with three plural verbs (“they will sanctify,” [twice], and “they will stand in awe”), which helps confirm that “he [Jacob]” means more than Jacob the patriarch (who was also called Israel).

been cut off (cf. 29:20, 21); now that (the remnant of) the nations have begun to worship God (e.g., 29:19); and now that the creation has been glorified (at least to the extent it will be glorified during the millennial kingdom [cf. 29:17, 18]), the house of Jacob/Israel (true Israel) will never again be ashamed/put to shame. In Isaiah's day, as with most generations, Israel was ashamed/put to shame by their sin and the penalties that came with their sin—but *now* (after God has accomplished His end-time work of saving, judging, and glorifying) things are totally different because the sin problem has been totally solved through total salvation in Christ Jesus.]; **(23) But** [or, “For”] **when he** [the house of Jacob] **sees his** [their] **children** [The NIV has, “When they see among them their children.”<sup>154</sup> Who are “[their] children”? They certainly include the saved, sanctified, and now glorified end-time remnant of Jacob/Israel. (The fact that “[their] children” are “in [their] midst” fits the idea that “the house of Jacob” and “[their] children” are now together. As I have mentioned, I believe we can say that all the members of God's true Israel will be glorified and reigning together by the time the millennial kingdom begins.<sup>155</sup>) Understood in a fuller sense, “[their] children” include all the elect Israelites (and all the Gentiles that become true Christians that are grafted into true Israel) that are saved from the days of Isaiah on to the last days through God's saving work. Understood in a yet fuller sense, “[their] children include the end-time elect remnant of the nations (cf. 29:19).<sup>156</sup> Understood in the ultimate sense that is pictured in Revelation chapters 21, 22, we can see the full glory of God's new heaven and new earth with all the glorified members of true Israel and all the glorified members of (the elect of) the nations.], **the work of My hands** [cf. Isa. 29:16; 45:11; 53:11; and Eph. 2:10], **in his** [their] **midst, They** [the house of Jacob] **will sanctify My name; Indeed, they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob** [cf. Isa. 8:13] **and will stand in awe of the God of Israel.** [This verse helps demonstrate that the names *Jacob* and *Israel* are being used interchangeably here, as they typically are.] **(24) Those who err in mind** [literally, in spirit] **will know the truth, and those who criticize** [literally, murmur] **will accept instruction.**” [God's former critics among His people (like in the days of Isaiah) will acknowledge that His plan of salvation was good (very good indeed) when they see the glorious results (e.g., Isa. 29:17-23; Revelation chapters 21, 22). They (along with all the elect of God) “will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob and will stand in awe of the God of Israel.”]

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<sup>154</sup> The Hebrew word translated “when he sees” by the NASB and “when they see” by the NIV is an infinitive. It means “when Jacob sees,” but the NIV (rightly I believe) understands the subject of this infinitive to be plural in that it is the house of Jacob that is doing the seeing.

<sup>155</sup> See under Rev. 20:4 on pages 63, 64 of my eschatological paper dated November 1998.

<sup>156</sup> On the children (offspring) of Israel, see the third paragraph under Isa. 59:21 (pages 76, 77 of this paper). Isaiah 44:1-5 and 45:14-25, which are discussed as separate chapters in this paper, are strong witnesses for the idea that the elect of the nations (the nations being distinct from true Israel) can be considered the offspring of true Israel.

## ISAIAH CHAPTER 42

[Isaiah 42:1-4 are quoted in Matt. 12:18-21.] **“Behold, My Servant** [The word *Servant/servant* (Hebrew *ebed*) is sometimes used in Isaiah for the Lord Jesus Christ (Isa. 49:3-7; 50:10; 52:13; and 53:11), and sometimes it is used for the nation of Israel (Isa. 41:8, 9; 42:19; 43:10; 44:1, 2, 21; 45:4; and 48:20). Here it is used of the Lord Jesus Christ. God the Father is speaking.], **whom I uphold; My chosen one** [cf., e.g., 1 Pet. 2:4] **in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him** [See under Isa. 11:2 in this paper.]; **He will bring forth justice to the nations.** [Compare, for example, Isa. 2:2-4; 9:1-7; 11:1-10; and 16:5. “The nations” (Hebrew *goyim*) could include Israel<sup>157</sup>; Isaiah chapter 42 (along with much other Scripture) shows that Israel needs to be saved by Christ too, and 42:4 speaks of establishing justice *in the earth*. However, “the nations” typically exclude Israel in the Bible, and Israel probably is not included here. The Hebrew noun *goyim* is often translated *Gentiles*, and that is the way this noun was translated here by the KJV and NKJV. The salvation of (true) Israel is given special treatment throughout the prophecies of Isaiah (cf., e.g., Isa. 42:6; 49:6).] **(2) He will not cry out or raise His voice Nor make His voice heard in the street. (3) A bruised reed He will not break And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish;** [These verses (2, 3) prophesy regarding the mostly unimposing, gentle demeanor of the Lord Jesus Christ at His first coming and in the intervening period until His second coming. At His first coming He comes mostly to heal those that are sick (with the emphasis on spiritual sickness), not to judge and destroy all rebels. See Matt. 12:9-21. When He comes to judge the world at the end of this age, it will be different; He will impose Himself as the Savior of His people (true Israel) and as the Judge enforcing the will of God on the inhabitants of the world. He will make things right; He will establish God’s worldwide kingdom of righteousness.] **He will faithfully bring forth justice** [cf. 42:1, 4]. **(4) He will not be disheartened or crushed Until He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands** [cf. Isa. 42:10, 12; 49:1; 51:5; 60:9; and 66:19<sup>158</sup>] **will wait expectantly for His law** [“in his law...will put their hope” NIV].” [Isaiah 42:1 spoke of bringing forth justice to the nations. Here we learn that the nations – that is, the remnant of the nations left after His end-time judgment of the world – will submit to God and His law (cf. Isa. 2:2-4).<sup>159</sup>] **(5) Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread out the earth and its offspring, Who gives breath to the people [Hebrew *am*] on it And spirit [Hebrew *ruach*<sup>160</sup>] to those**

<sup>157</sup> See note 13 on pages 31, 32 of *Holiness and Victory Over Sin*.

<sup>158</sup> The same plural Hebrew noun is used in each of these verses, including Isa. 42:4. The NASB translated it “coastlands” in some of these verses, “islands” in others.

<sup>159</sup> There is, of course, a very important partial fulfillment of the prophetic words of verse 4 when Gentiles submit to God and His law throughout this present age; they become Christians, members of true Israel. From our perspective we can see that the partial fulfillment that takes place throughout this (what has turned out to be) long period may be as important as, or more important than, the fulfillment at the end of the age, but I believe the primary fulfillment of the prophetic words of this chapter will take place after Christ returns to judge the world. Essentially every passage we are studying in this paper looks to God’s end-time judgment of the world and its results, including this chapter (see Isa. 42:13-17).

<sup>160</sup> The BDB Hebrew lexicon understands *ruach* here in the sense of “*spirit* of the living, breathing being....” The NIV translated “life.”

who walk in it, (6) “I am the LORD, I have called you [You] in righteousness, I will also hold you [You] by the hand and watch over you [You], And I will appoint [give] you [You] as a covenant to the people [Hebrew *am*], As a light to the nations [Hebrew *goyim*], [If it were not for the important cross-reference of Isa. 49:8 (“And I will keep You and give You for a covenant of [to/for] the people”), which is exactly the same as 42:6 in the Hebrew, I might be somewhat more inclined to agree with those who understand “the people” here to refer to the elect people of all nations. (For one thing, the same Hebrew noun [*am*] was used in verse 5 of mankind worldwide.) Anyway, I agree with the majority that “the people” here are (true) Israel and “the nations” are the nations of the earth, excluding Israel. This is the typical use of these words in the Bible; *the people* of Israel are typically distinguished from *the peoples/nations*, and they are always distinguished from the *Gentiles*. The NIV has, “a light for the Gentiles”; the KJV and NKJV have “the Gentiles.”

Those that are *blind* and/or dwell in *darkness* need the *light* that salvation in Christ brings, and that includes the Israelites (see Isa. 42:7, 16, 18-22). Acts 26:16-20 speak of Christ’s sending the apostle Paul to the Jews and Gentiles “to open their eyes so they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive [the release from their sins with the guilt and the penalties] and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.”<sup>161</sup> We are enabled to do much more than to see the light through salvation in Christ—we are enabled to dwell in the light and to experience the light.

Although it is true that all the elect (the elect of true Israel and the elect of the nations) are saved through the Messiah and His atoning death (cf., e.g., Isa. 52:13-53:12; Rev. 1:5; 7:14; 21:27), there are substantial differences between the status of true Israel and the status of the elect of the nations. For one thing, true Israel will reign forever (including reigning over the nations). It isn’t at all surprising that the salvation of true Israel would be given special treatment with the words “a covenant to the people.”

As with so many of the prophecies of Isaiah that we are studying in this paper, the salvation spoken of here (at least the primary salvation that is spoken of here) is the salvation of the worldwide remnant (the remnant of Israel [they become part of true Israel when they submit to the Lord Jesus Christ after the rapture] and the remnant of the nations) left after God’s end-time judgment of the world (see Isa. 42:13-15). There is, of course, a very important partial fulfillment of these prophetic words as Jews and Gentiles submit to the Lord Jesus Christ in faith throughout this present age. They are part of God’s true Israel.] (7) **To open blind eyes** [See Isa. 42:6 (“a light to the nations”), 16, 18-20 (these verses show that Israel is blind too). The primary fulfillment of these prophetic words will take place when the end-time remnant of the world (including the nation Israel), who are spiritually blind, will be enabled to see the light (and dwell in the light), which symbolizes the truth and righteousness of God. (It is true, of course, that the Lord Jesus Christ also opens the eyes of many that are literally blind.) There is a very important partial fulfillment of these words (as with the words of Isa. 29:18; 35:5) in the present age as Jews and Gentiles become Christians, but all three of these verses (in their contexts) look to the end of the age], **To bring out prisoners from the dungeon And those who dwell in darkness from the prison.** [The primary fulfillment of these prophetic words will take place when the end-time remnant of the

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<sup>161</sup> Acts 26:13-20 are discussed on pages 153-155 of *Holiness and Victory Over Sin*.

world (after God’s end-time judgment of the world), who are in bondage to sin, spiritual death, and Satan, are set free through salvation in Christ Jesus. It is also true that some people will be released from literal dungeons/prisons (cf. Isa. 42:22). Again, there is a very important partial fulfillment of these words in the present age, as with Isa. 49:9; 61:1 (cf. Luke 4:16-21; John 8:31-36), but all three of these verses cited from Isaiah (in their contexts) look to the end of the age.] **(8) I am the LORD [Yahweh], that is My name; I will not give My glory to another** [cf., e.g., Isa. 48:11], **Nor My praise to graven images.** [The Hebrew name *Yahweh* includes within its meaning the bold (but true) claim that “**HE** [the God of Creation, the God of true Israel, the God of the Bible] **IS** [God, and there is no other God].”<sup>162</sup> The name *Yahweh* also includes the meaning that He (the triune God of the Bible) *always was* and *always will be*. There is no other God, or Savior, or ultimate Judge. He is the only uncreated Being. There are other gods being worshipped by men now (the devil, his evil angels, demons, and the gods that men have made up), but they will all be removed in God’s end-time judgment of the world. He will not share His *glory* and *praise* with gods or idols/graven images. How could He give/share His glory with gods (who are in rebellion against Him) or idols that are not God?] **(9) Behold, the former things have come to pass** [cf., e.g., Isa. 48:3], **Now I declare new things** [cf., e.g., Isa. 43:19; 48:6]; **Before they spring forth I proclaim them to you.** [As I mentioned in the introduction to Isa. 9:1-7 in this paper (see that discussion), God makes the point several times in the book of Isaiah that He, and He alone, is able to make such prophetic proclamations and then bring these things to pass, which proves that He, and He alone, is God. By the days of Isaiah many of God’s prophetic words had already come to pass. For example, His words to Abram/Abraham that Israel would be oppressed for four hundred years by another nation (Egypt) and that God would then judge that nation and bring His people out with many possessions and bring them to the promised land (Gen. 15:13-16).] **(10) Sing to the LORD a new song, Sing His praise from the end of the earth** [cf. Isa. 49:6]! [The “new song” celebrates the *new* work that God has done (cf. Psalms 40:3; 98:1) through His Servant, which is spoken of throughout this chapter (and many other chapters) of Isaiah.] **You who go down to the sea, and all that is in it. You islands** [or, coastlands (see under verse 4, including the footnote)], **and those who dwell on them. (11) Let the wilderness** [cf. Isa. 35:1, 6] **and its cities lift up their voices The settlements where Kedar inhabits** [On “Kedar,” see the last paragraph of the chapter dealing with Isa. 21:6-12 in this paper]. **Let the inhabitants of Sela** [cf. Isa. 16:1] **sing aloud, Let them shout for joy from the tops of the mountains. (12) Let them give glory to the LORD And declare His praise in the coastlands.** [As 42:10 showed (cf. 42:4), God is

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<sup>162</sup> The name *Yahweh* was derived from the Hebrew verb “to be.” It is the imperfect “tense,” third person, masculine, singular form of the verb. See Ex. 3:13-15. Note “LORD” (*Yahweh*) in Ex. 3:15. The Hebrew translated “I AM” in 3:14 (*’ehyeh* [The ’ represents the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, aleph; it isn’t pronounced. The “e” after the “h” is a vocal shewa, a quick vowel-like sound; it is pronounced like the first “e” in “because.”]) is very closely related to *Yahweh*; “I AM” is the imperfect “tense,” first person, masculine, singular form of the same verb. The words “I AM WHO I AM” of Ex. 3:14 would probably be better translated “I AM FOR I AM.” Moses was to tell the people that God’s name is “I AM FOR I AM [and only I] AM [God, and I always was and always will be God].” Whereas the name *Yahweh* is very common for God in the Old Testament, being used over six thousand times, I don’t believe the name “I AM” is used anywhere else in the Old Testament. The primary purpose of Ex. 3:14 was undoubtedly to help explain the name *Yahweh* used in 3:15 (and very often).

to be praised from the end of the earth (worldwide). The scene here in 42:10-13 is very similar to the scene pictured in Isa. 24:13-16a, where the worldwide remnant (Jews and Gentiles) glorify God after His end-time judgment of the world. Isaiah chapter 2 is another important cross-reference that shows the remnant (Jews and Gentiles) left after God's end-time judgment of the world, but that chapter doesn't mention the remnant's singing and glorifying God as chapters 24 and 42 do.

What about all the people (Jews and Gentiles) that become part of true Israel during this present age, before God's end-time judgment of the world? They leave their *blindness* and the *darkness* behind when they become Christians; they don't have to wait for God's end-time judgment to wake them up. They will be glorified when Christ returns in the middle of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week.] **(13)** [Verses 13-15 prophesy about God's end-time judgment of the world, a judgment that will leave a humbled, repentant remnant worldwide (a remnant of Israel and a remnant of the nations); this theme is included in almost every passage we are studying in this paper. The same theme is also included in many other passages of Isaiah (and in many other books of the Bible) that are not dealt with in this paper.] **The LORD will go forth like a warrior** [cf. Ex. 15:3; Isa. 34:1-17; 59:17-19; and 63:1-6], **He will arouse His zeal** [cf. Isa. 9:7; 26:11; and 59:17] **like a man of war. He will utter a shout, yes, He will raise a war cry. He will prevail against His enemies** [cf., e.g., Isa. 66:14-16]. **(14) "I have kept silent for a long time, I have kept still and restrained myself.** [Cf., e.g., Psalm 50:21; Isa. 45:15; and 57:11.] **Now like a woman in labor I will groan, I will both gasp and pant. (15) I will lay waste the mountains and hills** [cf. Isa. 2:12-16] **And wither all their vegetation; I will make the rivers into coastlands And dry up the ponds.** [Cf. Isa. 44:27; 50:2; and Nah. 1:4-6.] **(16) I will lead the blind by a way they do not know, In paths they do not know I will guide them. I will make darkness into light before them And rugged places into plains. These are the things I will do, and I will not leave them undone."** [Compare Isa. 29:18; 32:3. As discussed already under verses 6, 7, the blindness/darkness spoken of here and in verses 7, 18-20 is a spiritual blindness/darkness. This spiritual blindness/darkness includes the ideas of not knowing or walking in the truth of God and His righteousness and holiness. The primary fulfillment of these prophetic words will come to pass for the worldwide remnant left after God's end-time judgment of the world. The end-time remnant of the nation Israel is included (as they were in Isaiah chapters 2, 24): They are singled out for special mention in verses 18-20, where their blindness (before God's end-time work of judging and saving) is spoken of.

There is a very important partial fulfillment of these words in the present age (cf., e.g., Luke 1:78, 79; Eph. 5:8).] **(17) They will be turned back and be utterly put to shame, Who trust in idols, Who say to molten images, "You are our gods."** [Compare Isa. 44:9-17; 45:16. Verses like Isa. 27:9 show that Israel was also guilty of the sin of idolatry. There won't be any idolaters left after God's end-time judgment of the world. They will have either repented or been removed by judgment.] **(18) Hear, you deaf! [Cf. Isa. 29:18; 35:5.] And look, you blind, that you may see.** [When *deafness* and *blindness* are being used in a figurative sense, as they are here, there isn't much difference between being deaf and being blind: In their hearts the deaf were not hearing the truth of God and the blind were not seeing the truth of God. It's quite possible, even probable, that all mankind is being spoken to here in verse 18 (not just

Israel).<sup>163</sup> The blindness spoken of in 42:7, 16 includes the blindness of the nations, and 42:6 informed us that Messiah will bring light to the nations. This chapter, starting with verse 1, deals much with the nations (not just with Israel). The following verses to the end of the chapter speak about the nation Israel.] **(19) Who is blind but<sup>164</sup> My servant, Or so deaf as My messenger whom I send? Who is so blind as he that is at peace with Me Or so blind as the servant of the LORD?** [As I mentioned under Isa. 42:1, Israel is sometimes called God’s “servant” in Isaiah. I assume the words “My messenger” relate to the fact that God had sent/given Israel to be a light to the nations (e.g., Ex. 19:6). And I assume the words “he that is at peace *with Me*” are being used in a loose (perhaps even sarcastic) sense of the relationship that was supposed to exist between God and Israel.] **(20) You have seen many things, but you do not observe them; Your ears are open, but none hears.** [In other words, all too often the sons of Israel were seeing like blind people see and hearing like deaf people hear (cf. 42:19).] **(21) The LORD was pleased for His righteousness’ sake To make the law great and glorious.** [The problem was that Israel (speaking of the majority of the people<sup>165</sup>) was not keeping the law,<sup>166</sup> and as God had promised, they were experiencing the curses of the law for disobedience. This fact explains the next four verses. A big part of what salvation in the blood of Christ is all about is that born-again believers (Christians) are enabled to fulfill the requirements of the Law by the grace/Spirit of God (e.g., Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:26, 27; Rom. 2:26-29; 8:1-4; and Heb. 8:10; 10:16).<sup>167</sup>] **(22) But this is a people plundered and despoiled; All of them are trapped in caves, Or are hidden away in prisons; They have become a prey with none to deliver them And a spoil, with none to say, “Give them back!” (23) Who among you will give ear to**

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<sup>163</sup> For one thing, the nouns and verbs used in verse 18 are plural, whereas verses 19, 20 switch to the singular. It is not of crucial significance whether the nations are addressed along with Israel in verse 18, but if they are, it makes verses 18-25 have all the more application for the nations. It’s clear that these chapters of Isaiah have much direct application for the nations (cf. e.g., Isa. 41:1, 5; 42:1, 4, 6, and 10-12).

There are a few uncertainties regarding the original Hebrew text of verse 20. The NRSV translates, “He sees many things, but does not observe them; his ears are open, but he does not hear.” Anyway, if we translate verse 20 the way the NASB did, the verbs “you have seen” and “you [do not] observe” are singular in the Hebrew.

<sup>164</sup> This verse does not say that Israel was the only one blind. The point is that, in some ways, Israel was the most blind; with all the light and blessings God had given that nation, Israel was far more responsible than the nations for her blindness. I’ll quote what the BDB Hebrew Lexicon said (on page 475) regarding the meaning of “but” here under *ki im* (the Hebrew words translated “but”): “who is blind in comparison with him [my servant].” The rest of verse 19 (after the first line) makes it clear that it was not only Israel that was blind, even if, in some ways, she was the most blind.

<sup>165</sup> The believers under the old covenant (those that were part of God’s true Israel) did live, for the most part, in accordance with God’s law (through faith in accordance with the limited grace available to them at that time), but those believers will be quick to testify that they needed the salvation that comes only through the Lord Jesus Christ and His atoning death, resurrection, and ascension.

<sup>166</sup> The “law” here need not be limited to the Mosaic Law. God’s law (including the Mosaic Law, which provided the foundation for the old covenant) is a lot more than commandments. We learn where we came from (we were created by God), we learn what went wrong, what God requires of us and what our priorities must be, what the consequences will be if we submit to God or if we continue in rebellion against Him, etc.

<sup>167</sup> The verses just cited from the New Testament are all discussed in some detail in *Holiness and Victory Over Sin*. Christians are not required to fulfill the *ceremonial* law of the old covenant. See my paper titled *The Christian, The Law, and Legalism*.

**this? Who will give heed and listen hereafter? (24) Who gave Jacob up for spoil, and Israel to plunderers? Was it not the LORD, against whom we have sinned, And in whose ways they were not willing to walk, And whose law they did not obey? (25) So He poured out on him the heat of His anger And the fierceness of battle; And it set him aflame all around, Yet he did not recognize it; And it burned him, but he paid no attention.** [Cf., e.g., Isa. 1:1-31; 5:24, 25; and 29:13, 14. All Israel (the end-time remnant of Israel) will *pay attention* and be saved after God's end-time judgment of the world (cf. Rom. 11:25-27).]

## ISAIAH 44:1-5

**“But now listen, O Jacob, My servant** [On the word *servant*, see under Isa. 42:1.], **And Israel, whom I have chosen: (2) Thus says the LORD who made you And formed you from the womb, who will help you, ‘Do not fear, O Jacob My servant; And you Jeshurun** [Compare Deut. 32:15; 33:5, 26. *Jeshurun* is another name for Israel/Judah. The BDB Hebrew Lexicon says that this Hebrew noun means *Upright One* and that this is a “poetic name of Israel; designating it under its *ideal* character.”] **whom I have chosen. (3) For I will pour out water on the thirsty land And streams on the dry ground; I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring And My blessing on your descendants** [Compare Isa. 32:15. I assume that the time setting here, as with so many of the prophecies we are studying in this paper, looks first and foremost to the time when the repentant remnant of Israel and then the repentant remnant of the nations will be saved through the Lord Jesus Christ after His end-time judgment of the world. Verse 5 shows that the elect of the nations (Gentiles) will be included; that verse could even be limited to speaking of the elect of the nations.<sup>168</sup> The fact that the elect of the nations can be considered part of the *offspring/descendants* of Israel comes up several times in this paper.<sup>169</sup> Also, there is an important preliminary, partial fulfillment of these words in this present age for the Christian church (which is part of God’s true Israel) when Jews and Gentiles become Christians. The *water* symbolizes the life, grace, and Spirit of God.]; **(4) And they will spring up among the grass Like poplars by streams of water.’ (5) This one will say, ‘I am the LORD’S’; And that one will call on the name of Jacob** [In the margin the NASB has, “Another reading is *will be called by the name of Jacob.*” I assume, in agreement with most, that this other reading (the reading in the margin of the NASB) is the correct reading. (This other reading uses the same letters in the Hebrew text; it involves only a change in vowel letters, vowel letters that were added to the text long after the days of Isaiah, even long after the days that Jesus lived on the earth.) The NIV has, “another will call himself by the name of Jacob.”]; **And another will write on his hand, ‘Belonging to the LORD,’ And will name Israel’s name with honor** [The NIV has, “and will take the name Israel.” The NKJV has, “And name *himself* by the name of Israel.”]” [This last verse seems to go out of its way to demonstrate that the remnant of the nations (Gentiles) left after God’s end-time judgment of the world will be saved too. Isaiah 45:14-25 (discussed next in this paper) are the most important cross-reference to help demonstrate that the saved remnant of the

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<sup>168</sup> I’ll quote a sentence from what F. Delitzsch said under 44:5 (*Commentary on the Old Testament* by Keil and Delitzsch, Vol. 7 [Eerdmans, 1976 reprint], page 204), “The threefold *zeh* [This Hebrew word, which is used three times in Isa. 44:5, was translated “This one,” “that one,” and “another” by the NASB.] refers to the heathen, as in Ps. 87:4, 5.” Psalm 87 is an important cross-reference. It speaks of (the elect of) the nations being *born* at Jerusalem, which, when understood in the fullest sense, speaks of the *birth* into the eternal life of God’s new earth; the nations are pictured on the new earth in Revelation chapters 21, 22. Psalm 87:4 ends with the words, “This one [*zeh*] was born there,” and the next verse continues with the words, “[And] of Zion it shall be said, ‘This one [not using *zeh*] and that one [not using *zeh*] were born in her.’” Psalm 87 is discussed on pages 106, 107 of my eschatological paper dated November 1998.

<sup>169</sup> See under Isa. 26:16-19; 29:23; 59:21 (discussed toward the end of the chapter on Isaiah chapter 27); and 45:14-24.

nations left after God's end-time judgment of the world can be considered the *offspring* of Israel/Jacob. If we take the words of Isa. 44:3-5 regarding the salvation of the elect of the nations through the water/grace/Spirit of God in the fullest sense, it is comparable with seeing the elect of the nations in God's new earth with its river of the water of life (as pictured in Rev. 21:24-22:3).]

## ISAIAH 45:14-25

**Thus says the LORD, “The products of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush [or, Ethiopia; cf. Isa. 18:1-7] And the Sabeans,<sup>170</sup> men of stature, Will come over to you and will be yours [cf., e.g., Isa. 14:1, 2; 49:23]; They will walk behind you, they will come over in chains [cf. Psalm 149:8] And will bow down to you [cf. Isa. 49:23; 60:14]; They will make supplication to you: ‘Surely, God is with you, and there is none else, No other God [cf., e.g., Isa. 45:5, 21; Jer. 16:19; and Zech. 8:20-23].’”**

[This verse speaks of (part of) the humbled, repentant remnant of the nations coming to Israel (and, more importantly, coming to God, the God of Israel) after God’s end-time judgment of the world (cf., e.g., Isa. 2:2-4). Some verses speak of the status of the nations with respect to Israel in a more positive way,<sup>171</sup> but the Old Testament prophecies make it clear that the remnant of the nations will be subordinate to true Israel. And, significantly, the book of Revelation confirms that true Israel will reign over the nations (Rev. 20:3-6; 21:24-22:5). The following verses of this chapter (especially Isa. 45:22-25), along with many other verses of Isaiah, show, however, that the remnant of the nations will be saved by God. The last two chapters of the book of Revelation show that the status of the nations in the eternal state will be glorious indeed because of their salvation through Christ Jesus, the Lamb of God. I’m quite sure that nobody will be complaining or manifesting pride in God’s new earth. They had better not! I believe God has had enough of those things!] **(15) Truly, You are a God who hides Himself, O God of Israel, Savior!** [Compare Psalm 44:24; Isa. 8:17; and 57:17. So often it looked like the nations were more blessed than Israel, and it looked like salvation never would, or could (because of their sinfulness), come to Israel, or to the nations; but God is good, and His Word is good, and He *will* do all that He has said He would do. This verse contains an important truth that has very much application for God’s people of all generations. We must walk by faith—a faith based on what the Word of God says—not by sight (cf. 2 Cor. 5:7). God set it up this way. For one thing, by hiding Himself to a significant extent, He is able to test people; furthermore, when God’s people walk by faith, they glorify Him and they grow in the things of God. All those who trust God will be rewarded with eternal glory.] **(16) They will be put to shame and even humiliated, all of them; The manufacturers of idols will go away together in humiliation.** [Compare Isa. 42:17; 44:9-20. Those who manufacture idols and those who worship idols will be removed by God’s end-time judgments, except for those who repent and turn to Him (cf. Isa. 45:20-25). The idols were a demonic alternative to worshipping God. In our day we don’t have much literal worship of manufactured idols, but there’s much worship of things like power, money, self, fame, sex, etc., which really are forms of idolatry [cf., e.g., Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5].] **(17) Israel**

<sup>170</sup> I’ll quote a sentence from M. R. Heicksen’s article on the *Sabeans* (*Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. 5 [Zondervan, 1975], pages 190, 191), “They were a people of Semitic origin, descended from Sheba (Gen. 25:3), and residing in SW Arabia in the area presently known as Yemen and Hadhramaut.” He mentioned that the queen of Sheba “who journeyed to Jerusalem to visit Solomon (1 Kings 10:1-13; 2 Chron. 9:1-12)” was from there.

<sup>171</sup> For example, the status of the remnants of Egypt and Assyria is spoken of in a very positive way in Isa. 19:23-25. If we were limited to those few verses in Isaiah chapter 19, we wouldn’t know of the subordinate status of the nations to true Israel.

**has been saved** [“will be saved” NIV] **by the LORD With an everlasting salvation; You** [true Israel] **will not be put to shame or humiliated To all eternity.** [Compare Isa. 49:23; 54:4. In contrast to those just mentioned in Isa. 45:16, true Israel will be saved with an everlasting salvation (so will the elect of the nations).] **(18) For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it** [cf., e.g., Gen. 1:1; Isa. 42:5], **He established it and did not create it** [to be] **a waste place** [“A waste place” is one way to translate the Hebrew noun *tohu*. The same Hebrew noun is also used in the next verse. In the margin the NASB has, “or, in vain” here and in the next verse. The NIV has “to be empty” here and “in vain” in the next verse. This Hebrew noun isn’t easy to translate in these verses; it could be understood several different ways.<sup>172</sup> I’ll comment further regarding the meaning of this word as we continue, but I’m satisfied with the translation of the NASB here and in the next verse.], **But formed it to be inhabited** [Compare Gen. 1:26-28; Isa. 45:12. God didn’t create the earth to be a waste place (a place of chaos, an empty place).<sup>173</sup> He created the earth to be inhabited (especially inhabited by man), and He hasn’t changed His mind.<sup>174</sup> After His end-time judgment of the world, He will have the *worldwide* millennial kingdom for His people (true Israel and the elect of the nations). Then, after the millennial kingdom, in the eternal state, His people will live on His fully glorified new earth with its new Jerusalem. His fully glorified earth will have left behind (forever) all that *tohu* means.

God’s plans won’t be frustrated by the evil work of Satan or men; in fact He incorporates that evil work into His plans to bring about a new glorified humanity (true Israel and the elect of the nations) and a new, glorified earth.

The entire earth, not just the land of Israel, is in view here. This is important because (as the following verses confirm) Isa. 45:14-25 have much more to say about the salvation of the end-time remnant of the nations than they do about the salvation of the end-time remnant of Israel. Also, there’s an important partial fulfillment of the words of Isa. 45:20-25 as Gentiles become Christians throughout this present age. God is the Creator and God of all mankind. It isn’t surprising that His salvation plans extend to cover the Gentiles too. Many Gentiles will be saved as part of the nations (the nations being distinct from true Israel), and many Gentiles (like most of us) are being saved by becoming Christians and part of true Israel.], **“I am the LORD [Yahweh], and there is none else.** [Compare Isa. 45:5, 14, 21. Yahweh is the God of all men; there is no other God. All men owe Him worship and obedience, and He is concerned for the salvation of all men, Jews and Gentiles—Christ died for all, and all are called to repent and to submit to God and His Word in faith. God won’t forfeit His creation to sin, Satan, idolatry, false religions (including secular humanism), or any form of *tohu*.] **(19)**

<sup>172</sup> The BDB Hebrew Lexicon gives “formlessness, confusion, unreality, and emptiness” as the basic meanings of this noun. For one thing, this noun is used in the book of Isaiah to point out the emptiness, confusion, unreality, and vanity of idolatry (Isa. 41:29 [“emptiness” NASB]; 44:9 [“futile” NASB]). This noun is also used to describe what the world will be like after God’s end-time judgment of the world, before His work of restoration (Isa. 24:10 [“chaos” NASB]; 34:11 [“desolation” NASB]; and Jer. 4:23 [“formless” NASB]).

<sup>173</sup> Genesis 1:2 starts out, “The earth was formless [*tohu*].”

<sup>174</sup> The sin of man (man joined the devil in his rebellion against God) didn’t frustrate God’s plans. As 1 Pet. 1:18-20 shows, God had already planned to send His Son, the perfect Lamb, to solve the sin problem “before the foundation of the world.”

**I have not spoken in secret** [Compare Isa. 48:16. In Isa. 45:21 God mentions that He has openly announced/declared from of old what He would do (not that He had revealed every detail; for one thing, His revelation is progressive).], **In some dark land** [There's a great contrast between God's bold prophetic proclamations before the whole world (including those through Isaiah [cf., e.g., Isa. 41:1-49:26]) and the typical messages given by the pagan prophets of the gods (cf. Isa. 8:19). God frequently makes the point in Isaiah that He, and He alone, is able to prophesy (before the world) what He is going to do and then do it, and that it will be manifested that He is God when the things He has prophesied come to pass. Many of them were fulfilled in the near future; many others have been fulfilled since then; and the rest will be fulfilled at the proper time. God challenged to gods of the nations to do the same.<sup>175</sup>

I'll quote part of what Harry Bultema said here,<sup>176</sup> "In verse nineteen God contrasts His prophetic revelations with heathen oracles which as a rule were pronounced in dark, hidden caves. The Lord always spoke openly, straightforwardly, unequivocally. In John 18:20 Christ said much the same thing to the high priest."]; **I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, 'Seek me in a waste place'; I, the LORD, speak righteousness** [cf. Isa. 45:23; 63:1; the NIV has, "speak the truth"], **Declaring things that are upright.** [The verb (apparently an imperative) translated "Seek Me" is apparently used here, as it sometimes is, in the sense of seeking the face of God on a regular basis to worship Him, etc., with no idea of seeking for Him as if it were necessary to find Him first (cf. 1 Chron. 16:10, 11; 2 Chron. 11:16; 20:3, 4; Psalms 24:6; 27:8; 40:16; 70:4; 105:3, 4; Isa. 51:1; Zeph. 1:6; 2:3; and Zech. 8:21, 22). The *offspring of Jacob/Israel* won't be seeking the face of God in a waste place (a place of emptiness, confusion, unreality, chaos, etc.). They will seek Him (come before Him) as the saved, righteous, blessed people of the One who is God (the triune God) in a land that is greatly blessed. By the time of the eternal state, God's people will have been glorified (true Israel and the elect of the nations) along with the new heaven and new earth.<sup>177</sup>

Discerning the identity of the *offspring of Jacob* is very important here, as it typically is in the prophecies of Isaiah. Isaiah 45:25 mentions the *offspring of Israel*, which refer to the same people.<sup>178</sup> It seems clear that these words, as they are used in Isa. 45:19, 25, include the end-time remnant of the nations that are saved through coming to Jerusalem/Israel, as in Isa. 2:2-4, for example. The salvation of the remnant of the nations after God's end-time judgment of the world is the primary topic dealt with in Isa. 45:14-25, but the topic is handled in a way that exalts the status of true Israel. The end-time remnant of the nations can be included in the *offspring of Jacob/Israel* because they partake of the life of God by coming to Jerusalem/Israel; in some ways they are born of Israel.<sup>179</sup> The elect of the nations will partake of the eternal life of God's new earth by coming to new Jerusalem (see Revelation chapters 21, 22).

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<sup>175</sup> See the introductory comments to Isaiah 9:1-7 in this paper; also see under Isa. 42:9.

<sup>176</sup> *Commentary on Isaiah* [Kregel, 1981], page 449.

<sup>177</sup> I don't mean to suggest that the glory of the nations will be comparable with the glory of true Israel (it won't be), but Revelation chapters 21, 22 show that the nations will be glorified in the eternal state.

<sup>178</sup> On the identity of the *offspring of Jacob/Israel*, as this expression is used here, see (in this paper) under Isa. 26:16-19; 29:23; 44:3-5; 59:21 (on pages 76, 77); and see that which follows in this present chapter.

<sup>179</sup> For one thing, they (along with true Israel) are the *offspring* of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is called *Israel* in Isa. 49:3. All who are saved through the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ are His *offspring*

Isaiah 44:3-5 seem to be an important cross-reference for understanding the identity of the *offspring of Jacob/Israel* here in Isa. 45:19, 25.<sup>180</sup> It seems clear (because of Isa. 44:5) that the *offspring/descendants* of Jacob/Israel pictured in 44:3-5 include the elect of the nations left after God's end-time judgment of the world.

Even as the elect of God (true Israel and the elect of the nations) will be born into the glory of God's eternal kingdom, the Bible also speaks of the birth of the creation, including the earth, into the glory of God's eternal life (cf., e.g., Matt. 19:28; Rom. 8:19-22). Some of the verses that speak of the glorification of the creation don't speak of this transformation in terms of a birth (cf., e.g., Isa. 29:17; 32:15, 16; Acts 3:21; and Revelation chapters 21, 22). Also, most of the verses that speak of the glorification of God's people don't speak of this glorification in terms of a birth (into the fullness of eternal life). (Cf., e.g., Isa. 25:6-8; Rom. 8:11, 17, 18; 1 Cor. 15:49-53; Gal. 6:8; Phil. 3:20, 21; Col. 3:1-4; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17; 2 Tim. 2:10-12; Heb. 2:10; 1 Pet. 5:1, 4, 10; Rev. 7:9-17; 20:4-6; and Revelation chapters 21, 22.)

Since Yahweh speaks righteousness and declares things that are upright (which includes speaking things that are true), unlike the gods, what He prophesies will come to pass. Also, everything associated with His finished product will be righteous and holy in every way, including all the people that will have a place in His eternal kingdom (true Israel and the elect of the nations [cf., e.g., Rev. 21:27]) and the new heaven, new earth, and new Jerusalem.] **(20) Gather yourselves and come; Draw near together, you fugitives** ["survivors" NRSV] **of the nations; They have no knowledge, Who carry about their wooden idol And pray to a god who cannot save.** [The "fugitives/survivors of the nations" are the remnant of the nations (not including true Israel) left after God's end-time judgment of the world. Bultema says that the "escaped of the nations" (he's using the KJV translation of this verse) refer "to the remnant of the nations that will survive the judgment and enter the millennium."<sup>181</sup> Merrill F. Unger's heading for Isa. 45:22-25 is "The Conversion of the Nations in the Kingdom Age."<sup>182</sup>

The end-time remnant of the nations are invited to turn from their former "god(s) who cannot save" to the true God who can and who does save (see 45:22). Having been humbled by God's end-time judgments (including the destruction of Antichrist and his followers), and having seen how He has saved His people (true Israel), not to mention that He has done what He had said He would do (cf. 45:21), the remnant of the nations will be ready to repent and turn to God for salvation through Christ Jesus. In Isa. 45:14-25 it is assumed that the humbled end-time remnant of the nation Israel has already

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(Isa. 53:10), and Rev. 21:27 confirms that the elect of the nations (the nations being distinct from true Israel) are saved through the atoning death of the Lamb of God. Taken in the fullest sense, which is appropriate here, the *offspring of Jacob/Israel* include all the elect of God (true Israel and the elect of the nations) that will have a place in His eternal kingdom on His new, glorified earth that is pictured in Revelation chapters 21, 22.

The prophecies of Isaiah include the birth into the glory of eternal life for true Israel and for the elect of the nations (see the references mentioned in footnote 178; and see on Isa. 66:7, 8 in chapter 16 of *Mid-Week Rapture*). Isaiah 66:7, 8 just deal with the birth into eternal glory for true Israel, not for the elect of the nations. Several other key verses deal with this birth for true Israel. (See on Rev. 12:5, 6 on pages 314-317 of *Mid-Week Rapture*; see on Mic. 5:3 on pages 249, 251-253; and see on Psalm 2:7 on pages 258-262 of the same book.)

<sup>180</sup> Isaiah 44:1-5 are discussed in the preceding chapter in this paper.

<sup>181</sup> *Commentary on Isaiah*, page 449.

<sup>182</sup> *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 2 [Moody Press, 1981], page 1269.

been saved before God invites the remnant of the nations to repent and turn to Him for salvation through Christ Jesus.] **(21) Declare and set forth your case; Indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides me, A righteous God and a Savior; There is none except me** [cf. Isa. 45:5, 14]. [Compare, for example, Isa. 41:21-29; 42:8, 9; 43:9-21; 44:6-28; 46:5-11; and 48:3-16. The fugitives/survivors of the nations will see, for one thing, that God’s prophetic words have come to pass, and that the gods/idols they have been worshipping have absolutely nothing to compare with this. The gods/idols aren’t God; they can’t begin to compete with Him and, more importantly, they can’t save those who look to them. There’s only one God. He is a righteous God and a Savior, and He has included the end-time remnant of the nations in His salvation plans (as the next verse shows).] **(22) Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth** [cf., e.g., Isa. 49:6]; **For I am God, and there is no other.** [There’s an important partial fulfillment of the glorious prophetic words of this verse (and of 45:24, 25) when Gentiles submit to the Lord Jesus Christ throughout this present age, but the primary fulfillment will take place after God’s end-time judgment of the world (see Isa. 45:14-20).] **(23) I have sworn by myself** [cf. Gen. 22:16; Isa. 62:8; and Heb. 6:13], **The word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness And will not turn back,** [God’s righteous prophetic words *will* come to pass (cf. Isa. 45:19; 55:11).] **That to me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance** [cf. Isa. 19:18]. [In Phil. 2:10, 11 the apostle Paul says that “at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” The apostle doesn’t say that all beings in the universe will begin to love and worship the Lord Jesus Christ. Many (like the devil) will only bow and confess that He is Lord when they are forced to do so (involuntarily) after they have been totally subdued by Him—there’s no suggestion that they will repent. In Rom. 14:11 Paul “quotes” Isa. 45:23 in a context dealing with the fact that all mankind (the righteous and the unrighteous) will stand before the judgment seat of God.

I believe these words (of Isa. 45:23) speak of the humbled end-time remnant of the nations that will bow in genuine repentance (not that every single individual will necessarily bow in genuine repentance; the potential for sin will still be there at that time for the nations)—they will join true Israel in bowing before God and swearing allegiance to Him. This is part of God’s generous plan of salvation, in accordance with His prophetic word—it will come to pass. They (like us) will not—thanks be to God—escape God’s saving mercy. Any individuals that don’t repent and submit to the Lord Jesus Christ (and God the Father) at that time will certainly be quickly dealt with. He doesn’t force people to submit to Him in faith or to love Him. I’ll quote a sentence from what F. Delitzsch said here, “This bending of the knee, this confession as an oath of homage, will be no forced one.”<sup>183</sup>] **(24) They will say of Me, ‘Only in the LORD are righteousness and strength.’** [The Hebrew would be more literally translated, “He will say of Me, ‘Only in the LORD [Yahweh] are righteousness and strength.’” Or probably

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<sup>183</sup> *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 7 [Eerdmans, 1976 reprint], page 231.

better yet, “He will say, Only in the LORD are righteousness and strength for me.”<sup>184</sup> The humbled remnant of the nations will then know that righteousness, strength, truth, salvation, and everything else that is good come from God, that these things can be found only in Him.

Here in Isa. 45:24 we are told that the remnant of the nations will have learned that *righteousness* can be found only in Yahweh. In the next verse we are told that the offspring of Israel (which, as we have discussed, includes the remnant of the nations) will be *righteous* with the *righteousness* of God (see under the next verse.) **Men will come to Him** [Again, in agreement with the more literal translation of the Hebrew suggested for the first words of this verse, the more literal translation here would be, “He will come to Him.”<sup>185</sup> Anyway, whether we translate the Hebrew as “Men will come” or “He will come,” the context shows that it is the remnant of the nations that are coming to God.], **And [or, But] all who were angry at Him will be put to shame.** [I assume that these words speak of people who never do repent who will be removed in God’s end-time judgment of the world (cf. Isa. 41:11); they won’t be left as part of the remnant of the nations (or as part of true Israel). These same people were spoken of in Isa. 45:16, which starts out with the same Hebrew verb, “They will be put to shame.”<sup>186</sup>] **(25) In the LORD all the offspring of Israel Will be justified** [Will be righteous] **and will glory.** [We discussed the identity of the *offspring of Jacob/Israel* under Isa. 45:19. The *offspring of Israel* includes all the members of God’s true Israel (those that will be reigning with Him forever). It also includes the elect of the nations. To “be justified” through the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, is a big part of what salvation is all about. Isaiah 53:11 (in a passage that speaks of the atoning death of the Lamb of God) says, “...the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities [with the guilt and the penalties (including the major penalties of spiritual death and bondage to sin, not to mention the ultimate penalty of eternal death)].”<sup>187</sup> As I discussed in some detail in *Holiness and Victory Over Sin*, I believe a translation like “will make righteous” would be better than “will

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<sup>184</sup> The *Amplified Bible* has, “Only in the Lord shall one say, I have righteousness...and strength...” The singular forms (“He will say” and “for me”; also the following verb “He will come”) apparently build on the singular verbs at the end of 45:23 (“will bow” and “will swear *allegiance*”).

I’ll quote a sentence from what A. R. Fausset said under this verse (*Commentary on the Old and New Testaments* by Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, Vol. 2 [Eerdmans, 1984 reprint], page 709), “Literally, ‘Surely,’ or ‘Only in the Lord (there are) to me (shall [one] say) righteousness (i.e., all righteousness, imputed, as also imparted, so as to be inherent) and strength’ (for enabling me to obey God).”

<sup>185</sup> I’ll quote the translation of Edward J. Young (*Book of Isaiah*, Vol. 3 [Eerdmans, 1972], page 215) for the first half of Isa. 45:24, “Only in the Lord have I, he says, righteousness and strength; unto him shall he come....”

<sup>186</sup> Some think that the words “And all who were angry at Him will be put to shame” speak of the same people mentioned in the preceding line (people who come to God). Some with that viewpoint think that these people will repent and be saved; others with that viewpoint think that none of them will repent and be saved. The use of the same Hebrew verb in 45:16, where the rest of the verse strongly suggests that they won’t repent and be saved, is strong evidence that these people mentioned here in the last line of Isa. 45:24 won’t repent and be saved. The fact that the Hebrew verb switches back to the plural here (with the verb “will be put to shame”) from the singular (“He will come”) fits the idea that this last line of 45:24 is speaking of different people.

<sup>187</sup> Significantly, Isa. 53:10 mentions the *offspring* of the Lamb of God, which speaks of all those that are saved through His atoning death (true Israel and the elect of the nations).

justify” in Isa. 53:11.<sup>188</sup> To be made righteous includes being forgiven and being made righteous and holy new creations by the powerful blood of Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, through faith. Hebrews 11:13-16, 39, 40; 12:23 confirm that the believers from Old Testament days (who are all part of true Israel) are saved through the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>189</sup>

Significantly, those who are made *righteous* through Christ, which includes the end-time remnant of the nations (excluding any that don’t submit to Christ in faith), are made *righteous* by partaking of the *righteousness* of God, which was just mentioned in Isa. 45:24. Those that are “in the LORD [Yahweh]” are made righteous with His righteousness. All the people that will have a place in God’s new earth will have been made righteous through Jesus Christ and His atoning death. Revelation 21:27 (with Rev. 21:24-22:3) confirms that the elect of the nations are saved through the Lamb of God as much as true Israel is. The sin problem will have been solved for them by Christ Jesus—there’s no room for sin in God’s eternal kingdom.<sup>190</sup> This doesn’t mean that God’s salvation plans for the elect of the nations is the full equivalent of His plans for true Israel. Clearly they aren’t: True Israel will reign.

Let’s briefly discuss the words “and will glory.” The NIV translates “and will exult.” The Hebrew verb used here (the hithpael stem of *halal*) fits the idea of boasting in God with rejoicing and thankfulness (cf., e.g., Isa. 41:16). J. Alec Motyer speaks here of “the righteous respond[ing] with exultant praise.”<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> See pages 26-29 of *Holiness and Victory Over Sin* for a start. For further study on this very important topic see the chapter titled “A Study on the Meaning of Justify/Justification as These Words Are Used in the New Testament” in that book. F. Delitzsch (*Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 7, page 231) translated “shall become righteous” here in Isa. 45:25.

<sup>189</sup> Hebrews 11:39, 40; 12:23 are discussed on pages 166, 167 (with pages 158, 159) of *Holiness and Victory Over Sin*.

<sup>190</sup> The potential for sin will still exist for the (unglorified) remnant of the nations during the millennial kingdom (cf. Dan. 7:12; Zech. 14:16-19; and Rev. 20:7-10), but there won’t be any room for sin in the eternal state that follows the millennial kingdom.

<sup>191</sup> *Isaiah* [Inter-Varsity Press, 1999], page 293.

## ISAIAH CHAPTER 49

**Listen to me, O islands** [or, coastlands (see under Isa. 42:4 in this paper)], **And pay attention, you peoples** [plural of *leom*] **from afar.** [God the Son, the Messiah, is speaking here. What He says applies to mankind worldwide.] **The LORD called Me from the womb** [cf. Jer. 1:5; Gal. 1:15]; **From the body of My mother He named Me.** [The name *Jesus* (*Yah* saves), which was given to Messiah/Christ, fulfills these prophetic words (Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:31; and 2:21). Also see Isa. 7:14; 8:8, 10; and Matt. 1:23. We have already learned of the deity of Messiah in the book of Isaiah (see under Isa. 9:6 in this paper) and of His humanity (e.g., Isa. 7:14; 9:6; and 11:1-3). Isaiah chapter 49 confirms His humanity, but it also makes it very clear that He is much more than just a man.] **(2) He has made My mouth like a sharp sword** [See under Isa. 11:4 in this paper.], **In the shadow of His hand He has concealed Me** [Even today, some two thousand years after the birth, earthly ministry, atoning death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ and the establishing of the Christian church, most people (including many who consider themselves to be Christians) don't begin to see the awesome significance of this Person and of His all-important work of saving and judging, not to mention His work of bringing forth God's new heaven and new earth at the proper time. Before long His time of partial concealment will be over. Every knee will bow before Him, one way or another (e.g., Phil 2:9-11), not that all will worship Him.]; **And He has also made Me a select arrow, He has hidden Me in His quiver.** [The words "select arrow," as with the words "He made My mouth like a sharp sword," demonstrate His awesome power to destroy and remove those who persist in rebellion. The last words here, "He [God the Father] has hidden Me in His quiver" are parallel in meaning with "He has concealed Me."] **(3) He said to Me, "You are My Servant** [On "Servant," see under Isa. 42:1 in this paper; cf. Zech. 3:8.], **Israel**<sup>192</sup> [It's quite significant that the Servant of God, the Messiah, is called *Israel*. He is the heart, the foundation, and the Savior of God's true Israel. Furthermore, He is the only one who can do what Israel was called to do, that is, to bring light and salvation to the nations. In that God's Servant is to be the Savior of Israel/Jacob (Isa. 49:5-7), it's clear that the word *Servant* here doesn't refer to the nation.], **In whom I will show My glory."** [God manifests His glory through Messiah as Savior and as Judge.] **(4) But I said** [Christ is still speaking.], **"I have toiled in vain, I have spent My strength for nothing and vanity; Yet surely the justice due to Me is with the LORD, And My reward** [or, *wages* earned for His faithful work] **with My God."** [Although it looked, in some ways, like Christ's mission was a failure when He was rejected, even "abhorred," by the nation Israel (Isa. 49:7) and put to death (e.g., Isa. 52:13-53:12), this was part of God's

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<sup>192</sup> *Israel* is an important name; I'll briefly comment on its meaning. The use of this name here in Isa. 49:3 for the Messiah makes the name a lot more important. Genesis 32:28 (with 32:24-32) explains how *Jacob* was given the name *Israel*: "He said, 'Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven [or, persevered] with God [*elohim*] and with men and have prevailed.'" The Hebrew word *Israel* [*Yisrael*] is a combination of two words. The first word was formed from the Hebrew verb (*sarah*), the verb that was translated "you have striven [with]" in Gen. 32:28; *el* is a word for God. The meaning then is something like "he strives with God." (Some take it to mean "God strives.") Based on the meaning of the Hebrew verb *sarah* given in the BDB Hebrew Lexicon, we could understand *Israel* [*Yisrael*] to mean "he perseveres with God," which sounds better to me.

salvation plan. When Christ submitted to the cross (and all that came with it), He knew that He was doing the Father's will, and He knew that payday was coming (cf. Heb. 12:2). He knew that He was overthrowing sin, spiritual death, and the devil through His atoning death and that He was earning the right to save the elect, and He knew that He would be resurrected on the third day (cf., e.g., Matt. 26:28; John 2:19-22; 10:11-18; 12:31-33). This doesn't mean, however, that His mission was easy for Him, far from it (cf., e.g., Matt. 27:46; Luke 22:42, 44); He (and God the Father) paid a very great price, an infinite price, to save us.] **(5) And now says the LORD, who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, To bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel might be gathered to Him** [Compare Isa. 11:11-16; 27:12, 13. The NIV translation is better, "to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself." The names *Jacob* and *Israel* are used interchangeably here (and in the next verse), as they often are.] **(For I am honored in the sight of the LORD, And My God is My strength** [For one thing, He was anointed by God (e.g., Isa. 11:2; 42:1; and 61:1).]), **(6) He [God the Father] says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel** [These words are essentially the equivalent of what was just said in verse 5, except that here we have the important added words, "the preserved ones of Israel." The NIV has "...to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept." "The preserved ones of Israel/those of Israel [that God has] kept" speaks of the often-mentioned elect remnant of the nation Israel that God will leave after His end-time judgment of the world.<sup>193</sup> On this end-time remnant of Israel/Judah, see (in this paper) under Isa. 11:11, 12; 27:12, 13 (including the sections titled "Isaiah 10:20-23 and Romans 9:27-29" and "Isaiah 59:19-21 and Romans 11:25-27" toward the end of the chapter dealing with Isaiah chapter 27). This remnant will submit to Christ in faith, starting about the time of His mid-week return, but not in time to be taken in the rapture.]; **I will also make You a light of [or, to/for] the nations** [Hebrew *goyim*. "The nations" here (in this context) don't include Israel. The NIV has "for the Gentiles." Compare Isa. 42:6 (which is discussed in this paper); Isa. 51:4; Luke 2:32; Acts 13:47; and 26:23.] **So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth** [cf. Isa. 42:4, 10]."] [In addition to bringing salvation to the end-time remnant of Israel, Christ will also bring light and salvation to the remnant of the nations left after His end-time judgment of the world. This theme permeates almost every passage we are studying in this paper, but Isaiah chapter 42 probably has the most in common with chapter 49. Also, there is a very important partial fulfillment of these prophetic words when Jews and Gentiles are saved and become part of God's true Israel

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<sup>193</sup> God's end-time judgment of the world and the remnant of mankind (the remnant of Israel and the remnant of the nations) left after this judgment play a prominent role in almost every passage we are studying in this paper. (And there are many other similar passages that we are not discussing in this paper.) Here in Isaiah chapter 49 there are strong allusions to God's end-time judgment of the world in verse 2 (with Christ's *mouth* being made like a *sharp sword* and His being made a *select arrow*); in verse 3 (God's *glory* will be manifested in His end-time judgment of the world); in verses 22, 23 (the remnant of the nations will be submissive to God, as they are pictured in these verses, after His end-time judgment of the world); and in verses 24-26 (these verses speak of God's end-time judgment of the nations). Although verses 22-26 speak only of God's end-time judgment of the nations (excluding Israel), other passages in Isaiah make it clear that Israel will also be judged (and reduced to the remnant) in God's end-time judgment of the world (see, for example, Isaiah chapters 2, 24, Zech 13:8; 14:1, 2; and Rom. 9:27-29).

throughout this present age (cf., e.g., Acts 13:47; 26:23).] **(7) Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel** [cf. Isa. 48:17] **and its Holy One, To the despised One** [cf. Psalms 22:6-8; 69:7-9; and Isa. 53:2, 3], **To the One abhorred by the nation** [The Lord Jesus Christ was *despised* and *abhorred* by the nation Israel at His first coming. Most of the leaders rejected Him, as did most of the people of Israel, and throughout this age the rejection has continued. It is also true that much of the Gentile world has rejected Christ. It will be different after His end-time judgment: The end-time remnants of Israel and of the nations will submit to Him. It is also true, of course, that some Jews and Gentiles have submitted to the Lord Jesus Christ throughout this present age.], **To the Servant of rulers** [The following words prophesy regarding the great reversal that follows the rejection of Christ spoken of earlier in this verse (and inferred in 49:4).], **“Kings will see and arise** [cf. Isa. 52:15], **Princes will also bow down, Because of the LORD who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel who has chosen You.”** [The remnant worldwide (the remnant of Israel and the remnant of the nations), including the kings and princes, will worship the Lord Jesus Christ (the one formerly despised and abhorred) after His end-time judgment of the world (e.g., Isa. 66:23). This worship will take place in a much fuller sense in the eternal state (following the millennial kingdom) when all the elect will have been glorified. Also, there is a very important partial fulfillment of these prophetic words during this present age when Christians, including some kings, princes, presidents, and prime ministers, submit to and worship the Lord Jesus Christ.] **(8) Thus says the LORD, “In a favorable time** [“In the time of my favor” NIV] **I have answered You, And in a day of salvation I have helped You** [It is probably better to translate the verbs here with the English future tense with the NIV, “I will answer [You]”<sup>194</sup> and “I will help [You].” The primary fulfillment of these prophetic words will take place when the Lord Jesus Christ (“You” refers to Him here) comes to judge the world at the end of this age, which will lead to *salvation* for the remnant of Israel and the remnant of the nations (cf., e.g., Isa. 49:6; 59:16-21; and 63:1-6). The emphasis of this verse and on to the end of this chapter is on the salvation of the humbled, repentant Israelites, but it is clear that light and salvation also come to the humbled, repentant remnant of the nations (e.g., Isa. 49:6). The following verses, in agreement with many other verses, emphasize the subordinate status of the remnant of the nations with respect to Israel.

Second Corinthians 6:2 confirms that there is a very important partial fulfillment of these prophetic words for true Israel (Christians) in the present age. These words of 2 Cor. 6:2 about “the time of God’s favor” and the “day of salvation” fit the idea of God’s greater Jubilee (time of release) through Christ Jesus (cf. Isa. 61:1-3 with Luke 4:16-21). Although it is clear that the day of salvation is here now (in a preliminary stage), I believe it is also clear that the primary fulfillment of these prophetic words will not take place until Christ judges the world at the end of this age and saves the remnant of the nation Israel and the remnant of the nations.]; **And I** [God the Father] **will keep You** [the Lord Jesus Christ] **and give You for a covenant of [to/for] the people** [The Hebrew here is exactly the same as the Hebrew of Isa. 42:6, where the NASB translated,

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<sup>194</sup> John N. Oswalt (*Book of Isaiah*, Chapters 40-66 [Eerdmans, 1998], page 295), for example, comments, “This verb and the next one are in the perfect tense [in the Hebrew], but are taken as ‘prophetic perfects,’ [“I will answer”] as indicated by the imperfect form of the remaining verbs in the sentence [in the Hebrew].”

“and watch over you [You], And I will appoint [give] you [You] as a covenant to the people.” As with Isa. 42:6 (which is discussed with all of chapter 42 in this paper), I assume that these prophetic words will receive their primary fulfillment when “the people”<sup>195</sup> (speaking of the remnant of Israel left after God’s end-time judgment of Israel) are saved by and through the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is a very important partial fulfillment of these prophetic words when Jews and Gentiles throughout this present age submit to the new *covenant* established on the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ and become Christians, part of God’s true Israel. Those believers will be glorified, along with all the believers from Old Testament days, when Christ returns in the middle of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week.], **To restore [establish] the land, to make them inherit the desolate [cf. Isa. 49:19] heritages** [These words speak of the elect worldwide remnant of Israel inheriting the desolate land of Israel after God’s day of judgment; Israel, then the earth, will be restored/established through the work of Christ (e.g., Isa. 11:1-9). The *desolation* came as a result of God’s judgments against sin.]; **(9) Saying to those who are bound, ‘Go forth,’** [In this context these words are aimed at the end-time remnant of Israel, but all mankind is bound by sin and spiritual death (cf. Isa. 42:7; 61:1; and Luke 4:18). There is a very important partial fulfillment of the words of this verse (as with many of these verses) for those who become Christians throughout this present age. Also, as we’ll see as we continue with this chapter, the end-time remnant of the nations will also be set free, and they will come to God and His kingdom.] **To those who are in darkness, ‘Show yourselves.’** [The NIV translates “Be free!” The point is that they are no longer living in *darkness* because Christ has become a *light* for the elect remnant of Israel (as He will for the nations [cf. Isa. 42:6, 7; 49:6; and 61:1]).] **Along the roads they will feed, And their pasture will be on all bare heights.** [The end-time remnant of Israel are coming from the ends of the earth; they are coming to Jerusalem/Israel. More importantly, they are coming to God Himself, having repented and submitted to the Lord Jesus Christ in faith.] **(10) They will not hunger or thirst, Nor will the scorching heat or sun strike them down; For He who has compassion on them will lead them And will guide them to springs of water** [cf. Isa. 41:17, 18]. [I understand these last words to refer first, and foremost, to the springs of the water of salvation and of spiritual life. The ultimate manifestation of this glorious water of life is pictured in God’s new heaven and new earth with its new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:6; 22:1, 2). Revelation 7:16, 17 speak of these glorious things coming to pass for those members of true Israel who are raptured from the earth at the time of Christ’s mid-week return.] **(11) I will make all My mountains a road, And My highways will be raised up. (12) Behold, these will come from afar; And lo, these will come from the north and from the west, And these from the land of Sinim.** [The east and south aren’t mentioned, but they will be included (cf. Isa. 43:5, 6). One common view is that the “land of Sinim” refers to China. Another common view is given by the translation of the NIV, “the region of Aswan” (in southern Egypt). It doesn’t make much difference where the land of Sinim is; the end-time remnant of Israel will be coming from the ends of the earth (and the remnant of the nations will be with them).] **(13) Shout for joy, O heavens! And rejoice, O earth!**

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<sup>195</sup> Note the plurals “the peoples,” which refer to the peoples of the nations (excluding Israel), in Isa. 49:1, 22. The singular *people* is often used in the Bible to refer to (true) Israel (God’s chosen people/nation); *peoples* and *nations* (in the plural) are often used to refer to the peoples/nations excluding Israel.

**Break forth into joyful shouting, O mountains! For the LORD has comforted His people And will have compassion on His afflicted.** [In this context “His people” and “His afflicted” refer to the end-time remnant of Israel. We have already learned that it is also Biblical to speak of the end-time remnant of the nations as God’s *people* and as His *afflicted* (see under Isa. 14:32; 19:21-25 in this paper). Part of the reason that the creation should rejoice is that the salvation and glorification of true Israel in the last days will signal that it is time for the creation itself to be glorified, first in the millennial kingdom, then in the full sense in the eternal state (cf. Rom. 8:18-22).] **(14) But Zion [Jerusalem/Israel] said, “The LORD has forsaken me, And the Lord has forgotten me.”** [In the days when the Assyrians had carried the northern kingdom into exile and the Babylonians had carried the southern kingdom into exile, after destroying Jerusalem and the temple, it may have seemed that God had forsaken and forgotten Israel/Judah, but His judgments were only temporary. In the days of the apostle Paul, when most of the sons of Israel were rejecting the Messiah, it may have seemed that God had forsaken and forgotten Israel/Judah, but the apostle Paul informed us in Romans chapters 9-11<sup>196</sup> that this state wouldn’t continue forever.] **(15) “Can a woman forget her nursing child And have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you** [cf. Isa. 44:21]. **(16) Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls [the walls of Jerusalem] are continually before me.** [These words speak of God’s tender concern for His city and His people, (true) Israel.] **(17) Your builders [or, probably better, “sons,” with the NIV, NKJV.] hurry; Your destroyers and devastators Will depart from you.** [As we have discussed in this paper, things will begin to change for the end-time remnant of Israel when they submit to the Lord Jesus Christ, starting about the time of His mid-week return. The “destroyers and devastators” (which will center in Antichrist and his “world” kingdom) won’t depart and the rebuilding/glorifying of Jerusalem/Israel won’t begin, however, until Antichrist and his forces have been destroyed at the end of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week.] **(18) Lift up your eyes and look around** [cf. Isa. 60:4]; **All of them gather together, they come to you** [cf. Isa. 43:5-7; 49:12; 54:7; and 60:4]. **As I live,” declares the LORD, “You will surely put on all of them as jewels and bind them on as a bride.** [The ones coming to the land of Israel are the end-time remnant of Israel after God’s end-time judgment of the world. (I’ll say more regarding the Israelites that will come to Zion in the last days under verses 20, 21 below.) Zion will put them on, so to speak, as a bride might put on jewels.

Verses 24-26 show that the nations must be judged before they will permit the Israelites to return to their land. Verses 22, 23 show that the humbled, repentant remnant of the nations will even bring the sons of Israel to God at Jerusalem (see under Isa. 11:11, 12 in this paper).] **(19) For your waste and desolate places and your destroyed land** [cf. Isa. 49:8; 51:3]—**Surely now you will be too cramped for the inhabitants, And those who swallowed you will be far away.** [The peoples that had swallowed Israel (at least the unrepentant ones) will have been removed by God’s end-time judgment of the world.] **(20) The children of whom you [Zion, Jerusalem, the land of Israel] were bereaved will yet say in your ears, ‘The place is too cramped for me; Make room for me that I may live here.’** **(21) Then you will say in your**

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<sup>196</sup> See the discussions on Romans 9:27-29; 11:25-27 toward the end of the chapter dealing with Isaiah chapter 27 in this paper.

**heart, ‘Who has begotten these for me, Since I have been bereaved of my children And am barren, an exile and a wanderer? And who has reared these? Behold, I was left alone; From where did these come?’ ”** [Compare Isa. 29:23; 60:1-23. This question regarding the source of the large number of the sons of (true) Israel coming to Jerusalem/Israel is of key importance. Isaiah 54:1-3 are an important cross-reference; these verses directly follow Isa. 52:13-53:12, the all-important verses that deal with the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ and the *offspring* (cf. Isa. 53:10) that result from that atoning death. All the *offspring* of the Lord Jesus Christ will ultimately come to Jerusalem/new Jerusalem. First I think of the remnant of the literal sons of Israel who will become Christians (members of true Israel) after Christ returns in the middle of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week who will still be alive on the earth at the end of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week. Added to that number will be the Gentiles who become Christians (members of true Israel) after Christ returns who will still be alive on the earth at the end of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week.<sup>197</sup>

Many Christians (members of true Israel; Jews and Gentiles) will be put to death by Antichrist and the false prophet during the second half of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week (cf. Rev. 13:5-18), but Revelation 20:4 shows that these martyred saints will be resurrected in time to reign with Christ in the millennial kingdom (along with the rest of the members of true Israel). These glorified sons of true Israel will be added to those who will come to Jerusalem/Israel, and along with them there will be the very large number of the sons of true Israel that were glorified at the time of Christ’s mid-week return.

Although the end-time remnant of the nations aren’t part of true Israel, their coming to God at Jerusalem will also contribute to the problem—the problem is quite a blessing—of overcrowding. They are mentioned in the next two verses. Ultimately, as Revelation chapters 21, 22 show, all the elect of the nations will come to God’s new Jerusalem.] **(22) Thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I will lift up My hand to the nations And set up My standard to the peoples; And they will bring your sons in *their* bosom, And your daughters will be carried on *their* shoulders** [cf. Isa. 60:4; 66:12]. [See under Isa. 11:12 in this paper. The wording here regarding (the end-time remnant of) the nations bringing (the end-time remnant of) the sons of (true) Israel to God at Jerusalem (as in some of the cross-references dealing with this topic mentioned under Isa. 11:12) takes some poetic license. The sons of true Israel are pictured being young (they are being carried; they have guardians and nurses); they are *sons* and *daughters* of Zion, the mother.] **(23) Kings will be your guardians, And their princesses your nurses.** [Cf. Isa. 60:4.] **They will bow down to you [Zion/true Israel] with their faces to the earth And lick the dust of your feet** [Compare, for example, Isa. 14:1, 2; 45:14; and 60:3-17. These words emphasize the subordinate status of the end-time remnant of the nations in relation to true Israel. Other verses emphasize the privileged status of the nations after they become the people of God (e.g., Isa. 19:23-25; Rev. 21:3, 4; 21:24-22:3); as the references from Revelation chapters 21, 22 show, they will indeed have a glorious existence. But the last two chapters of the book of Revelation confirm that true Israel will still have a privileged status in relation to the nations in the eternal state— true Israel will reign forever.]; **And you will know that I am the LORD** [God will confirm

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<sup>197</sup> I believe that these sons of true Israel who are still alive on the earth at the end of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week will be glorified in time to reign with the rest of the glorified members of true Israel in the millennial kingdom. See under Rev. 20:4 on pages 63, 64 of my eschatological paper dated November 1998.

to all the members of true Israel of all generations (and to everyone else) that He and He alone is LORD. He will have done all that He said He would do, and much more.]; **Those who hopefully wait for Me will not be put to shame.** [Those who trust God and wait for Him to do what He said He would do in hope and in humble faith will never be put to shame (cf. Psalm 25:3; Isa. 25:9; 26:8; and 45:17).] **(24) Can the prey be taken from the mighty man, Or the captives of a tyrant be rescued?” (25) Surely, thus says the LORD, “Even the captives of the mighty man will be taken away, And the prey of the tyrant will be rescued; For I will contend with the one who contends with you, And I will save your sons. (26) I will feed your oppressors [cf. Isa. 9:4; 14:4; 16:4; 51:12-14; and 54:14] with their own flesh, And they will become drunk with their own blood as with sweet wine; And all flesh will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior [cf. Isa. 43:3] And your Redeemer [cf. Isa. 49:7], the Mighty One of Jacob.”** [One important aspect of God’s saving the end-time remnant of Israel will be His end-time judgment of the nations, which includes the “world” kingdom headed up by Antichrist (cf., e.g., Isa. 14:1, 2; 25:9; 66:18-20; and Zech. 2:1-13). The salvation of true Israel also involves the judgment and removal of Satan and his hosts (cf. Rev. 12:7-10; 20:1-3, 10).]

## ISAIAH 66:9-24

Isaiah 66:1-8 are discussed in chapter 16 of *Mid-Week Rapture*. I consider Isa. 66:7, 8 to be two of the most important eschatological verses in the Bible. In Isa. 66:7 (and Rev. 12:5; Psalm 2:7; and Mic. 5:3)<sup>198</sup> we see the birth into the fullness of eternal life (the glorification) for true Israel that will take place when Christ returns in the middle of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week. All believers from Old Testament days and all true Christians who have been converted before Christ returns will be included in that glorious birth.

The end-time remnant of Israel (and the Gentiles who become Christians after the rapture) won't become Christians in time to participate in the mid-week birth and rapture.<sup>199</sup> Isaiah 66:8 speaks of the birth into the fullness of eternal life (the glorification) that will take place for the end-time remnant of Israel at the end of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week. Isaiah 66:9, which is the verse we are starting with in this present chapter, continues speaking of this same glorious birth.

**“Shall I bring to the point of birth and not give delivery?” says the LORD. “Or shall I who gives delivery shut *the womb*?” says your God.** [As I mentioned in the introductory comments, Isa. 66:8 speaks of the birth into the fullness of eternal life (the glorification) that will take place at the end of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week for the end-time remnant of Israel. They will be glorified in time to reign in the millennial kingdom along with the rest of the glorified members of true Israel. In Isa. 26:18, 19 we have already been told that those members of true Israel who have died will live again, that they will be born (resurrected) into the glory of eternal life. (The last line of Isa. 26:19 says, “And the earth will give birth to the departed spirits.”<sup>200</sup>) And in Isaiah 25:6-8 we have been told that death will be swallowed up (using a different figure of speech than a *birth*). See under those verses in this paper for the details. Also, we have discussed quite a few verses from Isaiah in this paper that speak of the creation itself being transformed/glorified (cf. Isa. 11:6-9; 29:17-24; 32:15-20; and 65:17-25).

Isaiah 66:8, 10-14 (and many other verses) confirm that Jerusalem will be glorified along with true Israel. It seems clear that Jerusalem will be glorified to a greater extent than the rest of the millennial earth (cf. Isa. 60:1-22; Zech. 14:8-10), but it also seems clear that it won't be fully glorified in the millennial kingdom (compared with the full glory of new Jerusalem of the eternal state). For one thing, Jerusalem will apparently also function as a city for the (unglorified) nations throughout the millennial

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<sup>198</sup> These three very important cross-references are discussed in some detail in *Mid-Week Rapture* (in chapters 17, 18, and 21).

<sup>199</sup> Regarding people (Jews and Gentiles) becoming Christians after the rapture, see Rev. 12:17 (discussed on pages 323, 324 of *Mid-Week Rapture*); Rev. 14:6, 7 (discussed on pages 6, 7 of my eschatological paper dated January 1999). On the glorification of the members of true Israel and the time of their glorification, see under Rev. 20:4 on pages 63, 64 of my eschatological paper dated November 1998.

<sup>200</sup> The birth of Isa. 26:19 is not limited to true Israel. Understood in its fullest sense, that birth includes the glorification of all the elect of *the nations* pictured in Revelation chapters 21, 22 (the nations being distinguished from true Israel). The glorification of *the nations* will not take place until after the millennial kingdom and the great-white-throne judgment.

kingdom.<sup>201</sup> Ultimately, in the eternal state, as Revelation chapters 21, 22 show, there will be a new earth, a fully glorified earth, with its new Jerusalem.

Although all the members of true Israel will be glorified by the time the millennial kingdom begins, it seems clear that the nations won't be glorified until after the millennial kingdom. But the nations, along with the millennial earth, will experience some preliminary stage of glory. Apparently the peoples of the nations will continue to bear children during the millennium and the possibility of sin (cf. Zech. 14:16-19; Rev. 20:7-10) and death will still exist for the nations (see under Isa. 65:20-25 in this paper). The nations will still be in a probationary period during the millennial kingdom (cf. Dan. 7:12); they will not have had their final judgment yet. Revelation 20:7-10 show that some of the peoples of the nations that live on the earth during the millennium will not have a place in God's eternal kingdom.] **(10) “Be joyful with Jerusalem and rejoice for her, all you who love her; Be exceedingly glad with her, all you who mourn over her** [Being joyful with Jerusalem and rejoicing for her goes with the exaltation of Jerusalem and true Israel. In some preliminary ways Jerusalem will be exalted when the Lord Jesus Christ comes to the city in the middle of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week, not long after the rapture,<sup>202</sup> but most of the exaltation of Jerusalem will take place after judgment day is over, when it is time for the millennial kingdom to begin. There won't be any more cause to mourn for Jerusalem or for any of the people of true Israel by the time the millennial kingdom begins. Then, after the great-white-throne judgment at the end of the millennial kingdom, it will be time for the full glorification of Jerusalem to prepare the city (new Jerusalem) for the full glory of the eternal state with its new earth, which will involve a new creation (cf., e.g., Rev. 20:11; 21:1).

In Isaiah's generation, and in most generations of Israel, there was plenty to mourn about because of all the sin of the people of Israel with its guilt and penalties. God's will wasn't being done for the most part, and He wasn't being glorified. The same thing has been true for the Christian church, and we have much to mourn about regarding the state of the church in our generation. Compare, for example, Psalm 119:36; Ezek. 9:4; and 2 Cor. 7:9, 10.], **(11) That you may nurse and be satisfied with her comforting breasts, That you may suck and be delighted with her bountiful bosom** [I prefer the translation given in the BDB Hebrew Lexicon (under *ziz*), “from the abundance of her glory,” instead of the last four words of the NASB.].” [These words speak, in an obviously poetic manner, of the blessing provided for the people of true Israel after God has judged the world and saved His people and exalted them and their city in the center of the earth. The end-time remnant of Israel<sup>203</sup> are pictured here being young children that still nurse at the breast. (Compare Isa. 49:22, 23; 60:4.)] **(12) For thus says the LORD, “Behold, I extend peace to her [Jerusalem] like a river, And the glory of the nations** [Isaiah 60:16 (see all of Isaiah chapter 60) emphasizes the point made here, that true Israel will be blessed by the good things the end-time remnant of the nations bring

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<sup>201</sup> Some teach that the glorified city the saints live in as they reign in the millennial kingdom won't be located on the earth. That viewpoint is possible, but I believe it is better to see the saints reigning on the earth. See Rev. 20:9, for example. It isn't easy to picture the glorified sons of true Israel interacting with the non-glorified peoples of the nations during the millennium, but apparently that will take place.

<sup>202</sup> See the section titled “The Lord Jesus Christ Will Claim Jerusalem as His City” on page 70 of *Mid-Week Rapture*.

<sup>203</sup> The saved end-time remnant of (true) Israel are the ones especially in view throughout most of Isaiah chapter 66 (cf., e.g., Isa. 66:14-20).

to God at Jerusalem when they submit to Him after His end-time judgment of the world. First and foremost the humbled remnant of the nations will bring themselves to God and submit to Him, which will mean great blessing, even salvation and eventual glorification, for the nations. The nations will bring their riches of every kind (cf. Isa. 60:5-17; 61:6; and Rev. 21:24, 26<sup>204</sup>.) **like an overflowing stream; And you will be nursed** [literally, “you will nurse”; the NIV has, “you will nurse”], **you will be carried on the hip and fondled on the knees** [“on her knees” NIV]. [The people of (true) Israel, pictured being young children, will nurse and be carried on the hip and fondled on the knees by their mother, Jerusalem (cf. Isa. 66:10, 11).] **(13) As one whom his mother comforts, so I** [Yahweh (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit)] **will comfort you** [true Israel; cf. Isa. 12:1; 40:1, 2<sup>205</sup>; 49:13; and 51:3]; **And you will be comforted in Jerusalem.**” [It must be understood that all the blessings that come to true Israel, including those that come through other peoples, come from God, and He must receive all the glory.] **(14) Then you will see *this* and your heart will be glad, And your bones** [cf. Prov. 3:8; Isa. 58:11] **will flourish like the new grass; And the hand of the LORD will be made known to His servants** [true Israel], **but He will be indignant toward His enemies.** [“His enemies” will all be removed in God’s end-time judgment of the world. This includes His enemies in Israel (cf., e.g., Isa. 65:2-16); Isa. 66:6 speaks of the judgment against His enemies in Israel that will start with the abomination of desolation.] **(15) For behold, the LORD will come in fire And His chariots like the whirlwind, To render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with flames of fire. (16) For the LORD will execute judgment by fire** [On God’s judgment by *fire*, cf., e.g., Isa. 26:11; 29:6; 30:27-33; 33:10-16; 66:24; Matt. 3:10-12; 13:36-50; 25:41; 2 Thess. 1:7; Rev. 14:10; 16:8; 17:16; 18:8; 19:20; 20:9-15; and 21:8.] **And by His sword on all flesh** [cf., e.g., Isa. 27:1; 31:8; 34:5; 49:2; Rev. 1:16; 2:12; and 19:15, 21], **And those slain by the LORD will be many. (17) Those who sanctify and purify themselves to go to the gardens** [cf. Isa. 1:29; 65:3], **Following one in the center, Who eat swine’s flesh** [cf. Lev. 11:7, 8; Isa. 65:4], **detestable things and mice** [cf. Lev. 11:29], **will come to an end altogether,” declares the LORD.** [God will

<sup>204</sup> Revelation 21:24, 26 speak of the elect of the nations bringing their glory and honor into new Jerusalem. Revelation chapters 21, 22 speak of things that won’t take place until the eternal state (after the millennial kingdom and the great-white-throne judgment).

<sup>205</sup> Isaiah 40:1, 2 speak of things that won’t come to pass for Israel until they (the end-time remnant) have repented and been saved by the Lord Jesus Christ.

I’ll briefly comment on Isa. 40:31, the last verse of Isaiah chapter 40, a verse that is often quoted by Christians, “Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up *with* wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.” The believers of Old Testament days were told that they must *wait* for God’s promised salvation. *Waiting for the Lord* includes trusting Him, being faithful to Him, and having a confident expectation.

A partial fulfillment of these prophetic words came to pass when the new covenant was established in the blood of Christ and the promised new-covenant gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out (and you could mention other lesser partial fulfillments, like the return of Israel from the Babylonian captivity), but the primary fulfillment is reserved for the time when true Israel (including all true Christians) will be glorified. Until then (while we’re still living on the earth), we must walk by faith, stay faithful to God, and *wait* for the manifestation of the glory for which we hope. God does, of course, strengthen His people as they look to Him, which enables them to stay faithful and to accomplish His will, and He does send times of special refreshing, but Isa. 40:31, in its context, looks to the promised salvation/glorification at the end of the age. The wait may seem long, but it is extremely short compared to eternity, and wait until you see what God has prepared for those who wait for Him.

remove all who are committed to persist (without repentance) in religious practices that don't center in the worship of the One true God. Those who are left as a remnant of the nations will have repented, or will quickly repent of all such practices (or will be quickly dealt with).] **(18) “For I know their works and their thoughts; the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues.** [Cf. Joel 3:2, 9-17; Mic. 4:11-13; Zeph. 3:8; Zech. 12:2-9; 14:1-4, 12-15; Rev. 16:12-16; and 19:19.<sup>206</sup>]. **And they shall come and see My glory.** [God's “glory” here very much includes His awesome power going forth in His end-time judgment of the world. The book of Revelation shows that God will gather the nations to Armageddon through the devil, Antichrist, and the false prophet in order to judge them (Rev. 16:12-16; 19:17-21; and 14:17-20). The book of Revelation also puts much emphasis on God's judgment of the great harlot Babylon before His judgment of Antichrist and his armies (Rev. 14:8; 16:18, 19; and 17:1-19:3). These two judgments combined constitute a large part of God's end-time judgment of the world. God's glory that is manifested in His end-time judgment of the nations will very much include the fact that He is fighting for, and is saving, His people (true Israel), in accordance with His promised salvation.] **(19) I will set a sign** [The “sign” could be Christ Himself (cf. Isa. 11:10).] **among them and will send survivors from them to the nations** [God will send “survivors” of the armies of the nations that gathered against Jerusalem/Israel back to the nations to tell them of the glory of God. (With our modern communication systems most of this literal returning to the nations apparently won't be necessary.) They will tell of the awesome power of God in destroying His enemies and in saving His people, in accordance with His prophetic word. He has proved that He, and He alone, is God. They will undoubtedly tell of His righteousness, holiness, truth, goodness, etc. From our perspective (now that the new covenant has been established in the Son of God and His atoning death), we can say that their message will center in God's saving and judging work through His Son, the Messiah, the Lamb of God.

A major feature of the message of the survivors that is sent to the nations will undoubtedly be that God, in His mercy, is inviting (the remnant of) the nations worldwide to turn to Him and be saved through His Son, and this too in accordance with His prophetic word given long before (cf., e.g., Isa. 45:20-25). I assume that essentially everyone left of the nations (the remnant) will jump at this offer. On top of everything else, God has left them alive when He could have easily destroyed them in His end-time judgment of the world. They will be thankful. Another factor is that God will have destroyed and removed all the wrong things that men have been living for (in the place of God) in His end-time judgments.<sup>207</sup> Most importantly, those that will be left

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<sup>206</sup> Before God gathers the nations to judge them toward the end of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week (which will work for the good of true Israel and will lead to the salvation of the end-time remnant of the nations), there will be an earlier gathering of the armies of the nations against Israel (which will start about the time of the abomination of desolation) that will reduce Israel to a repentant remnant. We can see that earlier gathering against Israel in Zech. 14:1, 2 (also see Zech. 13:8); Zech. 14:1-15 don't mention that there will be more than one gathering. Some other verses where we can see the earlier gathering against Israel (I'm not saying that the only reason these armies gather is to come against Israel) are Dan. 11:40-45; Joel 2:1-32; Matt. 24:15-22; Mark 13:14-20; and Rev. 9:13-21. All the verses cited in this footnote have been discussed in my previous eschatological writings.

<sup>207</sup> See on Revelation chapter 18 in my paper dated January 1999.

were chosen by God to be left; He knows what He is doing!<sup>208</sup>]: **Tarshish** [cf. Isa. 2:16; 60:9], **Put, Lud** [cf. Ezek. 27:10], **Meshech, Rosh, Tubal** [cf. Gen. 10:2] **and Javan** [i.e. Greece], **to the distant coastlands**<sup>209</sup> [cf. Isa. 11:11; 24:15; 42:4, 10, 12; 49:1; 51:5; and 60:9] **that have neither heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they will declare My glory among the nations. (20) Then they** [the remnant of the nations] **shall bring all your brethren from all the nations as a grain offering** [better, “as an offering” NIV] **to the LORD, on horses, in chariots, in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem** [cf. Isa. 2:2, 3],” **says the LORD, “just as the sons of Israel bring their grain offering in a clean** [The Hebrew noun used here (*tahor*) means *ceremonially clean*; the NIV has, “ceremonially clean [vessels].” This word helps demonstrate that their *offering* is proper and it will be accepted by the Lord.] **vessel to the house of the LORD.** [It’s a common prophetic theme that the humbled, repentant remnant of the nations will bring the scattered remnant of (true) Israel to God at Jerusalem after His end-time judgment of the world (Isa. 11:10-12; 14:2; 49:22; 60:4, 9; and Zeph. 3:8-11).] **(21) I will also take some of them for priests and for Levites,” says the LORD.** [Most commentators agree that this means God will take some of the Gentiles (some of the remnant of the nations) for priests and Levites. I assume that these words, “priests” and “Levites,” like the sacrificial offerings of Isa. 19:21; 56:7; and 60:7, are not to be understood in a literal old-covenant sense. Words that were appropriate for old-covenant worship are being used here (as they often are) to describe worship that supercedes that dispensation.<sup>210</sup> All true Christians will be priests (Rev. 1:6; 5:10; and 20:6; cf. 1 Pet. 2:5, 9); all the members of true Israel will be priests (Isa. 61:6; cf. Ex. 19:6).

For God to take some of the remnant of the nations for *priests* and *Levites* would seem to mean, for one thing, that they would become part of true Israel. An easy way to understand these words is that these particular Gentiles had become part of true Israel (had become Christians) during the second half of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week. One point that I have tried to emphasize in this paper is that the book of Isaiah (like the book of Revelation and other prophetic books of the Bible) makes a clear distinction between God’s ultimate plans for true Israel and His ultimate plans for the elect of the nations. It wouldn’t be impossible, but it seems unlikely, that some of the people of the end-time remnant of the nations would become part of true Israel, whether at the time the millennial kingdom begins, or at a later time.] **(22) For just as the new heavens and the new earth** [Isaiah 65:17 speaks of God’s creating “new heavens and a new earth,” but the words aren’t used there in the same full sense they’re used in Rev. 21:1 (where they’re used of the eternal state that will follow the millennial kingdom and the great-

<sup>208</sup> One thing we can assuredly say about those that will left as a remnant of the nations to enter the millennial kingdom is that they, one way or another, will not have taken the mark of the beast (Rev. 13:14-18; 14:9-11). Based on Rev. 13:8, we can also say that, at least for many of them, their names have been written in the Lamb’s book of life from the foundation of the world (cf. Rev. 17:8), which means they have been chosen by God. There will be room for rebellion by some of those left as a remnant of the nations, but such rebellion will be quickly dealt with (cf. Isa. 65:20; Zech. 14:16-19; and Rev. 20:7-10). The major rebellion at the end of the millennium spoken of in Rev. 20:7-10 could just involve offspring of those left as a remnant of the nations at the beginning of the millennial kingdom.

<sup>209</sup> On the word “coastlands,” see under Isa. 42:4 in this paper, including the footnote there.

<sup>210</sup> In the same way, we can be confident that the nations won’t be limited to the forms of transportation listed in Isa. 66:20. The Old Testament prophecies couldn’t be expected to speak of things and concepts not understood yet, and for which there were no words.

white-throne judgment). Isaiah 65:20-25<sup>211</sup> show that sin and death will not have been totally overthrown yet, as they will have been overthrown by the time we reach the eternal state of Rev. 21:1. The words “the new heavens and the new earth” here in Isa. 66:22 (and in 65:17) apparently include the (partially) renewed earth of the millennial kingdom and the totally renewed earth of the eternal state.<sup>212</sup> We had to wait for the book of Revelation to learn the details. The apostle Peter’s mention of “new heavens and a new earth” in 2 Pet. 3:11-13 also lacks the more complete viewpoint of the book of Revelation.] **Which I make will endure before Me,” declares the LORD, “So your offspring and your name will endure.** [True Israel will endure forever; their city will endure too. The last two chapters of the Bible speak much of true Israel and of new Jerusalem. The elect of the nations (the nations being distinct from true Israel) feature prominently in those chapters too.] **(23) And it shall be from new moon to new moon And from sabbath to sabbath, All mankind will come to bow down before me,” says the LORD.** [Compare Isa. 19:21, 23; Zech. 14:16-18. The “new moon” (cf. Num. 28:9, 10; 1 Chron. 23:31; Isa. 1:13, 14; and Ezek. 46:1, 6) and the “sabbath” (cf. Num. 28:9, 10; Ezek. 46:1; and Col. 2:16) were days of special worship under the old covenant that included sacrificial offerings. The worship of God in the millennial kingdom and then in the eternal state will be quite different than under the old covenant. For one thing, sacrificial offerings aren’t appropriate once the Lamb of God has been sacrificed. And in the eternal state there won’t even be a moon to shine on the new earth (according to Isa. 60:19, 20; Rev. 21:23), much less a new moon to determine when the new month starts. The worship will be appropriate for the new realities—it will be *full* of maximized glory.

For all mankind to come to bow down before God to worship Him at Jerusalem on a weekly basis would seem to require that all mankind live at (or near) Jerusalem. There are other prophetic passages that fit that viewpoint (cf., e.g., Isaiah chapter 60; Revelation chapters 21, 22); there are other prophetic passages that don’t fit that viewpoint (including Isa. 19:23-25; Zech. 14:16-21). For one thing, passages like the last two cited probably fit the millennial kingdom better while Isaiah chapter 60 and Revelation chapters 21, 22 fit the eternal state better. Revelation chapters 21, 22 clearly deal with the eternal state, but it is also true that passages like Revelation chapters 21, 22 are full of symbolic language,<sup>213</sup> which isn’t surprising when you consider that heaven and the fully glorified eternal state exist in a dimension far above the one we live in now. (As born-again Christians we have some contact with that dimension.) We don’t have words or concepts to adequately describe the glory of that dimension. The millennial kingdom, on the other hand, at least so far as the nations are concerned, will have much in common with this present world. Also, I remind the reader that the Old Testament prophets didn’t typically distinguish between the millennial kingdom and the eternal state. Some of their prophecies fit the former category and some fit the latter. The next verse seems to reach, at least to some extent, into the eternal state.] **(24)**

<sup>211</sup> I assume that the death mentioned in those verses (and the bearing of children) will apply only to the people of the nations since I assume that all the members of true Israel will have been glorified by the time the millennial kingdom begins. Isaiah 65:17-25 are discussed in this paper at the end of the chapter dealing with Isaiah chapter 25.

<sup>212</sup> As we discussed under Isa. 25:8 and in the last paragraph under Isa. 2:1, the Old Testament prophets didn’t clearly differentiate between the millennial kingdom and the eternal state.

<sup>213</sup> See the discussion of Revelation chapters 21, 22 in my paper dated November 1998.

**“Then they will go forth and look On the corpses of the men who have transgressed against me. For their worm [cf. Isa. 14:11; Mark 9:48] will not die And their fire will not be quenched [cf. Matt. 3:12]; And they will be an abhorrence to all mankind.”** [Compare Dan. 12:2. In this context (cf. Isa. 66:15-18), I first think of the rebels who God will have removed in His end-time judgment of the world, but there could easily be a greater application for these words by including all those from all other generations who followed the devil in his rebellion against God and never repented. As I mentioned under 66:22, the words “new heavens and new earth” cover both the millennial kingdom and the eternal state. Jesus’ allusion to Isa. 66:24 in Mark 9:43-48 shows that the *fire* of Isa. 66:24 is eternal fire.

Those who are left after God’s end-time judgment of the world (which, when understood in the fullest sense, includes all the elect [true Israel and the elect of the nations] who will enter God’s eternal kingdom, which is pictured in Revelation chapters 21, 22) will get the message in a powerful way that rebellion against God is abhorrent and leads to abhorrent results and that it must be avoided with top priority. It will be obvious that mankind has only two options. Those who *go forth* from worshipping God, as pictured in Isa. 66:24, will be confronted with the only other option: We must worship God (which includes becoming faithful to Him and staying faithful to Him by His grace), or we must pay the eternal penalty. This verse doesn’t mention how long the tormented transgressors will be visible, but I get the impression from these verses (Isa. 66:23, 24) that this will last forever. Anyway, it will be last long enough for everyone to get the message.

It’s clear that there is much more involved here than just seeing literal corpses, but it’s possible that literal corpses will be seen for some period of time. We know from the book of Revelation that God’s final judgment of the nations won’t take place until they are raised (resurrected) to stand before God at the great-white-throne judgment after the millennial kingdom (Rev. 20:5, 6, 11-15; cf. Isa. 24:21, 22).<sup>214</sup> Some other verses that speak of the eternal fire of God’s judgment are Matt. 3:12; 13:40, 42, 50; 18:8; 25:41; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 3:17; Jude 1:7; Rev. 14:10; 19:20; 20:10, 14, 15; and 21:8.

Revelation 14:9 warns that those who worship Antichrist and his image and take his mark “will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.” The saints aren’t mentioned in this verse, but that doesn’t prove that we won’t be able to see what is happening in the eternal lake of fire. I doubt that we will, but if it’s part of God’s plan, it will work for good. God is good, and He doesn’t do things that aren’t good and necessary.

I’ll quote part of what F. Delitzsch said under this verse.<sup>215</sup> “The prophet [Isaiah] by the very mode of description adopted by him, precludes the possibility of our conceiving of the thing here set forth as realized in any material form in this present age. He is speaking of the

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<sup>214</sup> Revelation 20:5 with 20:12, 13 show that the “rest of the dead” at the time the millennial kingdom begins will be raised at the end of the millennial kingdom to stand before God at the great-white-throne judgment. The “rest of the dead” won’t include any members of true Israel; all the members of true Israel who will have died will have been resurrected and glorified to reign in the millennial kingdom.

Antichrist and the false prophet are an exception; they will be cast into the eternal lake of fire before the millennial kingdom begins (Rev. 19:20). They are the only two specifically mentioned in Rev. 19:20 (and Rev. 20:10), but it’s quite possible, that those who follow them and take the mark of the beast will also be cast into the eternal lake of fire before the millennial kingdom begins (cf. Rev. 14:9-11; 19:21).

<sup>215</sup> *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 7 [Eerdmans, 1976 reprint], page 517.

future state, but in figures drawn from the present world. The object of his prediction [prophecy] is no other than the new Jerusalem of the world to come, and the eternal torment of the damned [Delitzsch believes in the millennial kingdom, as my quotation from him in the discussion of Isa. 65:17-25 earlier in this paper demonstrates, but that point doesn't come up in this present quotation.]; but the way in which he pictures it, forces us to translate it out of the figures drawn from this life into the realities of the life to come; as has already been done in the apocryphal books of *Judith* (16:17) and *Wisdom* (7:17), as well as in the New Testament, e.g. Mark 9:43-48, with evident reference to this passage. This is just the distinction between the Old Testament and the New, that the Old Testament brings down the life to come to the level of this life, whilst the New Testament lifts up this life to the level of the life to come [As Christians we already participate in eternal life, but in a preliminary stage.]; that the Old Testament depicts both this life and the life to come as an endless extension of this life, whilst the New Testament depicts it as a continuous line in two halves, the last point in this finite state being the first point of the infinite state beyond; that the Old Testament preserves the continuity of this life and the life to come by transferring the outer side, the form, the appearance of this life to the life to come, the New Testament by making the inner side, the nature, the reality of the life to come, the [powers of the age to come], immanent in this life. .... The new Jerusalem of our prophet has indeed a new heaven above it and a new earth under it, but it is only the old Jerusalem of earth lifted up to its highest glory and happiness; whereas the new Jerusalem of the Apocalypse [the book of Revelation] comes down from heaven, and is therefore of heavenly nature. ...."]