

MINDED . . . OBJECTIVE!!!?

“Also, I reject the idea of a life hereafter on the same grounds. Do you know anybody who has come back with a first-hand report on heaven? If you do, let me know. Until then you’ll pardon me if I don’t buy it.

“I agree with Mark Twain, who wrote about the hereafter, that there is no sex in it ; you can’t eat anything in it; there is absolutely nothing physical in it. You wouldn’t have your brain, you wouldn’t have any sensation, you wouldn’t be able to enjoy anything—unless you were queer for hymn singing and harp playing. So who needs it? SPEAKING FOR MYSELF, I’D RATHER GO TO HELL.”

UNBELIEF CAN’T GET ANY MORE DELIBERATE THAN THAT!

It is a matter of choice! Choose ye this day whom you will serve. Why go ye limp between the two sides, if Baal be God worship him. Jesus depicted life as a choice between two ways—not three (no neutrality).

B. FRIENDS THAT FETTER, CHAPTERS 30-31

1. SHAME

TEXT: 30:1-14

- 1 Woe to the rebellious children, saith Jehovah, that take counsel, but not of me; and that make a league, but not of my Spirit, that they may add sin to sin;
- 2 that set out to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to take refuge in the shadow of Egypt!
- 3 Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, the refuge in the shadow of Egypt your confusion.
- 4 For their princes are at Zoan, and their ambassadors are come to Hanes.
- 5 They shall all be ashamed because of a people that cannot

profit them, that are not a help nor profit, but a shame and also a reproach.

- 6 The burden of the beasts of the South. Through the land of trouble and anguish, from whence come the lioness and the lion, the viper and the fiery flying serpent, they carry their riches upon the shoulders of young asses, and their treasures upon the humps of camels, to a people that shall not profit them.
- 7 For Egypt helpeth in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I called her Rahab that sitteth still.
- 8 Now go, write it before them on a tablet, and inscribe it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever.
- 9 For it is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of Jehovah;
- 10 that say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits,
- 11 get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.
- 12 Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word and trust in oppression and perverseness, and rely thereon;
- 13 therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly in an instant.
- 14 And he shall break it as a potter's vessel is broken, breaking it in pieces without sparing; so that there shall not be found among the pieces thereof a sherd wherewith to take fire from the hearth, or to dip up water out of the cistern.

QUERIES

- a. What was wrong with going down to Egypt for help?
- b. Why would the people not want "right" things prophesied to them?

PARAPHRASE

I hereby threaten you, you rebellious and stubborn children of mine, says the Lord. You make all your plans without once seeking counsel from Me. You conduct all your business affairs and make political alliances without taking My will into account at all. All you are doing is multiplying your sins against Me. Without seeking the counsel of My prophet you have gone down to Egypt to get aid and security. You think Pharaoh is your friend and is able to help you, but he is neither. In fact, in trusting Egypt and the Pharaoh, you will be disappointed, humiliated and disgraced. Even though Pharaoh's princes and ambassadors are making political overtures and promises to you from Zoan and Hanes, you are involving yourself in useless and unprofitable agreements with them which will only bring shame and reproach upon you. This is My omniscient revelation concerning the Beast of the South: You take big risks going through a dangerous and troubled wilderness, populated by wild and fierce animals and poisonous serpents, carrying your nation's riches by caravan loads in tribute to a government that has not the power to help you! Egypt's promises of help are empty promises because, as much as she pledges to help, she is quite unable to do so. I tell you she is "A Big-Mouth that is a Do-nothing." Now, you Isaiah, go write My revelation concerning Egypt for this people in permanent tablet and book form so that future generations may know of Israel's unbelief and that My word is absolutely true. The people of this generation are rebels, liars and they refuse to listen to the proclamation of My word. They say to the prophets, Don't get any more revelations for us; don't preach your truths to us. If you want us to listen to you, give us what we want to hear—pleasant words, illusions, intrigues. Get out of the way of our dealing with Egypt—leave our path clear. We've heard enough about the Holy One of Israel. Leave us alone!

This is what the Holy One of Israel replies to that! Because you hold My word in contempt and put your faith in force

and intrigue and you are relying on this for your safety, you are going to reap the fruits of such perverseness. Calamity will come upon you explosively and suddenly like a damaged wall falls that has a top-heavy bulge from being breached. The Holy One of Israel is going to smash this nation to pieces like a fragile earthenware pot is shattered when it is broken. God's shattering will be very thorough. Nothing usable will be left when he finishes with this nation.

COMMENTS

V. 1-7 FOLLY OF JUDAH: *Hoy* in Hebrew is sometimes translated *woe* but can also mean *alas, ho!*, and generally presages grief and threatening. In this case the idea of threat is prevalent. Jehovah is threatening Judah with grief as a result of her perverse folly. Judah's primary foolishness was in making plans and instituting programs without considering God's advice. God advised His people through His written law and through revelations given through prophets and other messengers. But the people paid only lip-service attention to these. Judah conducted her commercial, social, national and international relations all without knowing or caring what God's will was in any of these areas. She was just like her sister, Israel, a few years before (cf. Hosea 4:1-6; 5:4, 13; 8:1-5; 8:9-10; 10:3, etc.). Israel was like a silly dove, without sense, calling to Egypt and Assyria (Hosea 7:10-11). Now Judah plays the stupid fool calling to Egypt.

The Jews were a specially called society. Their social, political and cultural structure was uniquely structured. They were called to commit their total existence (political, social, cultural international) to the guidance and glorification of Jehovah; When they did not do so, they forfeited their reason for being. Actually, all human governments are ordained by God in order to serve and minister to His divine purposes in the earth (cf. Rom. 13:1-7). When they refuse to know and be guided by God's will in their national and international

relationships they also forfeit their reason for approval by God. So, we have here a revelation through Isaiah of divine principles for all, both citizens and leaders, concerned with human governments. Governments wishing to have God's approval today must conduct their national affairs and international agreements according to peace with liberty, justice, compassion, truth, righteousness for all men for these are principles for which God ordains human government.

The second violation Judah made of her divine destiny was, having refused the guidance of God, turning to Egypt for help against her enemies. Judah was to find her help in Jehovah. Jehovah had given her plenty of evidence not only of His ability to help, but of His eagerness to help. Egypt would only volunteer to help Judah in order to later exploit Judah for Egypt's profit. However, as willing as Egypt might be to help, she was powerless to do so! Egypt was a "paper tiger."

Egypt's greatness was millenniums old. The Great Pyramid (the greatest and most accurate structure the world has ever known) was built about 4750 B.C. (Abram was not even called by God to begin the Hebrew race until 2700 years later). Probably the most magnificent era of Egyptian culture and power was the 18th Dynasty (1587-1328 B.C.) when Moses and the Hebrew people were there as slaves. Having experienced first hand the imperial power and greatness of Egypt for so many years of her own history (Abraham, Joseph, Moses) Judah would think of Egypt as invincible.

But around 1100 B.C. (near the time of Saul and David), under a succession of Ramessides rulers, Egypt began a cultural and political decline. The self-indulgence and ineptitude of its rulers was mainly responsible for the decline. Ethiopians gained control of all Egypt. For several decades (715-663 B.C.) Egypt was dominated by Ethiopian rule. These new rulers followed ancient political custom of agitating border-states (like Palestine) to revolt against their Mesopotamian overlords. Assyria, which controlled Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine and all the territory to the Egyptian

borders had her hands full squelching one revolt after another. In 720 B.C. the Assyrians appointed Akhimiti governor of Ashdod. In 711 Ashdod revolted against Assyria and deposed Akhimiti and made a Greek mercenary its ruler. Sargon, king of Assyria, dispatched an army to besiege Ashdod and overrun the city. Hezekiah was on the throne of Judah—a good man but not the strongest ruler Judah ever had. He was inclined to listen to those who favored the Egyptian philosophy of revolting against Assyria. Isaiah warned Hezekiah and the nation then (Isa. 20:1ff) that following Egyptian policies would be disastrous. Sargon's annals indicate Judah was a party to the revolt of Ashdod. Sargon writes that the Greek ruler of Ashdod tried to persuade the rulers of Judah, Edom and Moab to join his revolt and also invoked the aid of "Pharaoh king of Egypt, a prince who could not save them." The Assyrians were as accurate in their evaluation of Egyptian powerlessness as Isaiah was! The Greek ruler of Ashdod fled to Egypt when Sargon overran the city—but the Egyptians thought it politically expedient to deliver him up to the Assyrians. Judeans were fools to think they could trust the Egyptians to save them from the Assyrians!

Sargon died in 705 B.C. and was succeeded by his son Sennacherib. As usual, the death of one emperor and the coming to the throne of a new one touched off widespread political revolt among tributary nations. Merodach-baladan returned to Babylon from exile and reclaimed rights to the rule of that area. He also began a program of inciting other tribute-paying nations to revolt against Assyria. He sent an embassy to Hezekiah to prod him into joining the revolt. At the same time Egypt was also busy with her usual promises to help Judah throw off the Assyrian yoke. So our present chapter is a warning from the prophet of God that Judah is not to listen either to Merodach-baladan or the Egyptian king Shabaka, but to God.

But the princes of Judah had already made contacts. They had gone to Zoan, in the northeastern part of the Nile delta and to Hanes (which may have been the Heracleopolis Magna,

fifty miles upstream from Cairo), to meet with Egyptian ambassadors and plot against Assyria. But they are simply tightening the Assyrian noose around their own necks as they discover in a few short years (Isaiah, chapters 36-39). They are going to suffer humiliation and embarrassment when Egypt proves impotent to help them!

They will not heed the prophet's warning. They are obsessed with dependence upon Egypt. They send ambassadors, messengers and caravans laden with Judah's treasures (v. 6) through wild, dangerous, beast-infested country to work out alliances with a decadent, pagan, powerless people. Their troubles and treasures will all be for nothing!

Isaiah calls into play both humor and sarcasm. His oracle ("burden") concerns the *behemoth* (great beast) of the South (Egypt). But in verse 7, he calls Egypt "Rahab that sitteth still." *Rahav* in Hebrew means, *big mouth*, or *puffed up—arrogant*. The Hebrew word that is translated "sitteth still" is *shavvath*, or *sabbath* which means, of course, *rest, inactivity*, etc. So the pretended behemoth is really a big mouthed, do-nothing. Egypt is a "paper tiger." Judah will seek her help in vain.

V. 8-14 FURY OF JEHOVAH: In this section the Lord expresses through the prophet His righteous wrath against a nation deliberately refusing to accept His guidance and deliverance. First, the Lord directs the prophet to make a permanent record of His revelation concerning Egypt's helplessness and Judah's folly. Isaiah is to write this revelation on *lukha*, a tablet of stone or wood (probably wood), and then he is to write it in a *sepher*, a ledger, a book, in epistolary form. This emphasizes two things: the seriousness of the message and the need for its permanency. If Judah will not listen now, as Isaiah is giving the message orally, perhaps future generations will read of Jehovah's guidance, Judah's folly and Egypt's failure, in written form, *after the fact of its fulfillment*, and repent of their attitude toward Jehovah. Written testimony of supernatural revelation, tested through centuries of attack and investigation are much more conducive to creating faith

than experiencing the supernatural events as eyewitnesses (e.g., the difficulty of many of the Jews in believing in Jesus while He was alive, but turning to Him many years after the events of His life were recorded in the Gospels).

Second, Jehovah delivers through Isaiah the indictment He has against Judah. Judah is rebellious, deceitful, and unheeding. A grateful son is expected to be obedient to the Father's guidance, but Judah is an ingrate and a stubborn rebel. She not only refuses to hear the word of God, she presumes to instruct God's messengers what to say to her. They blatantly announce their refusal to want to hear "right" things and their desire to hear *khalaq* (smooth, flattering, slippery) things, and *mehathaloth* (lofty, illusory, deluding) things. It is almost incredible that a people who had vowed so emphatically under Moses, Samuel, David and other leaders, to adhere to the law of God, chose to set themselves so emphatically against His law. It is difficult to believe that a majority of the Hebrew people would instruct their prophets to flatter and delude them. Isaiah is not the only prophet to record such a perverse attitude (cf. Micah 2:6-11; Jer. 6:10-19; Ezek. 2:3-7; 3:4-11, etc.). But the prophet of God was not held responsible for their hearing—only for his preaching (cf. Ezek. 2:5). In verse 11 the people are represented as commanding the prophets to give up walking in the way of Jehovah (the ancient paths, cf. Jer. 6:10-19). And the prophets are commanded to cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from their presence. The word translated *cease* is *hasheveethu* and is another form of the word *shavvath* used in verse 7. They want Isaiah to put the Holy One of Israel to rest. They want a do-nothing God. They are especially agitated at the repeated emphasis on the *holiness* of God. It is a constant stabbing at their consciences to hear of the *Holy* One of Israel.

But the Holy One of Israel is going to act. And He is going to act according to His holiness! Because they have held His word in contempt and trusted in *'asheq* (fraud, violence, injustice, oppression) and in perverseness (ability to deceive, manipulate, despoil) He is going to bring them down. They

had gone so far as to *rely* on these machinations. These evil ways became the base and structure of their whole existence! God is going to allow them to reap the fruit of their evil thinking and doing. A society of moral, conscionable beings cannot hold together on a base of such moral perversity. Human social structures, whether small (as a home) or large (as a nation) must be conducted on a modicum of trust, honesty, purity, truth, respect for authority, compassion. If such values are held in contempt and perverted that social structure will disintegrate of itself. It will become a raging jungle where all inhabitants prey on one another. When the rulers and political leaders of a nation despise and pervert these principles it becomes a "breach" in the wall and soon the whole wall is weakened and falls. The "breach" is unnoticed by many, at first, but it gradually does its weakening work until the wall falls suddenly and everyone wonders why, all of a sudden, the wall falls. Jehovah will also exercise direct judgment upon Judah and smash her into fragments like a broken potter's vessel (cf. Jer. 19:1ff). What a picture of the future of Judah!—smashed and scattered into pieces, good for nothing!

QUIZ

1. How did Judah copy her sister, Israel, in conducting her business?
2. How did the Jews forfeit their reason for being a special nation?
3. Why couldn't Egypt help Judah against Assyria?
4. How intense was Judah's appeal to Egypt for help?
5. How is Egypt characterized by God?
6. What are the instructions of the people to Isaiah and other prophets of God about their messages?
7. Upon what base were the people building their society?

2. SALVATION

TEXT: 30:15-33

- 15 For thus said the Lord Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.
- 16 But ye said, No, for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift.
- 17 One thousand shall flee at the threat of one; at the threat of five shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on a hill.
- 18 And therefore will Jehovah wait, that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for Jehovah is a God of justice; blessed are all they that wait for him.
- 19 For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem; thou shalt weep no more; he will surely be gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear, he will answer thee.
- 20 And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be hidden any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers;
- 21 and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it; when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.
- 22 And ye shall defile the overlaying of thy graven images of silver, and the plating of thy molten images of gold: thou shalt cast them away as an unclean thing; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence.
- 23 And he will give the rain for thy seed, wherewith thou shalt sow the ground; and bread of the increase of the ground, and it shall be fat and plenteous: in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures.
- 24 The oxen likewise and the young asses that till the ground shall eat savory provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and the fork.

- 25 And there shall be upon every lofty mountain, and upon every high hill, brooks and streams of waters, in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall.
- 26 Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that Jehovah bindeth up the hurt of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.
- 27 Behold, the name of Jehovah cometh from far, burning with his anger, and in thick rising smoke: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue is as a devouring fire;
- 28 and his breath is as an overflowing stream, that reacheth even unto the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of destruction: and a bridle that causeth to err shall be in the jaws of the peoples.
- 29 Ye shall have a song as in the night when a holy feast is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come unto the mountain of Jehovah, to the Rock of Israel.
- 30 And Jehovah will cause his glorious voice to be heard, and will show the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and the flame of a devouring fire, with a blast, and tempest, and hailstones.
- 31 For through the voice of Jehovah shall the Assyrian be dismayed; with his rod will he smite him.
- 32 And every stroke of the appointed staff, which Jehovah shall lay upon him, shall be with the sound of tabrets and harps; and in battles with the brandishing of his arm will he fight with them.
- 33 For a Topheth is prepared of old; yea, for the king it is made ready; he hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of Jehovah, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.

QUERIES

- a. How will they be saved by rest? v. 15

- b. When would they “cast away” their molten images of gold?
- c. What does Assyria (v. 31) have to do with this context?

PARAPHRASE

This is what the Holy One of Israel, the One from whom you wish to hear no more, says: In turning again unto Me in humility you will find salvation; in calm trust in Me you will find power—but you refuse to do so. You actually said, No, we will find our safety in fleeing to Egypt upon fast horses. Our salvation will be in our swiftness. Yes, if it is swiftness you wish to see, you shall see it, but it will be the swiftness of your enemies coming upon you. If it is fleeing you wish to see, you shall see that also. Indeed one thousand of you shall flee at the threat of just a very few of your enemies. There will be so few of you left after the fleeing before your enemies, those few will be like the solitary mast pole of a ship—standing all by itself. So, because of your attitude, the Lord will wait to show mercy to you until He has first completed His work of judgment. The Lord is a Lord of justice, and therefore He must uphold His exalted name in judgment before He can be gracious. All who wait with endurance upon the Lord to fulfill His purposes will find blessedness. Indeed, you who wait upon the Lord will dwell in Zion, even in the Holy City, where My presence is. There shall be an end to your weeping. The Lord will be gracious to you when He hears your cry to Him. As soon as He hears your cry of repentance and turning to Him, He will answer you. Although the Lord is going to give you a diet of adversity and affliction for awhile, the time will soon come when your God-sent teachers will no longer have to hide from threats to their lives. You will once again be able to see and hear true teachers from God calling you back to the true way where God wants you to walk. They will keep you from erring in walking on the wrong way. And in that day you will despise your expensive and precious idols as repulsive things and cast them away, saying, Good riddance, away with you! Then God

will make you prosperous. He will bless you with rain at planting time and make what you plant produce abundantly and bring forth broad pastures for your flocks. Your livestock will eat the best kind of feed. In that day, when God defeats your enemies, He will give you refreshment like cool, clear streams of water flowing down every mountain and hill. In that day, when the Lord treats the illness of His people and heals them, the glory of God and the abundance of His blessings upon His people will be so magnificent it will be like a sevenfold intensification of the shining of the sun and moon. Behold, the Lord, who before removed Himself because of the sins of His people, will come in the day of their repentance, aflame with wrath, lips filled with fury, consuming His enemies by His word. His wrath will pour out upon them and sweep them away like a flood which drowns; they will be destroyed like chaff from a sieve; they will be led by their errors to their doom as a horse is led by its bridle. But the Lord's people will have a festive song to sing like the songs of their holy feast days. The same kind of gladness of heart exhibited when worshippers go up to the mountain of the Lord playing on their flutes and other instruments will be the gladness that the Lord's people will have at that time. The Covenant-God will cause the majesty of His voice to be heard in the deliverance of His people. He will exhibit the power of His arm to save His people and destroy His enemies. His destruction will be terrible and complete. By the power of the word of God His enemies, the Assyrians, will cease to exist. Every stroke with which the Lord smites His mighty rod of punishment, the Lord's people will rejoice at their deliverance with music and song. In wars of heavenly power God will shake down His enemies to destruction. For ages and ages a cremating of His enemies has been prepared by the Lord. Jehovah has prepared a massive funeral pyre for the ruler of His enemies. Like brimstone which set on fire Sodom and Gomorrah, the breath of the Lord will consume His enemies.

COMMENTS

V. 15-22 REPENTANCE: It is interesting to note how often Isaiah uses the phrase, "the Holy One of Israel," to henceforth refer to God. It is undoubtedly deliberate on the prophet's part to rebuke and bring to repentance those who earlier (30:10-11) insisted they did not want to hear any more of "the Holy One of Israel." The most used Hebrew word for repentance in *nahkam* but in verse 15 the word describing the action involved in repentance, *beshoovah* or, "in turning," is used. The word *nahkath* which means "bring down, or humble" is also used but translated "rest." Isaiah is really saying that the salvation of this proud and rebelling people is to be found in returning to the Lord in humility and penitence. It is going to take drastic action on their part. Isaiah uses the words *sheket*, quietness, and *batahk*, trust, confidence, to inform his people where strength is to be found. The clamness which comes from trust in the Lord is the strength they will need to save their nation from its present corruption and inevitable disintegration and defeat. Judah's rulers are presently in a state of turmoil, indecision, conflict and strife about going to Egypt or not going to Egypt for help against Assyria. Proud and haughty, self-sufficient and carnal-minded, they refuse to trust in the Lord's way because His way demands trial, testing and discipline (cf. Heb. 3:7-19). Christian discipleship is difficult. Jesus always taught those who would follow Him to "count the cost." Few enter because the "way is strait." The majority of people in Isaiah's day deliberately chose to reject God—they "would not" turn and humble themselves (cf. Jer. 6:16-19; Ezek. 2:1-7; 3:6-11).

Quite the contrary to humbling themselves and turning to the Lord, the majority of people are confident in their preparations to flee from the Assyrians on swift horses. People then put their trust in horses (cf. Gen 50:9; Ex. 14:6ff; 15:1; II Chron. 12:3; Jer. 46:4; II Kings 18:24; Deut. 17:16) like people today put their trust in military weapons. Isaiah predicts they will see some swift horses, but they will be the swift horses of the

Assyrians who pursue them. Isaiah's people will also do some fleeing! Their enemies will be so terrible and awesome it will only take a few of them to put hundreds of Jews to rout. There will be so few people left when the Assyrians come, what remains will be so alone they will look like a lonely signal fire in the night—like a solitary flag pole on a hill. This probably refers to the days of Hezekiah when the Assyrians had overrun and devastated all of Palestine except the city of Jerusalem and they had laid siege to that!

Isaiah continues to tell his audience what their relationship to the Holy One of Israel ought to be—repentance. Jehovah is going to “wait” awhile before He has mercy upon His people. Jehovah's “waiting” period will involve an exhibition of His justice in judging the enemies of His people, the bread of adversity and water of affliction for His people, the crying of His people unto Him, their paying heed to their teachers and casting away of their idols. This “waiting” period of Jehovah is His program to work repentance in His people. His people must be prepared to receive His mercy. In their rebellious, ungodly attitude they do not even desire His mercy. They must see His judgment upon themselves and their enemies, cry to Him, listen to His teachers and purge themselves of false gods. Then they are ready to want and appreciate His mercy. Verse 21 seems to indicate that the attitude of the people of Isaiah's day toward their teachers was one of malice and hate. The prophets often were obliged to hide lest the people kill them for declaring the word of God. There must be a complete change of attitude toward who God is and what He says through His teachers, before they are ready for God's great blessings.

This section probably refers initially to the captivities of Israel by the Assyrians and Judah by the Babylonians and the restoration under Ezra and Zerubbabel. It is true the Jews learned their lesson about idolatry in the captivity. They never again worshipped images. However, in Jesus' day the Pharisees had made an idol of their traditions. It is our opinion that the ultimate fulfillment of this passage and the verses that follow

is found in the Messiah and His kingdom, the church.

V. 23-26 RESTORATION: These verses are figurative hyperbole to describe the great way in which God will prosper His people upon their repentance and turning back to Him. It does not seem to be intended to be understood literally. There are things which, so far as history knows, have never happened literally—and should they happen literally they would bring an end to life on our planet, i.e., the moon becoming as the light of the sun and the sun's light increasing sevenfold! It is even doubtful that animals ever ate as well as they are described to eat in verse 24. It is also a matter of record that Palestine has never known literally a time when there were brooks and streams upon every lofty mountain and every high hill! It is apparent that Isaiah is talking in "times coloring" of the great spiritual blessings that are to come as a result of the repentance of God's covenant people when God "binds up the hurt of his people, and heals up the stroke of their wound." It is the binding up and healing that is to come through the Messiah (cf. Isa. 53:4-6). It is through the Messiah God's people are to prosper (cf. Isa. 53:10-12).

V. 27-33 REJOICING: After repentance and restoration comes rejoicing. The Lord's people are portrayed as rejoicing when they see the all-powerful deliverance given to them by Him. He is coming from His place, burning with His anger and He will destroy His enemies with the word of His mouth. If God can bring the universe into existence by His word, He can destroy His enemies by the word of His mouth. His defeat of His enemies is inevitable and all consuming. Their defeat will be complete. Jehovah is going to bring this judgment upon the *goyim* (Gentiles, nations). The nations are brought to Him to be judged as beasts compelled by a halter or bridle are led to sacrifice. God will bring His enemies to judgment even against their will to be brought. When this great victory of God occurs it will result in a great deliverance for His people and this will cause His people to sing and rejoice at their redemption. God's people do not rejoice in a malicious attitude at the destruction of others—they are praising God for His

glory and faithfulness. Their deliverance will be like a great feast!

Verse 30 indicates that the main purpose of judgment and deliverance is to cause God's voice to be heard and His power to be exhibited. The initial focus of this judgment and deliverance will be upon Assyria. God will defeat the Assyrians in a stupendous, miraculous way when they surround Jerusalem in the day of Hezekiah (cf. Isa. 36-39). But it seems to refer to a much greater and more complete victory of the Lord over "the nations" and Assyria is its beginning.

The word *battles* in verse 32 is *tenoophah* which means more precisely, *shaking*. God is going to shake all the nations. All kingdoms of men oppose God's kingdom. He is going to shake them all down and establish a kingdom that cannot be shaken (cf. Heb. 12:25-29). God is going to thoroughly destroy His enemies. He is going to bury them. Topheth was located in the valley of Hinnom south of Jerusalem and was the place where unbelieving Israelites offered up their sons and daughters to Moloch. Here, too, the refuse of the city was deposited and burned; the fires burned continually. Thus the place came to take on the name Gehenna, i.e., the valley of Hinnom, and was a symbol of the place of eternal destruction.

The point of all this is found in the key words we have used in each section: Repentance, Restoration, Rejoicing. The Hebrew people had decided to find deliverance from their enemies (Assyria) in human governments and earthly programs (Egypt). Isaiah declares that the true people of God find their deliverance in turning to Him, because God is going to completely destroy all the nations, beginning with Assyria. Daniel symbolizes this so clearly in the vision of the great image (Dan. 2) and the vision of the four beasts (Dan. 7). The ultimate fulfillment of all this is accomplished in that great victory of God at Calvary, the Empty Tomb and Pentecost when God defeated man's greatest enemy, Satan, and established His kingdom on earth, the church.

QUIZ

1. Why does Isaiah begin by mentioning the Holy One of Israel?
2. Name the four things associated with their salvation?
3. How had the people decided to save themselves?
4. Why was Jehovah determined to wait?
5. Why are verses 23-26 probably not literal?
6. What is the point of all this section?

SPECIAL STUDY

OLD TESTAMENT NAMES FOR GOD

by Robert D. Stacy

INTRODUCTION

Hardly has there been a time in which mankind did not seek after a god of some kind. As far back as the eye of history looks, it sees man worshipping. He may be worshipping the heavenly bodies. He may be worshipping the rushing sea or mighty mountain. He may be worshipping another man or even himself. But man is inherently a being who seeks something to worship.

As the eye of history focuses on the small nation of Israel, however, it sees a type of worship which is quite unique. The One God, whom Israel claims to worship, is invisible. He is the Creator and Sustainer of life, the Ruler of the universe. And He cannot be represented by wood or stone images. Before Him there is no other god.

The God of Israel was essentially (1) personal, (2) spiritual (3) sole and supreme, (4) of an inapproachably lofty ethical character. . . . Personality . . . is a distinctive feature of the God of the Old Testament throughout.¹

¹ W. T. Davison, "God," *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings (London: T. & T. Clark, 1914), VI, 254.