

BEHOLD MY SERVANT
A MESSIANIC STUDY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT BOOK OF ISAIAH
CHAPTERS 7 to 12

C. The Prophecies of Immanuel: Chapters 7-12

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Following the commissioning of the prophet by the Lord, the section 7:1 to 12:6 presents further revelation regarding the "holy seed" (singular). Details are given regarding His birth, His titles, His redemption of the remnant, His personal attributes, and His kingdom. The Lord will not relent in pouring out His righteous judgment on His rebellious and sinful people. Yet He also in the midst of wrath, gives mercy and the hope of future redemption through a Messianic figure whom various titles are given: Immanuel, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace and to whom descriptive words are ascribed: "shoot from the stem of Jesse", "root of Jesse" and "a branch".

The overarching theme of this section and arguably to the entire prophecy of Isaiah is: Who do you trust, God or yourself? The early chapters of Isaiah provide ample proof of the folly and deadly consequences of the Jewish people's self-trust, self-indulgence and the selfish worship of idols. In response God sends a prophet to proclaim the Lord's message of judgment and mercy. God also is patient and offers the King of Judah in particular an opportunity to trust Him during a time of warfare and invasion by Aram and Israel. To whom will the King of Judah look to for help and protection? Will the King look to an evil and regionally powerful nation or to the Eternal, Holy and all-powerful God? The response is predictable and the results are catastrophic.

Historical Background

The historical background to Isaiah chapters 7-12 is recorded in 2 Kings 16: 1 -20 and 2 Chronicles 27:9 -28:27. King Ahaz of Judah, grandson of King Uzziah, was just twenty years of age when he became King of Judah. His reign lasted about 21 years (including co-reigning with his father Jotham) and was one of evilness and rebellion against the Lord. Ahaz was so vile that he made molten images for the Baals, he burned incense in the valley of Ben-hinnom and sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills and under every green tree.

His most rebellious act against God he committed was in burning his own sons in fire according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had driven out before the sons of Israel. (2 Chronicles 28:1-4).

Because of the sins of Ahaz, the Lord brought swift judgment against the nation of Judah. 120,000 people of Judah were slain in one day by the armies of king Pekah of Israel. The armies of the northern kingdom of Israel under command of king Pekah also carried off 200,000 captives from Judah and brought them to Samaria. However, these captives whom the northern kingdom wished to enslave, were very quickly escorted back to Jericho in Judah because of the intervention of the Lord through His prophet Obed. (2 Chronicles 28: 5-15).

Following a further invasion by the Edomites and the Philistines who also took captives from Judah, King Ahaz sought help from the king of Assyria. Ahaz and offered to pay tribute to Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria in payment for seeking Assyria's aid to fight against Judah's enemies. This act of rebellion by Ahaz resulted in further affliction against Judah due to Assyria's abuse of Judah. In spite of all the disaster facing Judah by its enemies, king Ahaz became more rebellious and unfaithful to the Lord by offering sacrifices and burning incense to pagan gods and using temple implements, devoted to the worship of the Lord, to make altars for worshipping these pagan gods. There is no record that Ahaz ever repented of his sins against God. (2 Chronicles 28: 16-27). For further historical details regarding the reign of Ahaz, see article on "Ahaz" by R. D. Culver, in the *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 1975, Vol. 1.

It is also important to the understanding of chapters 7-12 to know the historical timeline of the events Isaiah describes from the viewpoint of his location in Jerusalem. Much was happening in the Fertile Crescent area of the Ancient Near East region. The smaller nations were in turmoil and fear as both Egypt and Assyria were asserting their imperialistic plans for expanding their empires. A smaller nation, Babylon was just emerging which was to have an over-powering presence several years in the future from the days of Isaiah. The duration of the reigns of the kings of the various nations and some of the most important historical dates and events for the Book of Isaiah are indicated in the following list:

Note: all dates are approximate only.

Approximate time of Isaiah's prophetic ministry: 740 – 681 B.C.

Kings of Judah and Israel:

Death of King Uzziah, king of Judah: 740 B.C.

Rule of Jotham, king of Judah: 750 -731 B.C. Jotham co-ruled with Uzziah from 750 – 739 B.C.

Rule of Ahaz, king of Judah: 735-715 B.C. Ahaz co-ruled with Jotham from 735-731 B.C.

Rule of Pekah, king of Israel: 752-732 B.C.

Rule of Hoshea, king of Israel: 732-722 B.C

Rule of Hezekiah, king of Judah: 729-686 B.C. Hezekiah co-ruled with Ahaz from 729-715 B.C.

Rule of Manasseh: king of Judah: 695-642 B.C. Manasseh co-ruled with Hezekiah from 695-686 B.C.

The Assyrian kings:

Rule of Tiglath-Pileser III king of Assyria (also known as “Pul”): 745-727 B.C.

Rule of Shalmaneser V king of Assyria: 726-722 B.C.

Rule of Sargon II king of Assyria: 721-705 B.C.

Rule of Sennacherib, king of Assyria: 705 – 681 B.C.

The Babylonian kings:

Rule of Merodach-Baladan king of city of Babylon: 721-703 B.C.

Babylon under Assyrian control: 701-626 B.C.

Rule of Nabopolassar, king of renewed Babylon 626-605 B.C.

Rule of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon: 605 – 562 B.C.

Major Events:

Isaiah’s vision of the Lord in the temple: 740 B.C.

Isaiah’s meeting with king Ahaz: 735 B.C.

Invasion of Judah by Aram and Israel: 734-732 B.C.

Assyria conquered Damascus: 732 B.C.

First invasion of Israel by Assyria: 732 B.C.

Destruction of Israel by Assyria: 722-21 B.C.

Complete obliteration of Israel’s people (Isaiah 7:9): 669 B.C.

Sickness and healing of Hezekiah: 703-702 B.C.

Hezekiah receives ambassadors from Babylon: 703-702 B.C.

Conquest of Judah by Assyria: 701 B.C.

Threatened siege of Jerusalem by Assyria and destruction of the Assyrian army: 701 B.C.

Prophesized destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon:

First conquest and exile of Daniel and his friends to Babylon: 605 B.C.

Second conquest and exile of 10,000 captives including Ezekiel to Babylon: 597 B.C.

Third conquest and complete destruction of the city, the temple and the walls: 586 B.C.

1. The Threat to the Nation: 7:1-9

Before the events described in 2 Chronicles chapter 28, Isaiah records some background details about the plans to invade Judah by Aram and Israel. The armies of the Arameans had advanced against Judah and were camped just north of Judah in Israel (Ephraim). It was just prior to the invasion of Judah by Aram and Israel that Isaiah was instructed by the Lord to take his son Shear-jashub (“a remnant will return”), and meet king Ahaz and bring the king a message from the Lord. The message was for Ahaz to be calm and have no fear and not to be fainthearted because of the impending invasion by the kings of Aram and Israel. These two kings planned to invade Judah, breach its walls (likely the walls of Jerusalem) and set up a puppet king who would be in their service. The Lord stated regarding the plans of the kings of Aram and Israel: *“It will not stand and it will not happen.”* (Isaiah 7:7). The Lord also gave words to Isaiah of a stunning prophecy: *“Within sixty-five years, Ephraim will be shattered in pieces, so that it will not be a people”*. Isaiah 7:8. The Lord through the prophet then stated: *“if you will not faithfully stand firm, then you will not stand at all”*. Isaiah 7:9.

The words of the Lord to remain calm and be without fear in the midst of impending doom were hard for Ahaz to bear as the armies of his enemies whom he could see appeared more menacing than the armies of the Lord whom he could not see. Ahaz, if he considered the records in Scripture of the kings of Judah and Israel, would have remembered the story of Elisha's servant, who was in a similar situation, when an army from Aram had encircled the city. The servant was in distress and said to Elisha, "*Oh no, my master! What can we do now?*" Elisha replied, "*Do not be afraid, for there are more with us than there are with them.*" Elisha prayed that his servant's eyes would be opened and God responded by allowing the servant to see that "*the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.*" 2 Kings 6:11-17. The remarkable issue in Isaiah 7 is that God was willing to provide help, not to an obedient and believing prophet, but to a faithless, evil and rebellious king who never ceased to perform abominable acts in the very face of God.

It is also remarkable that Isaiah was told by the Lord to take his son, Shear-jashub with him when he went to meet with king Ahaz. In the midst of impending doom, Isaiah was to bring with him a living message of hope. Isaiah's son, Shear-jashub whose name means "*a remnant will return*", was a sign to Ahaz that God would bring a future restoration to the nation. Isaiah recognized that he and his sons were "*signs and harbingers in Israel from the LORD of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion*". Isaiah 8:18. It is very unlikely that Ahaz took any notice yet God gave him hope both in the prophet's message and in the presence of Isaiah's son. It could be concluded that due to the grace given to him, Ahaz was without excuse before the Lord.

7:1 *In the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, King Rezin of Aram, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to attack Jerusalem, but could not prevail against it.*

Vs. 1 of the seventh chapter of Isaiah contains much historical information that is an important background to the message that the prophet delivered to king Ahaz. Ahaz had an impressive family lineage. His grandfather Uzziah and father Jotham were God-followers and the land and its people prospered under their leadership. Ahaz's son, Hezekiah was also sought the Lord and the Lord brought deliverance to the city of Jerusalem in response to the prayers of Hezekiah. But Ahaz would have nothing to do with following or worshipping the Holy One of Israel. During the first year of Ahaz's reign (735 B.C.), Rezin, king of Aram and Pekah, king of Israel incited war against Judah and Jerusalem. 2 Chronicles 28:5-15 describes this war (see brief details above). The nation of Judah and its cities were devastated by this war yet the capital city of Jerusalem was not conquered. 2 Chronicles 28:5 and 2 Kings 15:37 state that it was God who delivered Ahaz into the hands of the king of Aram and king of Israel due to the sins Ahaz had committed as detailed in 2 Kings 16:1-4 and 2 Chronicles 28:1-4. See also 2 Kings 16:1-20 for a brief account of the life and times of King Ahaz.

7:2 *It was reported to the house of David, "Syria has allied itself with Ephraim." His heart and the heart of his people were shaken, as the trees of the forest tremble in the wind.*

New of the coalition between Aram and Israel had brought terror into the hearts of the king Ahaz and his people in Jerusalem. Due to the evilness of Ahaz, the Lord had brought an end to the influence and strength of the nation of Judah. Its sphere of influence and control was shrinking and its armies were no longer blessed by the Lord. They were in great fear of the nations around them. They knew they were vulnerable to being conquered and Ahaz had two options for help. He could seek the assistance of men, in this case the powerful king of Assyria or seek the divine aid of the true King of the Jewish people who Isaiah had seen in the temple, the high and exalted Lord. The heart of king Ahaz, to whom he would trust, would be revealed very shortly.

The mention in vs. 2 of the “house of David” is due to the threat of the removal of the (dynasty) the line of David. God moves to assure the current member of this line, Ahaz that the threat will not result in the total collapse of the house of David for God will keep His covenant with David (see notes on vs. 3). Isaiah will also refer to the “*house of David*” in vs. 13 in the same context of preserving the lineage.

7:3 *Then the LORD said to Isaiah, "Go out now to meet Ahaz, you and your son Shear-jashub [a remnant will return], at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, on the road to the Laundry Washing Field.*

At this precise time, when Ahaz was in despair for his life and for the lives of the people of Jerusalem, God sent Isaiah to meet the king. God told the prophet to bring along with him his young son, Shear-jashub. God never does things haphazardly or on a whim. The presence of Isaiah's son was intended to bring Ahaz a crucial message from God. The meaning of the name Shear-jashub was “*a remnant will return*”. The presence of Isaiah's son and the meaning of his name, Shear-jashub, was a three-fold object lesson to king Ahaz. **First**, God was not sugar-coating the realities of the sins of Ahaz. For the king of Judah must bear the responsibility for the ravages of war upon his nation and the great number of his people who had been and who were going to be killed. God was judging Ahaz and the message “*a remnant shall return*” was a stunning prophecy that exile for his people was decreed by God. The land was to be conquered and most of its people were to be killed or taken into captivity. Ahaz would live to witness this happen to the northern kingdom of Israel within a few-years. Yet this message of judgment was for him and for his nation of Judah. **Second**, God was sending a message of hope to the king who was born into the royal line of David. It was to David that God had made covenant promises that David's house (lineage) and kingdom would endure before the Lord forever. (See 2 Samuel 7:8-17 and 1 Chronicles 17:7-14). Refer also to the Master's Seminary Journal, Volume 10, Number 2, Fall, 1999, devoted to the Biblical Covenants, for an excellent study of the promises of God through His covenant with the people of Israel. Ahaz was confronted with a reminder of God's covenant promise in the person of a small boy. Another young son would soon be announced to him that would change history forever. **Third**, the presence of Shear-jashub would also have significance in understanding “the boy” in vs. 16. See notes on that verse below.

The location of the meeting place between Isaiah and Ahaz was also not inconsequential. Ahaz had likely gone out to inspect the water supply that led into the city. David L. Cooper explains:

“Thereupon the Lord sent Isaiah, together with his little son Shear-jashub, to Ahaz who was inspecting the water system of Jerusalem in preparation for the threatened siege. Isaiah met him at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, which was in the highway of the fuller's field. In other words, he was in the Kidron Valley (east of Mount Moriah, the Temple area) near Gihon. This was the only running water around Jerusalem.” (D. L. Cooper, *Commentary on Isaiah*, Biblical Research Monthly-December 1943).

This location was also to play an important part in later years when the Assyrian spokesman, Rabshakeh, stood on this spot (Isaiah 36:2) to taunt King Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, and the people of Jerusalem with threats of destruction if Jerusalem did not surrender to the king of Assyria and his army. Rabshakeh challenged Hezekiah's trust in God; a challenge he and the Assyrian army would soon discover was to bring them doom.

7:4 *Tell him, 'Be careful, be quiet, and don't be afraid. Do not be timid, because of these two stubs of smoldering sticks, because of the fierce anger of Rezin, Aram, and the son of Remaliah.*

God's message to Ahaz through the prophet was reassuring to someone who placed their faith and trust in God. Ahaz was not that someone! The first part of Isaiah's message was for Ahaz to not fear and be quiet within himself so as not to panic because of the actions of the kings of Syria and Israel. Isaiah was putting into practice the commission God had given him (Isaiah 6:8-13) to proclaim the word of the Lord to a people who would be insensitive to the message. Isaiah's commission was primarily one of announcing judgment to those who were rebellious to God. Isaiah's words to Ahaz would result in sealing the fate of the Judean king for although He had an opportunity to respond positively to God, his refusal (vs. 12) brought judgment upon him. He could blame no one except himself for the great calamity to come upon the people of Judah during his lifetime and upon Jerusalem many years later.

In God's opinion, the threat of the two kings, Rezin and Pekah (son of Remaliah) were but the stub ends of a smoldering (dying) piece of wood in a fire pit. They were not to be feared nor should Ahaz worry himself about them. God's call for the king to adopt a calm attitude about the threat of siege for God was in control and as Ahaz was about to hear, God would soon remove forever any more threats from these two kings.

7:5-6 *Aram, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have planned evil against you, saying,*
⁶ *"Let us go up against Judah, terrorize it, and rip it apart and divide it up for ourselves. Let us set up a king, the son of Tabeel, over it."*

Isaiah, in verses 5-6, explains why Ahaz was in dread over the threats of Rezin, the king of Aram and Pekah, the king of Israel. These two kings had plotted together to breach the walls of Jerusalem and set up a puppet king (son of Tabeel) who would join them in their resistance to the imperialistic designs of the king of Assyria. This was no idle threat. As the historical background, stated above, revealed, these two kings had the means and the motivation to destroy Jerusalem as they had devastated Judah. Not only did Ahaz remain full of fear but he had likely already considered (but had not yet taken any action) to seek the aid of Assyria against these two menacing kings.

7:7-9 *This is what the sovereign LORD says:*

*"It will not stand,
and it will not happen,
8 for the head of Aram is Damascus,
and the head of Damascus is Rezin.
Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be shattered in pieces,
so that it will not be a people.
9 The head of Ephraim is Samaria,
and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son.
If you will not faithfully stand firm,
then you will not stand at all."*

Isaiah emphatically declares the intention of God in vs. 7: *"It will not stand and it will not happen."* God was demonstrating that He was the One in sovereign control of world affairs and Ahaz was not to worry about other kings who had but limited power and resources in comparison to almighty God. But God had used these two nations as His agent of judgment upon the evil acts of King Ahaz. See 2 Kings 16:1-4 and 2 Chronicles 28:1-4. The judgment of God upon King Ahaz was most severe as the account in 2 Chronicles 28:5-15 demonstrates.

The Lord, through the prophet, next reveals some startling news for Ahaz to consider. God reminds Ahaz that these two kings, Rezin and Pekah are just minor players in the greater scheme of things but the stunning announcement is that the northern kingdom, Israel (called Ephraim) will not even exist as a people in 65 years. *"Ephraim will be shattered in pieces, so that it will not be a people."* (vs. 8).

Why would God allow the complete destruction of Israel? In 9:8 to 10:4, Isaiah proclaims God's judgment on the northern kingdom. Also, almost the entire prophecy of Hosea is about God's judgment on Israel. In 13:15-16, Hosea declares Israel's (Samaria) final demise for: *"Samaria will bear her guilt, for she rebelled against her God."* (Hosea 13:16). However even in the midst of calamity and destruction God offers hope as Hosea reveals in chapter 14 of his prophecy and the prophet's final recorded words (14:9) have an application for all peoples for all time:

Who is wise, that he may understand these things?

Prudent, that he may know them?

*For the ways of the LORD are right,
and the just will walk in them,
but rebels will stumble in them.*

Isaiah completes this first part of his discussion with Ahaz with the warning: *“If you will not faithfully stand firm, then you will not stand at all.”* Ahaz was issued an ultimatum by God to trust solely in Him in faith. To put his trust in anyone or anything else would prove disastrous for him and his people. Isaiah had earlier warned the people of Judah (including the king’s house) that destruction would come upon them because they had *“despised the word of the Holy One of Israel,”* 5:24. In the next chapter Isaiah would again warn them of their impending doom, 8:6-8. Later another warning would be given as recorded in 30:12-17. Ahaz certainly heard the warning from Isaiah but with dull ears. He listened but did not perceive nor acknowledge the gravity of these words.

Teaching Outline for Isaiah 7:1-9

7:1-2 The Problem Described

7:3 The Prophet Dispatched

7:4-9 The Prophecy Delivered

2. The Sign of Immanuel: 7:10-16

These verses contain some of the most controversial issues of interpretation in all of Scripture. The crux of the issue is the understanding of the sign and the word virgin in vs. 14 and whether two sons are indicated in verses 14-16. Discussions involving these issues will be given within the notes on these verses. The lead up and reason for the declaration by Isaiah that the Lord will give the house of David a sign is explained in the notes for verses 10-13. These verses (10-17 and specifically vs. 14) are of critical importance to the doctrine of Christology and specifically the virgin birth of the Messiah. A careful study of these verses must be undertaken by the student of Scripture so as to understand God’s intended purpose of His revelation of the announcement of the virgin who would bear a son. More information about this “Son” is recorded by Isaiah in the chapters immediately following, specifically, 8:8; 9:1-7; and 11:1-10. Isaiah will record much more information about this Son as his prophecy unfolds. The apex of this revelation is stated by Isaiah in 52:13-53:12 and 63:1-6 but it does not diminish in any way the importance of the other prophecies regarding the Messiah interspaced throughout the book of Isaiah.

7:10-11 *Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying,*

¹¹ “Request a sign from the LORD your God; ask it either in the depths of Sheol, or in the height of heaven.”

“Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz.” (vs. 10). The Lord would have spoken to Ahaz through the prophet Isaiah. It is not recorded if this was immediately following Isaiah’s warning as recorded in vs. 9 but it is likely as no other meeting between Isaiah, accompanied with his son and king Ahaz is stated in Scripture. The first part of God’s message though the prophet is directed to Ahaz: “Request a sign from the LORD your God; ask it either in the depths of Sheol or in the heights of heaven.” (vs. 11). There are important issues to be discussed in this request. *First*, the Lord had just revealed to Ahaz that the two kings he had feared would not conquer Jerusalem and the dynasty of the line of David would be preserved. Also, God had given him the most stunning news that the northern kingdom of Israel would cease to be a people in 65 years. Prior to these announcements, God had told Ahaz to be calm, and have no fear nor be fainthearted because of the threat posed by the kings of Aram and Israel. *Second*, as the current representative of the house of David and the living recipient of the covenant God gave to David (2 Samuel 7:8-17 and 1 Chronicles 17:7-14), Ahaz needed to have faith in His God and trust Him for keeping His covenant promises. *Third*, although Ahaz was an evil king who did not seek God, he was being offered something far beyond what he deserved. His evil activities were well documented (for example: 2 Kings 16:2-4). Nonetheless, up to this point, God was willing to extend a sign to Ahaz which would demonstrate God’s faithful commitment to His covenant. *Fourth*, by requesting a sign from God at God’s request, Ahaz did not need to exercise true faith for the fulfillment of such a sign would be proof of God’s intention and faithfulness to His word by sight and experience (of the fulfillment of the sign). *Fifth*, God’s offer of a sign was not a suggested minor change to the immediate situation or a small miracle. God opened the possibilities to have Ahaz ask for a sign that could possibly be the greatest of all miraculous acts God had undertaken short of creation itself. It could possibly have been more spectacular than the parting of the Red Sea or any other miraculous things God had done up to this point in history. The vault of God’s divine acts was open to Ahaz to consider.

7:12 *But Ahaz said, "I will not ask. I will not test the LORD."*

The response of Ahaz to the request by God of a sign was short and momentous in its tragic significance. Ahaz responded, “*I will not ask, I will not test the LORD.*” His response was not only hypocritically pious but full of hubris as Ahaz displayed his great contempt for and open rebellion of God. It was unlikely that Ahaz was in purity of mind responding to the command of God as recorded in Deuteronomy 6:16: “*Do not put the LORD your God to the test.*” He had shown no previous concern for any command of God. Also, his sinful and repulsive actions were an indication of the evil intentions of his heart. This was not a mere response to a whim to ask the Lord for a sign. The One asking was God Himself. It was a direct request with the demand of a response. By his seeming pious attitude, Ahaz was in fact throwing his sinfulness into the face of God and demonstrating openly (Isaiah 3:9) his vileness. He was therefore bringing judgment upon himself and his nation.

Ahaz had placed himself and the royal line of David in grave danger. God’s patience with Ahaz’s wickedness and rebellion had finally come to its full conclusion. The Scriptures state that the Lord is slow to anger. Yet when His anger is aroused, no one, not even the king of Judah can stand before God.

The prophet Nahum recorded: *“The Lord is slow to anger and great in power, and the Lord will by no means leave the guilty unpunished.”* Nahum 1:3.

*The LORD is slow to anger,
and great in power,
and will by no means acquit the guilty.*

Isaiah would later state in 51:17:

*Wake up, wake up, stand up, O Jerusalem,
you who drunk at the hand of the LORD
the cup of his wrath;
you have drunk dry the bowl that causes staggering.*

Ahaz had taken the cup of the Lord’s anger and completely drunk it. There would be no further offer from God for the king to consider. God would act alone.

7:13 *Then Isaiah said, “Listen now, O house of David. Is it too small a thing for you try the patience of humans, that you want to try the patience of my God too?”*

Isaiah responded to the hypocritical and self-pious retort of Ahaz. At least two very significant issues are addressed by Isaiah. *First*, he responds by addressing the “house of David.” It is no longer a direct response to Ahaz as a representative of the line of David. Isaiah addresses the entire covenantal dynastic lineage of David with whom God has made a covenant (see above). Ahaz, has been judged and found guilty of rejecting God’s offer of defense of Judah and Jerusalem and has been cast aside for consideration as a representative of the Davidic dynasty and Isaiah rhetorically addresses the entire lineage of David. *Second*, Isaiah had previously (vs. 11) referenced God to Ahaz as “the LORD your God”; now Isaiah states that the Lord is “my God”. This change in reference is not coincidental. It is a deliberate statement of Isaiah’s faithfulness to God and Ahaz’s disobedience and unfaithfulness to God. Thomas Constable comments:

Isaiah saw right through the king's hypocrisy. He warned him by addressing him as the representative of the house of David. The plural "you" indicates that Isaiah was addressing all the members of the house of David and perhaps the whole nation (cf. v. 9). Yahweh had made covenant promises that David's dynasty would continue forever (2 Sam. 7:16; 1 Kings 8:25). Ahaz should not have feared being replaced by a puppet king (v. 6). Ahaz had said he would not test God (v. 12), but by refusing to ask for a sign, that is precisely what he was doing—testing God's patience with him. He was also testing the patience of the godly in Israel who were looking to their king to trust God.

The prophet had called Yahweh "Ahaz's God" (v. 11), but now that the king had rebelled against Him, Isaiah referred to the Lord as "my (Isaiah's) God." This change was ominous, suggesting that God would abandon the king. If Ahaz's decision resulted in God withdrawing support from the Davidic kings, the prophecy of Immanuel may imply that God would raise up His own King from David's house who would be faithful to Him. This could explain why God gave such a major messianic prediction at this time.

"To appreciate fully the messianic portrait of Isaiah 1—39, it must be viewed against the backdrop of the generally negative presentation of Judahite kingship in these same chapters."¹²¹

[Note 121: Chisholm, *A Theology of Isaiah*. In *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*, page 45]. (Thomas Constable, *Isaiah*, page 52).

7:14-16: Introduction

These three verses are without question vital to a proper understanding of the great sign God gave to the "house of David" which was a prophetic announcement of the virgin birth of a Son, Jesus Christ 730 years in the future which would have world changing significance and would be of critical importance to God keeping His covenantal promises with David. Also within these verses God gives a promise of immediate historical importance to the people of Judah which was to be through the illustration of Isaiah's son. Verses 14-15 address the future great sign of the divine Son, Immanuel. Vs. 16 addresses the current political crisis with reference to a son standing literally at the feet of king Ahaz.

There has been a great deal of debate and controversy regarding the correct interpretation of these verses. Even among conservative, evangelical and pre-millennial scholars, a friendly debate ensues to this day regarding the meaning of the sign and how should this sign address both the far distant application as recorded by Matthew in his gospel, (Matthew 1:22-23) and how it addresses the immediate crisis faced by the people of Judah. At least four major "interpretations" have been suggested:

First, the sign of Immanuel was for the day of Ahaz and addressed the immediate historical crisis only without a certain meaning for a future application in the New Testament.

Second, the sign of Immanuel was intended for the day of Ahaz, but was applied by Matthew to refer to the virgin birth of Jesus Christ.

Third, the sign of Immanuel is a double reference referring both to the immediate context in the days of Ahaz and also to the virgin birth of Jesus Christ.

Fourth, the sign of Immanuel itself (verses 14-15) was for the future and was literally fulfilled by the birth of Jesus Christ from a virgin named Mary. Vs. 16 referred to Isaiah's son and was an object lesson for the people of Judah regarding the crisis they were facing.

The following brief critiques of these three interpretations are not intended to fully engage scholarly debate or provide technical and language based reasons for any stated conclusions. References for such scholarly review will be provided so the student can delve deeper into this most critical passage of God's word.

Regarding the *first* interpretation: Proponents of this suggested "solution" usually do not interpret the Hebrew word (*almah*) for virgin, as stated in the NASB, as being an unmarried woman who has had no sexual relations with a man. These proponents suggest "*almah*" means young woman. Thus, Isaiah, according to this understanding of "virgin" is simply referring to a son soon to be born to a young woman who will have a son with the name of Immanuel. The identification of the son's father is further suggested as Isaiah, Ahaz or some other person with connections to the unfolding drama faced by Judah. The three major problems with this interpretation is that (1) as will be indicated below, "*almah*" indeed does mean "virgin" in the sense that it refers to a woman of marriageable age who will have a son although she has had no sexual relations with a man. (2) This interpretation robs any sense of the meaning of a "sign" by God. Ahaz could have simply shrugged his shoulders and said "so what" young women are having sons born to them every day. (3) As well, this interpretation makes Matthew's reference to Isaiah's prophecy in 7:14 of no importance as it robs the Old Testament of having any Messianic content. It also removes from Scripture of the vital importance of the virgin birth of Christ and brings into question the deity of Christ.

Regarding the *second* interpretation: Proponents of this suggested "solution" suggest that Matthew drew his story of the virgin birth of Christ from an Old Testament story that had no direct prophetic relevance. Matthew simply "applied" the Isaiah 7:14-16 as an illustration to accent his record of the birth of Christ. This so called "solution" is similar to the first proposed solution and the objections to the *first* proposed solution apply to this *second* proposal. The most important objection to this second interpretation that it makes Isaiah's prophetic message to Ahaz, without a purpose or a solution and denies that the Old Testament has any messianic prophetic content. Also, by applying an Old Testament story to an event current in Matthew's day, it gives affirmation to those who seek to allegorize the content of the Old Testament to fit any desired interpretation they intend to apply to a New Testament text.

Regarding the *third* interpretation: Proponents of this suggested "solution" hold that the sign of Immanuel has a double reference both to the immediate historical context of the crisis facing Judah and to the far future referring to the virgin birth of Christ as Matthew records the quotation from Isaiah 7:14. Two major problems (among others) are evident regarding this viewpoint. (1) There is no evidence that a virgin during the days of Isaiah and Ahaz gave birth supernaturally to a son which would literally fulfill Isaiah's prophecy. Some may point to Isaiah 8:8 and 10 as evidence that a son named Immanuel had been born but a close study of these verses reveals they refer to a far future day when indeed the land of Judah will be rightly called Immanuel's land.

(2) There is also no internal direct warrant for imposing a law of “double reference” on certain prophecies of Scripture. Many conservative, godly and highly regarded scholars have held to this view and it is not the intention of this study to cast aside or deride their opinion. It is with respect of their great contribution to the understanding of Scripture that this study suggests another possibility for understanding the sign of Immanuel.

Regarding the *fourth* interpretation: There appears that there are not many proponents of this suggested solution. Michael Rydelnik is one such scholar who holds this view and he suggests that Wm. Kelly and H. Bultema also proposed this solution. See Michael Rydelnik, *The Messianic Hope*, note: pages 159-160. Gary V. Smith also hints at this solution. See Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah*, Vol. 1, pages 214-216. Michael Rydelnik, *The Messianic Hope*, pages 146-163 devotes a chapter to explaining why the Hebrew language of Isaiah 7:14-16 strongly supports the literal prophecy of a virgin who will give birth to a son in vs. 14 and 15 and the literal reference in vs. 16 to Isaiah’s son, Shear-jashub, as an object lesson pointing to the soon demise of the two kings who were threatening Judah and Jerusalem. For additional study refer to W. Kelly, *An Exposition of the Book of Isaiah*, (London: Paternaster, 1987) and H. Bultema, *Commentary on Isaiah*, trans. D. Bultema, (Grand Rapids, Kregel, 1981). The following study expands upon the reason for supporting this *fourth* interpretation.

7:14 *Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, a virgin will conceive, and give birth to a son, and you will call him Immanuel [God with us].*

Isaiah directly speaks to the “house of David” (see above notes on vs. 13) and announces that the LORD Himself will give “you” a sign. The word “you” in the Hebrew is plural and refers to the house of David (vs. 13). This sign was offered to the entire “house of David” since the offer of a sign was rejected by the current representative of this “house” who has brought God’s judgment upon himself (king Ahaz) for his unbelief and evil rebellion against God. The sign was of the greatest importance to the house of David. The prophet declared: “Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.” Several points of discussion will be provided to help in the understanding of this sign.

The DASV, among other English versions, translates the Hebrew word “almah” as virgin. Whenever the word “almah” appears in the Hebrew it always refers to a virgin. In the New Testament, Matthew quotes from Isaiah 7 and uses the Greek word “parthenos” which also clearly means virgin. (Matthew 1:23). The reason this word has received so much critical attention is that liberal and Jewish scholars do not want to admit the obvious which is Isaiah was given a true prophetic word from God approximately 730 years before the birth of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. It is for theological reasons and not exegetical reasons that many do not translate the Hebrew word “almah” as virgin. For example, the Revised Standard Version (RSV) translates “almah” as young woman, in Isaiah 7:14 which causes confusion because the RSV translates “parthenos” as virgin in Matthew 1:23. For an excellent treatment of this issue, please refer to Victor Buksbaze, *Isaiah*, pages 149-153 and Michael Rydelnik, *The Messianic Hope*, pages 151-155.

God provided a sign for the Jewish people and for all humanity that would ultimately deal with their wickedness. God demanded a righteous and just punishment for humanity's sinful condition. The punishment was that any sin committed by anyone without atonement resulted in death. Since God could not find anyone worthy to bear the death penalty for all humanity due to their sinfulness, He alone gave the remedy. The first action of this remedy was to give the world a sign which was unheard of or unimaginable to humanity's finite and fallible intelligence. The sign was that a virgin would be with child and bear a son, and she (the virgin) will call His name Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14). See David L. Cooper, for a discussion on the significance of this "sign", *Messianic Series Volume 2: Messiah: His Nature and Person*, Biblical Research Society, 1933, pages 143-146.

The importance of this sign cannot be understated. The rebellious Ahaz certainly could not provide this protection or salvation. No one at any time in history, past, present or future could be the means of salvation from the penalty and punishment for the sins of the entire world – except for One Person. The nation of Judah was in danger of being destroyed and the line of David was in danger of being obliterated. Who could save them? It certainly would not be the king of Assyria who would later inflict the nation of Judah with hardship and the nation of Israel with complete destruction. It also would not be any other nation or powerful earthly king. God alone could save them.

Isaiah chapter 59 is a commentary on the failure of humanity to provide salvation for their wickedness. Isaiah 59:11 states, "*we look for justice, but there is none, for salvation, but it is far from us.*" A few verses later, 59:15b-16, Isaiah recorded:

*"The LORD saw it,
and the fact that there was no justice displeased him.
16 He saw that there was no vindicator,
and was amazed that there was no one to intervene.
Therefore his own arm brought salvation to him;
his righteousness supported him.*

In a truly wonderful passage regarding the second advent of the Messiah, Isaiah 63:1-6, Isaiah prophecies of the Messiah's provision of salvation. In verses 4-5 of Isaiah 63 the prophet states:

*For the day of vengeance was in my heart,
and the year of my redeemed has come.
5 I looked, but there was no one to help;
I was shocked that there was no one to lend support.
Therefore my own arm brought me salvation,
and my wrath sustained me.*

The name of the son to be born of the virgin was to be Immanuel. The name is a blessed hope not only for the nation of Judah but to the entire world. The name means “*God is with us*”. It is God who is with us who will make right that which is evil and wrong, who will heal the nations, who will be a comfort to all who are suffering, who will by His own arm bring eternal salvation to all those who will trust in the Son who was born of the virgin.

Although this is far from an original thought, it is among the great truths of Scripture that God alone provides hope, present salvation and eternal joy in heaven with Him. He does this through three easy to remember themes: God is with us; Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23); God is for us (Romans 8:31); and God is in us, (Colossians 1:27).

Victor Buksbazen provides an excellent discussion on the meaning of Immanuel:

“It was one of the central doctrines of the Hebrew Scriptures that God was present with His people, watching over their destiny. He was with the patriarchs (Gen. 26:3; 28:15; 39:2,3). He was with Moses (Ex. 3:12) and with His people as a national entity (Ex. 3:16; 33:15-17).

The Tabernacle in the wilderness (and later the Temple in Jerusalem) was a material and physical symbol that God was amidst His people. This Presence was visible to the children of Israel in the cloud which filled the Tabernacle by day, and the pillar of fire which rested over it by night, or went before them as they journeyed in the wilderness (Ex. 40:38).

The very word for “tabernacle” in Hebrew *Mishkan* is derived from the root *shachan* – to dwell, to rest, to abide, the same root from which the word “*Shechinah*” is derived.

Isaiah was now prophesying that the birth of that wonder child, whom the virgin will call “Immanuel”, “God-Is-with-Us,” shall be a visible manifestation in flesh and blood, that God is truly among His people, in a manner more real and more intimate even than the Tabernacle or the Temple.

The apostle John understood this when he wrote:

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth. John 1:14.

It was this certainty of the Presence of God among His people which allowed Isaiah to defy all the hostile forces of the nations assembled against Israel. Take counsel together and it shall come to naught, speak the Word and it shall not stand, for “God is with us” [Immanu-el] (Isa. 8:10).

The prophet’s faith in the coming of the Messiah was the very foundation of his confidence in Israel’s future triumph and redemption.

What kind of redeemer did Isaiah think that Immanuel would be? Isaiah gives an answer to this in chapters 9:6-7 and 11:1-10 where he describes Immanuel's glorious reign. The three prophecies, Isaiah 7:14; 9:6,7; and 11:1-10 are closely related and should be studied together. The name Immanuel, just at the four names in Isaiah 9:6, was not meant as a proper name, but rather as a description of the person and character of the Messiah. (Victor Buksbazen, *Isaiah*, pages 153-154).

7:15 *He will eat curds and honey when he knows enough to refuse the evil, and choose the good.*

Continuing with the far future significance of the sign of Immanuel, Isaiah predicts that the Son to be born will live his early years; "at the time He knows enough to refuse evil and choose good," eating curds and honey. Curds (butter) and honey can refer to desolate times when the ground is only suitable for the grazing of animals who produce the less than desirable cheese curds and wild flowers flourish (instead of food crops) resulting in the abundance of bees who produce honey. Such was the situation at the time of Christ's birth. The nation of Israel was in subjection to Rome, politically and militarily but the desolation of the land can be traced back to the days of Ahaz who was responsible for the destruction of the land by foreign nations as God's judgment on the land was widespread and lasted for many centuries.

Michael Rydelnik explains:

"The point then of the description of the coming virgin-born, Davidic king eating butter and honey is to accentuate that he would be born during a time of political oppression. In other words, the prophecy of Messiah concludes with a hint that He will be born and grow up ("Learn[ing] to reject what is bad and choose what is good") at a time when Judah is oppressed by a foreign power". (Michael Rydelnik, *The Messianic Hope*, page 156).

7:16 *For before the child knows to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted.*

It is unlikely that Ahaz cared for or even gave much thought to the sign from God that Isaiah proclaimed to him. He did not want to acknowledge the hope of God through faith in God. Yet if he listened to the prophet, he would have reason to trust God. In vs.16, Isaiah refers to the boy, Shear-jashub his son, who is standing next to him, which explains why God directed Isaiah to bring his son with him to meet with King Ahaz. Isaiah had just proclaimed an amazing message of a future hope to the entire world in verses 13-15. He now announces a message of an immediate hope to the nation of Judah, recorded in vs. 16. The two kings, (Rezin of Aram and Pekah of Israel), whom Ahaz had feared (you dread) will have met their deaths (will be forsaken).

Isaiah had told Ahaz earlier, (verses 4-7) that the king had nothing to fear from these two kings. Isaiah uses similar words: to refuse evil and choose good," regarding his son (the boy) as he had to describe the divine Son, Immanuel in order to provide a separation between the divine Son who was to be born of a virgin and Isaiah's own son, Shear-jashub.

In vs. 16, Isaiah uses his own son as an object lesson to describe that in a short period of time, both of these kings whom Ahaz dreaded would be dead and the threat to Judah from them would be removed. As noted above, Michael Rydelnik provides an excellent discussion on the Hebrew text to support the difference in meaning between Isaiah 7:13-15 and 7:16.

Michael Rydelnik again explains:

“While many have considered v. 16 to be a continuation of the prophecy in 7:13-15, the grammar of the passage suggests otherwise. The opening phrase in Hebrew can reflect an adversative nuance, allowing for a disjunction between the child described in 7:13-15 and the one described in verse 16. There is a different child in view in this verse.” (Michael Rydelnik, *The Messianic Hope*, page 157).

One of the issues to be considered, is the audience to whom the prophet is addressing his message in verse 16. Michael Rydelnik offers this viewpoint:

“To whom does Isaiah make this prediction? What is not evident in the English text is plain in the Hebrew. The prophet returned to using the second-person singular pronoun in 7:16 (“the land of the two kings you [sg.] dread”). In 7:10-11 he used the singular to address King Ahaz. Then, when addressing the house of David with the prophecy of Messiah, he shifted to the plural. But in 7:16, he addressed King Ahaz, using the singular pronoun once again and giving him a near prophecy: before Shear-Jashub would be able to discern good from evil, the northern confederacy attacking Judah would fail. Within two years, Tiglath-Pileser defeated both Israel and Syria, just as the prophet had predicted.” (Michael Rydelnik, *The Messianic Hope*, page 158).

Teaching Outline for Isaiah 7:10-16

7:10-12	The Scorn of the Sinful: Ahaz
7:13-15	The Sign of the Savior: Immanuel
7:16	The Son of the Seer: Shear-jashub

3. The Plunder of the Nation: 7:17-25

The coming days for Judah and Israel (Ephraim) were to be terrifying due to the continual sinfulness of the Jewish people. There are four “in that day” judgments: verses: 18, 20, 21 and 23. These days were to be judgments, in the form of the coming of the Assyria, from the Lord as they had never seen “since the day that Ephraim separated from Judah”. God was to whistle for “the fly” from Egypt and “the bee” from Assyria to descend upon the land and on all the watering places. God would use the King of Assyria to symbolically shave the head, the hair of the legs and the beard of the Jewish men bringing disgrace upon them as the outward symbols of their manhood would be removed. Also, the overwhelming armies of the Assyrians would leave very little cattle or sheep which would mean the people would only have curds to eat and some honey. God would still provide food for His people among the devastation to come. The vineyards and cultivated lands would be trampled by the invading armies leaving only briars and thorns and a place where only sheep and cattle could wander.

7:17 *The LORD will bring on you, your people, and your father's house days that have never been since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah -- the king of Assyria.*

Many scholars place vs. 17 in the previous section. However, upon a close inspection of the context it seems best to start the new section with vs. 17 as it is an introduction to the new section which is about the judgment of God on king Ahaz, his nation and upon the house of David. Isaiah reveals that God was to bring judgment on Ahaz, his people and importantly on his “father’s house” (the house of David). The reason for God’s punishment was due to Ahaz’s sinful rebellion against God and his evil acts: 2 Kings 16:1-4, 2 Chronicles 28:1-4, 16-27; and his refusal to trust in God and significantly his call to the king of Assyria for assistance against his enemies: from Aram and Israel: 2 Kings 16:7-9 and from the Edomites and the Philistines: 2 Chronicles 28: 16-18.

The entire line of David would now suffer a great calamity. This judgment of God would be so severe that it is described as days: “*that have never been since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah.*” This refers first to the prophecy of Ahijah to Jeroboam: 1 Kings 11:29-39, which gives God’s reasons for splitting the kingdom but preserving the tribe of Judah and the City of Jerusalem. Second it refers to the time when this rendering of the kingdom actually happened: 1 Kings 12:12-20. The reason God gives for the sundering of the kingdom into two (1 Kings 11:33) was similar to the actions and disbelief of king Ahaz during the days of his reign in Judah. The entire house of David would in the future suffer a separation which seemed on the surface to put an end to the covenant God made with David. Jeremiah prophesized that Coniah (Jeconiah) would not have any man of his descendants who will sit on the throne of David or who would rule again in Judah: Jeremiah 22:28-30. The cities of Judah would also be made a desolation without inhabitant: Jeremiah 34:21-22. However, as Isaiah proclaimed in 7:14, God would fulfill His covenant promises with a Son who would be born and be called Immanuel and have four two-fold titles describing Him as God and the kingdom of this Son would have a kingdom that would never end. (Isaiah 9:6-7 and Jeremiah 33:14-26). This Son would be from the line of David: Matthew 1:1-16 and Luke 3:23-31.

The last phrase of verse 17 is “*the king of Assyria.*” Here the prophet finally reveals, as he received the prophecy from the Lord, that the punishment God has meted out to the people of Judah and its leadership, due to the sinful actions of Ahaz would be the coming of the armies of Assyria, under rule of its king. The following verses, 18-25 contain four oracles of judgment stating just what the Assyrians (and also the Egyptians) would do to the people and land of Judah. The beginning of verse 17 states that it was the LORD who was bringing this calamity to Judah. The Lord would use foreign pagan nations to accomplish His acts of judgment. Judah would be disgraced as a people and their land would be in ruin.

7:18-19 *In that day, the LORD will whistle for the flies from the remotest part of the rivers of Egypt and for the bees from the land of Assyria.*

¹⁹ *They will come, and will settle in the ravines between cliffs and in the crevices of the rocks, and on all thorn bushes and at all the watering holes.*

The first of the four “in that day” oracles in this section (7:17-25) are declared by Isaiah in verses 18-19. The context of the words “in that day” is easily understood as a reference to an invasion that would soon come upon Judah. It is not a latter day or end times prophecy. Assyria would first conquer the northern kingdom of Israel and take its people into exile. See notes above on verses 8-9 above. In the days of Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, Assyria would come upon Judah and capture all its territory except for the city of Jerusalem. See Isaiah chapters 36-37.

The LORD will: “*whistle for the flies*” (in Egypt) “*and for the bees*” (in Assyria). Some scholars see an historical significance in these two insects. Thomas Constable comments:

“Yahweh would summon the armies of Assyria and Egypt to do His bidding as one whistles (or hisses) at insects (cf. 5:26). The ancients could evidently control flies and bees by hissing at them. Egypt was a land filled with flies, and the ancients spoke of Assyria as a country of beekeeping. Enemy soldiers would swarm everywhere in Judah (cf. Judg. 6:1-6).” (Thomas Constable, *Isaiah*, page 55).

The calling of the armies of Egypt and Assyria would result in a massing of troops that will overwhelm the nation of Judah. The armies would settle “on the steep ravines, on the ledges of the cliffs, on all the thorn bushes and on all the watering places.” (vs. 19). In other words, they would be literally everywhere and no place in the land would be free from their presence. There would be no place for the people of Judah to take refuge. See also Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah*, Vol. 1, page 217, for comments on verses 18-19 including the invasion of Judah by Egypt.

7:20 *In that day the Lord will shave with a razor hired from beyond the Euphrates River--with the king of Assyria--the head and leg hair; along with the beard too.*

The second “in that day” oracle declared by Isaiah regards the actions of the king of Assyria representing his army who will shave off the hair of the Judean men from their head and legs and remove their beard. Victor Buksbazen comments:

“The Assyrian razor from beyond the Euphrates whom Ahaz had foolishly hired, will shave Judah from top to toe, including the beard. To an Israelite the beard was the emblem of his manly dignity. Isaiah predicted that the land would be shaven clean of man and of all his treasured possessions, and that the unfortunate survivors would undergo the most cruel treatment and indignities. This was exactly what happened later under Sennacherib who in 701 B.C. invaded Judah, destroyed 46 cities and led 200,000 people of Judah into captivity.” (Victor Buksbazen, *Isaiah*, pages 155-156).

7:21-22 *In that day, a man will keep alive a young cow and a couple goats.*

²² *From the abundance of milk they will produce he will eat curds; for everyone left in the land will eat curds and honey.*

In the third “in that day” oracle, Isaiah states that the livestock will be so few that a man (head of the family) will only be able to keep alive “*a heifer and a pair of sheep,*” With all other sources of food (animals and crops) destroyed because of the Assyrian invasion, only milk will be in enough abundance for the people to survive on curds which is the poorest of milk products. There will also be honey available due to the proliferation of wild flowers where edible crops used to grow. See verses 23-25. The descriptive phrase “curds and honey” is also used by Isaiah in vs. 15 to describe the poor agricultural conditions of the land of Judah during the time of the birth of Christ when Judah was under the control of the Romans.

7:23-25 *In that day every place where there used to be a thousand vines worth a thousand shekels, it will be overgrown with briars and thorns.*

²⁴ *With bow and arrows one will hunt there, because all the land will be full of briars and thorns.*

²⁵ *All the hills that used to be dug with a hoe, you will not go there for fear of briars and thorns. It will be a place for cattle to graze and for sheep to trample.*

The fourth “in that day” oracle describes the results of the Assyrian invasion. See also Isaiah 8:6-8. The land will be so destroyed that the people of Judah will have to depend for food on animals they will hunt with bows and arrows in lands full of briars and thorns. The crops from the fields will no longer produce any edible yield and the value of their agricultural lands will now be virtually useless. The reason for these four-fold “in that day” oracles is due to the unfaithfulness of Ahaz and his rebellious heart that was opposed to God. Ahaz was so vile that he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus which had defeated him when the armies of Aram and Israel had conquered most of the land of Judah. Ahaz reasoned that because of the success of the gods of the kings of Aram, he would sacrifice to them with the thought that they would help him. Instead of any help from a pagan worthless idol, Ahaz brought ruin and destruction to himself and to his people. A further reason for the demise of Ahaz and his people was that instead of having faith in God for the protection of his people, he sought and purchased dearly for the aid of the king of Assyria. See 2 Chronicles 28: 22-33 and wider context of all of chapter 28. See also 2 Kings 16:7-18.

Teaching Outline for Isaiah 7:17-25

The four “in that day” Oracles of Judgment:

- 7:17-19: The Settling of foreign armies
- 7:20: The Shaving of the pride of Judah
- 7:21-22: The Shortage of livestock
- 7:23-25: The Scourge of Food Crops

Chapter 8 Introduction

Chapter 8 continues the dialogue Isaiah began in chapter 7 regarding the incidents during the days of the invasion of Judah by Aram (Syria) and Ephraim (Israel). Some scholars have called this period the Syro-Ephraimite War. Details of this invasion are recorded in 2 Kings 16:5-6 and 2 Chronicles 28:5-15. As recorded in chapter 7, Isaiah, accompanied with his young son Shear-jashub, met with king Ahaz and gave the king a hopeful message from God that the two kings Ahaz feared, Rezin of Aram and Pekah of Israel would not succeed in their planned siege of Jerusalem. Following Ahaz's rejection of God's message and His offer of a sign to authenticate His message, Isaiah declared that God Himself would give a sign which was the sign of Immanuel, the future virgin birth of the Messiah (Matthew 1:18-25). Following the repulsion of God's offer by the king of Judah, Isaiah began a series of judgments on king Ahaz, his people and upon the house of David, the kingly line of David.

In Chapter 8, Isaiah is directed by God to make a sign with the name on it of Maher-shalal-hash-baz and have two well-known individuals witness the writing of the name on the sign. Shortly, after this (about a year), Isaiah's wife gave birth to a son to whom Isaiah called the same name as written on the sign. Isaiah would later declare in 8:18, that he and his children "*are for signs and harbingers in Israel from the LORD of hosts who dwells on Mount Zion.*" In this chapter, Isaiah also declares more prophecy about the demise of both Damascus (Aram) and Samaria (Israel) and the fate of Judah at the hands of the king of Assyria. However, all is not lost and along with judgment Isaiah announces mercy in that God will be with both the houses of Israel (southern and northern kingdoms). Isaiah was instructed to not fear what the people of Judah fear (king of Assyria) for Isaiah was only fear (reverence) the LORD of hosts. Chapters 8-39 of Isaiah primarily deal with the threat of the Assyrian advance on Judah and the threat to Jerusalem. At the end of chapter 8, Isaiah declares a message of despair on those who do not consult God, "*should not a people consult with their God?*" (8:19). The fate of these people is that they will be driven into darkness. Thus chapter 8 ends in darkness but the great hope of chapter 9 is that "*The people who walk in darkness will see a great light*" (9:2).

4. The fall of the Nation's Enemies: 8:1-8

David L. Cooper gives a brief overview of verses 1-8:

In the section chapters 8:1-10:4 occurs another oracle which was spoken at some later time. As to what length of time there was between them no one can say. In chapter 8:1-4 is a prediction of the birth of Isaiah's second son, who is called Maher-shalal-hash-paz. Some have thought that Isaiah's second son was the one whose birth was foretold in verses 15 and 16 of the preceding chapter. This interpretation may be correct, but one cannot be dogmatic.

The next portion of this prophecy consists of verses 5-8. Again the prophet spoke of the Jews' being dissatisfied with their own condition and casting about, thinking that they could better their situation and improve conditions by winning the favor of Assyria. He therefore spoke of the Assyrian invasion, which came to pass under the rulership of Sennacherib. He compared the oncoming hosts to the flood waters of the river Euphrates and declared that they would overflow

Immanuel's land. The Assyrian records show that the hosts of that empire actually swept over the entire country, leaving it desolate. (D. L. Cooper, *Commentary on Isaiah*, Biblical Research Monthly-December 1943).

8:1-2 *Then the LORD said to me, "Take a large tablet, and inscribe on it with an ordinary stylus: Belonging to Maher-shalal-hash-baz [quick to the plunder, swift to the spoil].² I will have it verified by faithful witnesses, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah."*

The chapter opens with a message to Isaiah from God to take a large tablet. The Hebrew word *gillayon* is translated "tablet" in 8:1 and "hand mirrors" in 3:23. It has the meaning of a shiny flat surface that can be easily seen. Isaiah was instructed to write a name on this tablet: Maher-shalal-hash-baz which in the Hebrew is "*Quick to the plunder, swift to the spoil*". The meaning of this name was that it spoke of the advance of the Assyrian army who in just a short time would gather on behalf of the king of Assyria the spoils of victory from Damascus (Aram) and Samaria (Israel) as vs. 4 records.

The tablet written in ordinary letters for all to see was a sign for the people of Judah. God saw to it that two witnesses would testify that this name was written on the large tablet by His prophet Isaiah. The two witnesses were called "faithful" however it was not necessarily because they were faithful to God or trusted in Him. They were likely called "faithful" because they would testify to Judah the truth that Isaiah had written the name on the tablet at a specified time which was before the Assyrian invasion of Aram and Israel and the land of Judah. These two witnesses were Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah. Uriah is known to students of Scripture as the priest who followed the wicked orders of Ahaz (2 Kings 16:10-13). Zechariah may have been the one described in 2 Kings 18:2 as the father of Ahaz's mother Abi. Thus, these two witnesses, although faithful to testify that Isaiah wrote the name on the sign at a specific date, were not likely friendly to Isaiah who spoke against the wickedness of King Ahaz.

8:3-4 *So I had relations with the prophetess, and she conceived, and bore a son. Then the LORD said to me, "Name him Maher-shalal-hash-baz."*

⁴ *For before the child knows to cry, 'My father,' and, 'My mother,' the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be carried off by the king of Assyria."*

After these things and not necessarily as a direct consequence (as the word "so" in vs. 3 may seem to indicate), Isaiah had relations with the prophetess (his wife) and as a result she conceived and gave birth to a son. The words "*had relations with*" should be understood as a descriptive term for sexual relations between a man and woman, in this case the wife of Isaiah. The word "prophetess" may simply be a reference to the wife of Isaiah and may not indicate that she also was a prophet as there is no Scriptural record that she was a prophet of God. The wife of Isaiah gave birth to a son and Isaiah followed the LORD's instruction and named this boy the same name that was written in plain language on the sign: "Maher-shalal-hash-baz."

God explained the meaning of the boy's name as a sign for Judah, that before Maher-shalal-hash-baz knew how to cry out for his mother or father, the problem Judah faced with the threat from Aram and Israel would be removed in that "*the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be carried off by the king of Assyria,*" (vs. 4). This word from God was fulfilled in approximately two years: 732 B.C. in which year, both of the kings threatening Judah would be removed from power and their lands would be overrun by the Assyrian armies and would become vassal states under control of the king of Assyria. For the fate of king Pekah of Israel refer to 2 Kings 15:27-31. For the fate of king Rezin of Aram refer to 2 Kings 16:9. See also the notes on Isaiah 7 for a timeframe for the complete destruction of Samaria, the northern kingdom of Israel.

8:5-6 Then the LORD spoke to me again, saying,
⁶ "Because this people has refused
the gently flowing waters of Shiloah,
and rejoices over what will happen
to Rezin and Remaliah's son,

As recorded in these verses the Lord explains to Isaiah why this judgment was brought upon the northern kingdom of Israel. The core reason is recorded in vs. 6: "*Because this people has refused the gently flowing waters of Shiloah and rejoices over what will happen to Rezin and Remaliah's son.*" The reference to the gently flowing stream of Shiloah, which brought water into the City of Jerusalem to the pool of Siloam from the exterior Gihon Spring, is very poetic and poignant and refers to God who extended an offer of safety to king Ahaz. The words: "*rejoices over what will happen to Rezin and Remaliah's son*" is a reference to the trust king Ahaz of Judah placed in the king of Assyria, Tiglath-Pileser (2 Kings 16:7-9) who sent his army to conquer the Rezin's nation, Aram and also the nation of Israel led by the son of Remaliah, who was Pekah. Instead of accepting the offer of safety from the Lord of the Universe, Ahaz turned to the king of Assyria, a temporary and treacherous ruler who would only be on the regional stage for a short time. Ahaz rejoiced in a brief raging torrent instead of an eternal and gentle "stream". The result of rejecting God's offer is always disastrous as Ahaz should have known from the past history of his fore-fathers. Ahaz and his people who were blinded by sin had now to face the wrath of God.

8:7 *therefore the Lord will bring up against them
the strong floodwaters of the Euphrates River,
the king of Assyria and all his glory.
It will overflow all its channels,
and overrun all its banks.*

As a result of the rejection of God by Ahaz, God was to bring on Judah the destruction of the king of Assyria described as "*the strong and abundant waters of the Euphrates.*" The Lord further described this king with the addition of "*and all his glory*" referring to the temporal earthly might of Assyria which at that time had no equal among the nations within the "fertile crescent" area of the Middle East. The metaphor of the waters of the Euphrates River also included the description that the river waters would flood and therefore fill all the surrounding

land. For Aram and Israel, the metaphor of the flooding waters was meant to indicate that these nations would be totally over-run and conquered by Tiglath-Pileser, the king of Assyria.

8:8 *It will sweep on into Judah,
flooding and pouring through.
It will reach even to the neck,
and the stretching out of its wings
filling the breadth of your land, O Immanuel.*

These flood waters, representing the invasion by Assyria would also flow southward into Judah passing through this nation and rise even to the neck of the Judean people. This surely is a prophecy that the Assyrians would, at a later time, invade Judah but not completely conquer it. They would threaten to destroy Jerusalem but would be prevented from doing so by God. See Isaiah chapters 36-37 for a fulfillment of this prophecy. Isaiah in vs. 8 changes the metaphor for the Assyrian advance to that of a bird spreading its wings to cover the entire land which Isaiah adds is the land of Immanuel. This was a strong statement of the faith Isaiah had in God for the prophet recognized that the land did not ultimately belong to the people of Judah but to the God of the people whom the prophet calls Immanuel.

The Lord states that among the judgment He has called, He will still be with them: Immanuel: God with us. He has not forsaken them. He is inflicting them with holy justice yet they will have enough sustenance to survive. (7:22). The Lord also reminds His people that the land they live upon belongs to the Lord. It is Immanuel's land. It is still Immanuel's land. It has not ceased to be and as long as the earth remains, it will always be His land. Any current conflict in Israel needs to be understood in light of these truths. God stands with and among His people and His people need to be constantly reminded that the land is His land. The gospel of Matthew (1:23) references Isaiah 8:8 by stating that the Christ child was to be called "Immanuel." See notes on 7:14 for discussion on "Immanuel."

Teaching Outline for Isaiah 8:1-8

8:1-4 The Prophet's Son and the Pursuer's Spoil

8:5-8 The Lord's Lament and the Lord's Land

5. The future of the Nation's Remnant: 8:9-22

In these verses, Isaiah declares the message of the Lord for the nations, the prophet and his family and the people of Judah. In verses 9-10, the Lord warns any nation that would seek to by plan or action to destroy His people that they themselves would be shattered (stated in vs. 9 three times for emphasis). In verses 11-22, the Lord speaks to Isaiah about: walking with God rather than in the way of the people of Judah and judgement upon those who fail to walk with Him. This section has four main parts. *First*, in verses 12-17, the Lord speaks of trusting in the holy Lord only and fearing Him. *Second*, in vs 18 Isaiah declares that to the children of God, Isaiah and his children are signs and wonders from the Lord. *Third*, in verses 19-20, God 's people to

look to the Word of God rather than consulting mediums and spiritists. *Fourth*, Isaiah issues a message of judgment on God's people who fail to trust Him (verses 21-22).

8:9-10 *Be broken, O nations,
and be shattered in pieces.
Listen all you distant countries.
Gear up for battle,
but you will be shattered;
gear up for battle,
but you will be shattered.*

¹⁰ *Devise a plan,
but it will achieve nothing.
Issue orders,
but they will never happen,
for God is with us."*

Isaiah in these verses declares a message to the nations of the earth regarding their plans concerning the people of God. For dramatic emphasis, Isaiah states three times in vs. 9 that those nations will be "shattered." If they "devise a plan" (vs. 10) it will "achieve nothing" (thwarted). This word in the Hebrew is *parar* and has the meaning of breaking, frustrated or annulled. If these nations issue "orders" *dabar* in the Hebrew, which has the meaning of giving a word or a speech, these orders will never happen. The reason Isaiah can state this with utter confidence is that "*God is with us*" (Immanuel). See also vs. 8 and 7:14. Not only is the land of Judah (and Israel) Immanuel's land and belongs to the Messiah, so also is Immanuel with God's people. Any suggested, proposed or planned attack on the land and the people of God will be under the direct superintendence of God for He has not decreed that any such plan or proposal will be carried out, it will not "happen" (vs.10).

This warning to the nations must be seen within the greater plan of God for His people. Isaiah has just prophesized that Assyria would be used of God to overflow Immanuel's land like the Euphrates river when it floods its banks (verses 5-8) and earlier in 7:17-25, the prophet had declared that the Lord will call (whistle) for the armies (flies and bees) of both Egypt and Assyria to assault Judah as an act of God's judgment because of the sinfulness of God's people.

God faithfully keeps His covenants with His people and His land. As Scripture indicates, the permanent fulfillment of God's covenants will need to wait until the days of the end when the Messiah will rule on the earth from Mount Zion. Prior to the establishment of Messiah's earthly reign and kingdom, however, there have been numerous times recorded in the past (from Isaiah's time) and predicted for future days when this fulfillment is postponed or delayed due to the sinfulness and rebelliousness of the people of God. See Amos chapter 9 for God's clear intentions for His people.

8:11-12 *For the LORD told me this with a strong hand, and instructed me not to walk in the way of this people, saying,*

¹² *"Do not make allegation of a conspiracy;
concerning everything this people calls a conspiracy,
do not be afraid of what they fear,
or be in dread of it.*

The Lord spoke to Isaiah “*with a strong hand*”, signifying the importance of the message that Isaiah was given to address the people of Judah. The Lord’s first statement to Isaiah was for the prophet not to walk in the way they have walked. This is a parallel message given to the psalmist as recorded in Psalm 1:1-3. The righteous are those who delight in God’s law and mediate day and night upon it. Isaiah, (vs. 12) was to avoid the gossip of those who talk about (allegation) a conspiracy, neither was he to be afraid or in dread of that which caused the people of Judah to fear. The people feared and dreaded the combined armies of Aram and Israel even though Isaiah had relayed God’s message to them (through Ahaz) to be calm and have no fear and to be quiet (in heart) because of the intentions of the kings of Aram and Israel (7:4).

8:13 *The LORD of hosts is the one you must recognize as holy,
and let him be your fear,
and let him be your dread.*

Isaiah next declares a message from God that is full of wonderful theology and Biblical truth. It is a three-part message: The first part is that God’s people are to regard the LORD of hosts (*Lord of armies* who is the supreme commander and sovereign over all the hosts (armies) of heaven and earth), as **holy**. Isaiah had heard the call of the Seraphim in the temple declaring the three-fold attribute of “Holy, Holy, Holy is the LORD of hosts.” (See notes on Isaiah 6:3). The people of God should have been acutely aware of the command of God in the Torah as stated in Leviticus 11:44: “*For I am the LORD your God, consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy.*”

The second part of this critical message from God in vs. 13 is about God “*let him be your fear*”. Fear in this verse is the Hebrew word *morah* which has the meaning of respect and reverence as well as the common meaning of being afraid. The necessity of a reverent fear of God is one of the most emphatic themes of Scripture as Proverbs 1:7 so perfectly illustrates: “*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge*”. Also, the Apostle Peter (1 Peter 3:14-15) refers to Isaiah 8:12-13.

The third part of this message from God in vs. 13 is also about God “*let him be your dread*”. Dread is the Hebrew word *arats* and has the meaning of to cause to tremble. Although some may want to equate fear and dread as synonymous terms, they are separated in this study to emphasize a seldom stated and perhaps unpopular characteristic of those who would live a godly life. To tremble during times of worship of and meditation upon God is to acknowledge the profound truth that God alone rules the universe and there is no one else to whom we can rely upon and invest our trust. To dread God is to visibly demonstrate His affect upon the believer.

It is different than fear which in the context of the Scriptures is often an inward calmness of absolute trust in Him. Dread gives the connotation of trembling with sweat that breaks out when one comes face to face with the truth of whom God is and what that really means to the believer's daily life. Dread visibly moves the believer to holiness. Dread also moves believers to be intensely aware of any sinful act which separates them from a right relationship with God and spurs the believer to repent with the result of restoring this relationship. Believers move to repentance but God restores the relationship. Being in dread of the Lord can also be the safest place for the believer who knows that any other place is un-safe and un-desirable.

8:14-15 *He will be a sanctuary;
a rock one trips over
and a stone of stumbling
for both the houses of Israel.
He will be a trap
and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.*
¹⁵ *Many will stumble over them.
They will fall and be broken,
snared and taken captive."*

Although some may want to interpret these verses as a prophecy of the future Babylonian captivity, the message of verses 14-15 had an immediate application and a far future prophetic fulfillment. To those who heard Isaiah's declaration, it would be a warning to either trust in God for safety as a sanctuary or to trust in their evil king causing them to stumble and be snared and caught by their enemies. In the far future, other servants of God would apply this message to the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Refer to Matthew 21:44, Luke 2:34, Romans 9:32-33 and 1 Peter 2:8. To those who trust in the Messiah, the stone of stumbling would be their cornerstone, Psalm 118:22, but to those who reject Him, this stone will cause them to fall and be broken. See also notes on Isaiah 28:16.

8:16-17 *Bind up the testimony,
seal the teaching among my disciples.*
¹⁷ *I will wait expectantly for the LORD,
who hides his face from the house of Jacob,
but I will put my hope in him.*

Isaiah next turns to his disciples, the holy remnant, those who remain faithful to the Lord, and declares that they are to have the "testimony" and the "law" bound and sealed among them as a reminder of their true foundation stone. (vs.16). Isaiah repeats this call in vs. 20 to: "*consult the law and the testimony!*" Even though, God was presently "*hides his face from the house of Jacob.*" Isaiah 8:17; Isaiah will look eagerly for Him as should all of Isaiah's disciples. It is possible that Isaiah addresses his disciples because the court of the king and the people of Judah have rejected his message as God revealed would be the response from the people (6:9-13).

The disciples representing the remnant who are faithful to God would be the “tenth” portion and the “holy seed” God mentions in 6:13. Even so today, Christians are to eagerly look to the return of the Lord: Romans 8:23, 8:25, Philippians 3:20, Hebrews 9:28. In the New Testament, the phrase “*I will wait expectantly for the LORD,*” (vs.17), has a messianic application for it is interpreted as “*I will put my trust in Him*” as recorded in Hebrews 2:13 which cites this verse. The sense is similar. To expectantly wait for Him is by implication to put one’s trust in Him. In the context of Hebrews chapter 2, it is Christ who has put His trust in the Father.

8:18 *Look, I and the children whom the LORD has given me are for signs and harbingers in Israel from the LORD of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion.*

As Isaiah waited expectantly for the Lord, Who, had hid His face from the house of Jacob, the people were not without a sign from God. Isaiah understood his relationship to the people when the Lord was silent. Isaiah reveals in vs. 18 that he and his children are to be seen as signs and wonders in Israel (the people of God) from the Lord. The very presence of Isaiah as the one proclaiming God’s word was a sign. Isaiah’s name means “Salvation is of the Lord”. To even speak about Isaiah, the people in Judah were thus, acknowledging this truth from God. Isaiah is a walking testimony of the saving grace of God to the Jewish people. Isaiah’s first son was Shear-jashub, which means, “*a remnant will return*”. This name was a constant reminder to the people that the Lord not only will save them but will preserve to Himself a remnant from among the people who will have a future in the land. The meaning of the name of Isaiah’s first son will be a message that is to be frequently repeated throughout Isaiah’s long career as a prophet. The name of Isaiah’s second son, Maher-shalal-hash-baz means, “*quick to the plunder, swift to the spoil*” or “*swift to the booty-speedy to the prey*”. This sign was first for the immediate situation that the king and people of Judah found themselves as recorded in Isaiah 8 with the coming of the armies of Assyria to conquer Aram (Syria) and Israel (Samaria). As time progressed this second son’s name would act as a reminder that the Lord keeps His promises and a warning, that if the Jewish people continued to rebel against God, this message would apply to them.

The words “*Look, I and the children whom the LORD has given me*” was used by the author of Hebrews as recorded in Hebrews 2:13, to indicate that to those who have put their trust in Him, Christ is not ashamed to call them brethren. The words “children” and “brethren”, in the context of Hebrews Chapter 3, should be understood as the same ones who trust Christ. It is not the only passage where believers in Christ are referred to as children. For example, Isaiah states this in chapter 53:10, “*He will see His offspring*”.

8:19-22 *When they say to you, "Consult with mediums and spiritists, who chirp and mutter,"*

should not a people consult with their God? Should they really ask the dead on behalf of the living?

²⁰ *Rather consult the law and the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, surely there is no dawn for them.*

²¹ *They will wander through the land distressed and hungry. When they get hungry, they will be enraged, and curse their king and their God, as they turn their faces upward.*

²² *They will look to the earth, and see only distress and darkness, gloom and anguish; they will be driven away into the darkness.*

Isaiah next turns his attention to those who are not the offspring of the Messiah by trusting in Him, but are those who rejected Him and instead consulted mediums and spiritists. Isaiah asks these iniquitous inquirers: “*should not a people consult with their God? Should they really ask the dead on behalf of the living?*” (vs. 19). Consulting mediums was condemned by God: Leviticus 19:26, Deuteronomy 18:9-14. King Saul was an example of those who went against God’s command when he consulted a medium (witch) at Endor: See 1 Samuel chapter 28. It is little wonder that the people Isaiah spoke about who did consult mediums and spiritists would have no dawn (vs. 20) and would “*see only distress and darkness, gloom and anguish*” (vs. 22). They would, due to the hardships placed upon them, “*be enraged and curse their king and their God as they turn their faces upward*”. (vs.21). The passage of time will not change the sinfulness of people and their rebellious acts towards God. During the Great Tribulation, the people who will have the mark of the beast upon them will curse God and blaspheme his name when they face the wrath of God represented by the seven bowl judgments as recorded in Revelation chapter 16.

Chapter 8 ends with a message of despair: “*they will be driven away into the darkness.*” Isaiah had earlier warned king Ahaz: “*if you will not faithfully stand firm, then you will not stand at all.*” (7:9). It was a message that the king ignored and his future destiny was firmly set in destruction because of his failure to trust God. Isaiah as recorded in the last verse of chapter 8 reminds the people of Judah that their destiny will be the same as their king because they also have refused to consult God and trust in Him for their salvation. If the message of Isaiah had ended in this place, we would have to despair with these ancient participants in the great covenants of God. But all is not lost to darkness. The very next verse 9:1 begins with “*But there will be no gloom to her who was in anguish.*” Also, the great news of 9:2 blazes into the darkness and beams hope: “*The people who walk in darkness have seen a great light.*” A few verses later, Isaiah reveals the astounding messages that this great light will be seen in the person of a child. “*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son given.*” (9:6). This blazing light that defeats the darkness will be revealed in the notes of chapter 9 as the promised Messiah, with titles only applicable to God. This child is the virgin born Son (7:14) and later will be revealed as the great suffering Servant of the Lord upon whom “*the LORD has laid on him the sin of us all.*” (53:6).

Teaching Outline for Isaiah 8:9-22

- 8:9-10 God’s Safety for His People: Immanuel
- 8:11-15 God’s Sanctuary for His People: Instruction
- 8:16-22 God’s Sign for His People: Isaiah (and his sons)

6. The Promise of the Kingly Child: 9:1-7

This short passage of just seven verses, Isaiah 9:1-7 is enormous in scope to the significance of Biblical prophecy and specifically to Messianic studies. It would be difficult to find so much information about the coming Messiah in any other Scriptural passage of the same length. Portions of these verses are sung as high praise to God the Father and to His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ each Christmas season. Of all the titles ascribed to Christ in Scripture, the names in Isaiah 9:6 are perhaps the most memorized and cited by Christians throughout the world. But there is much more to this small passage than these four titles. Nearly all the verbs in this section, except for vs. 7, are written in the past tense to indicate Isaiah's confidence that the predictive words given to him from God are considered as events that already have taken place. It is critical to understand that the names given to this child, this Son given to us are not for "signs" as were the names of Isaiah and his children. This Son to come is not a sign of a future hope, He Himself is the future hope, the Messiah, not only for Judah and Israel but for all the nations of the earth.

With the prophecy of the coming of this Son, (also 7:14; 8:8,10) Isaiah completes the narrative of using sons, including himself and two of his own to illustrate significant truths for his people. Isaiah's first son, Shear-jashub meaning "a remnant shall return" was a constant reminder that God, although exacting judgment on the rebellious people of Judah and Israel, promised that all would not be lost and a faithful remnant would return to the glorious land in the future. Isaiah's second son, Maher-shalal-hash-baz meaning "*quick to the plunder, swift to the spoil*" was a sign of a specific historical event in which the Assyrian armies would quickly gather up the spoils of victory over Aram (Syria) and Israel. Isaiah's name has the meaning of "the Lord is salvation" and was a constant reminder to his people all through his ministry that, even though judgment would fall on Israel and Judah, the people must look to the Lord for their salvation, for there is no hope in any other God, person or nation. The names of the greater Son, first called Immanuel in 7:14 meaning "God with us" are expanded in this section, 9:1-7, to declare a most amazing message to the people of Judah and Israel. This message is that God is sending His very own unique Son to finally bring peace to His people and to establish a kingdom to be ruled by this Son that will last forever. The people of God must, as must all peoples, trust in God for their future salvation and glorious eternal existence when this greater Son will forever be Immanuel.

9:1-2 *But there will be no gloom to her who was in anguish. In the former times he treated the land of Zebulun and Naphtali with contempt, but in the latter time he will make glorious Galilee of the nations, from the way of the sea to the region beyond the Jordan.*

² *The people who walk in darkness have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death,
on them the light has shined.*

In the Hebrew text, verse 1 of chapter 9 in the English versions, is placed as vs. 23 of chapter 8. Thus, this verse serves as a bridge between the despair due to the judgment upon the people in the latter verses of chapter 8 and the great promise to the people of the coming Prince of Peace.

The NSAB translates the first clause of this verse as: “*But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish*”. Isaiah speaks about earlier times when the lands of Zebulun and Naphtali, areas to the north of Galilee, were treated by God with contempt. As these times are not specifically mentioned, and in the context of the preceding chapters in the prophecy of Isaiah, these times may be a reference to the areas in northern Israel (Ephraim) conquered by the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III. In contrast to these devastating earlier times, God will in later times: “*will make glorious Galilee of the nations, from the way of the sea, to the region beyond the Jordan.*” Isaiah 9:1.

So, what is going to happen in later times within the area known as Galilee of the Gentiles? Matthew chapter 4, verses 12 to 17 provide an historical response. Matthew states that when Christ had heard that John (the Baptist) was taken into custody, He left Nazareth and withdrew into Galilee, settling in Capernaum, which is by the sea (of Galilee), in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali and Matthew adds this fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 9:1-2. When Jesus was in this northern area of Galilee He from that time: “*began to preach, and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."*” Matthew 4:17. It was the presence of Christ and His teaching in this northern area of Galilee that was the great light that would shine upon them. This often neglected and Gentile influenced area of Israel would be blessed with the Messiah and His message. In application, it could be suggested that the entire nation would be blessed by the presence of the Lord, Jesus Christ, for the message that the Lord preached during Matthews’s time was that the kingdom of heaven is at hand, implying that the kingdom was at hand due to the presence of the King of the kingdom. However, the kingdom was not yet a present reality and was postponed due to the rejection by the Jews of Jesus Christ as their Messiah.

9:3 *You have multiplied the nation;
you have increased their joy;
they joy before you like the joy during harvest,
like warriors rejoice when they split up the spoil.*

The result of having the Messianic light shine upon them was one of great blessing to the people who would be living in Israel during the time of the Messianic kingdom. This event can fit no other period. They do not refer to Isaiah’s time, nor do they adequately apply to the first century. But they must refer to a later time when the nation shall be multiplied, and the people’s gladness will be increased for the people will be joyful in the presence of the Messiah. The work of God in multiplying the nation naturally implies the expansion of the borders of the land and an increase in population. The expansion of the land during the Messianic kingdom is described in detail in Ezekiel chapter 47. The increase or multiplication in population is further discussed by Isaiah in Isaiah 66:7-9. This promise of multiplication of land and people is a fulfillment of the covenant of God with Abraham: Land: Genesis 12:7; 13:15; 15:18; 17:7-8. See also Isaiah 60:21. People: Genesis 12:2; 13:16; 17:6. For further study see “*The Kingdom of God in the Old Testament*” pages 181 to 184 authored by William D. Barrick. The Masters Seminary Journal: MSJ 23/2, Fall 2012. Refer also the *Masters Seminary Journal* study on the Covenants: Volume 10, Number 2, Fall 1999.

9:4-5 For the yoke of their oppression,
and the bar on their shoulder,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as in the day of Midian's defeat.

⁵ For every boot of the marching warriors,
and every garment drenched in blood,
will be for burning, fuel for the fire.

These two verses affirm the likelihood that these blessings could only refer to a time when the Messiah would be among them. The people would finally be at peace with their enemies and battle clothing would only be used as fuel for the fire. Isaiah predicts that the people of God will break or remove the yoke, staff and burden from those who oppress them. This would refer to Assyria and in the eighth century B.C. and to Babylon in the seventh century B.C. Chapters 1-39 of Isaiah often refer to Assyria as the dominant aggressor to Judah and Israel while chapters 40-66 point to the future when Babylon will assume this role. The good news for God's people is that, eventually, in a far future time, they will be victorious over all nations who oppose them and seek their destruction. They will be reminded of the victory God brought them over the armies of Midian under the leadership of Gideon as recorded in Judges Chapter 7. Refer also to Isaiah's further discussion on the removal of the burden placed upon them by their enemies, for example: 10:24-27; and 14:24-27. Chapters 13-23 of Isaiah deal mostly with God's judgment on the nations which have oppressed Judah and Israel but they also include judgment on Israel.

9:6-7 *For unto us a child is born,
unto us a son is given,
and the government will be upon his shoulders:
and his name will be called Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

⁷ *Of the increase of his government
and of peace there will be no end.
He will rule on the throne of David,
and over his kingdom,
to establish it,
and to uphold it with justice
and with righteousness from this time forth forever.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.*

The prophet gives details about the Messiah who will be present during this blessed future time and be the cause of the peace of the land. Isaiah, in vs. 6, states this reason: "*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.*" Certainly, this must in the context of the preceding chapters, refer to the son who was to be born of a virgin and who would be called Immanuel; Isaiah 7:14. Also Isaiah would have known the prophetic words of the second Psalm 2:6-7 regarding the Son who was to be installed on Mount Zion as a King. Isaiah would have pondered the meaning of the words God had given him to proclaim as recorded in Isaiah chapter 9 and he

may have wondered about their fulfillment. We have the advantage of the completed Scriptures to inform us of the full impact of these prophetic words. See Matthew 13:17; Luke 10:24 and Acts 3:17-26.

Another detail given in Isaiah 9:6 regarding this Son is that, “*the government will rest on His shoulders*”. This certainly amplifies Psalm 2:6-9 and looks forward to Zechariah 14:9; Matthew 2:6; Revelation 1:5, 2:26-27, 12:5, 19:15-16 and 20:4. There is no doubt that one of the high offices of the King to come, the Messiah, is that of a Ruler. This Ruler will first come as a son and will later rule the nations. All peoples will acknowledge His rule and not only obey Him as Ruler but worship Him as the King of King and Lord of Lords. (Revelation 19:16).

The Ruler, the child to come as a son, will have four two-fold names or titles ascribed to Him. These two-fold names/titles are not an exhaustive description but it is specifically given to emphasize His eternal, exalted, holy, majestic and royal person. The *first* two-fold name is: “Wonderful Counselor,” *Pele Yoetz* in the Hebrew, is literally, “wonder of a counselor” (Thomas Constable, Isaiah, page 62). He is to be a counselor both in the sense of the instruction He is to give and the life He is to live. His word and His sacrificial life would give irrefutable counsel regarding salvation for mankind. Luke states as recorded in Acts 4:12: “*There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven, given among humans, by which we must be saved.*” Victor Buksbazen instructs that:

“The word “pele” therefore indicates a wonder, a mysterious act of God, beyond human grasp. Pele wonderful or mysterious is an attribute of God, like holiness. Pele Yotz therefore means a wonderful counselor and partakes of the very nature of God.” (Victor Buksbazen, *Isaiah*, page 164).

The second two-fold names is: “Mighty God,” *El Gibbor* in the Hebrew. In Isaiah 10:21, the prophet records that “*A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God.*” Since this title would naturally refer to the “*Lord, the Holy One of Israel*” in the preceding verse, it is an extremely important reference in Isaiah 9:6 that the son to be born would also be called “*Mighty God*”. Thus, the son to be born would be God. No other person or spiritual being in all of Scripture was given this name. In the New Testament, passages such as John 1:1-14 and Hebrews 1:1-3 give further revelation that this Son to be born would be more than just a human son, He was also God in the flesh. Victor Buksbazen again instructs:

“Elsewhere Isaiah calls God *El Gibbor* (10:21): “*A remnant shall return, a remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God [El Gibbor]*”

Jeremiah refers to God: “The God who is great and mighty [*Ha-El Ha-gibbor*] his name is the LORD of hosts” (Jer. 32:18).

Here the Messiah is called the mighty God, the same name as God, thus clearly bearing witness to the divinity of the Messiah. Some translate *El Gibbor*, God-like hero, but in view of Isaiah 10:21 this is not satisfactory.” (Victor Buksbazen, *Isaiah*, page 165).

The third two-fold name is: “*Eternal Father*,” *Abhi ad* in the Hebrew. This is a title combining two concepts which could be stated as “my father is eternal” or “father of eternity” (Gary V. Smith, Isaiah 1-39, NAC, page 241). There are only a few references in the Old Testament to God as Father: Deuteronomy 32:6, Isaiah 63:16 and 64:8; Jeremiah 3:4, 19; and Malachi 2:10. There are many others where the Jewish people are called God’s sons. This two-fold name is another clear statement that this Son to come is declared to be God. In the New Testament, as recorded in John 10:30, Jesus stated: “*I and the Father are one*”. The Jews immediately understood that Jesus was claiming to be God because they picked up stones to stone Him. Jesus asked them, “*I have showed you many good works from the Father; for which of those works are you stoning me?*” John 10:32. The Jews answered: “*We are not stoning you for a good work, but for blasphemy; because you who are just a man, claim to be God.*” As the Davidic King, the Messiah is the father of His people, and will eternally act as a kind and gentle father.

The second aspect of this title is “eternal”. In the next verse, Isaiah 9:7, Isaiah records that the son would sit on the throne of David, forever. The prophetic reference in 2 Samuel 7:16 to the eternal duration of David’s throne points forward to the birth of this Son and to His place on the throne of David as stated in Luke 1:32-33: “*He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.*”

Victor Buksbazen instructs on this name:

“Abhi-ad – The Everlasting Father

Literally the father of eternity. In Isaiah 63:16b the prophet approaches God in these words: “Thou O Lord art our father, our redeemer, from everlasting is thy name.” Here the father aspect in relation to His people is emphasized. He acts in relation to His people with paternal compassion. “Like a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.” (Psa. 103:13).

We are reminded of the words of Matthew 9:36 concerning Jesus: “But when He saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them...” Some commentators who sought to diminish the implication of divinity in this name of Messiah, translated *Abhi-ad* – the father of booty or spoil, which neither grammatically nor contextually is admissible. The name means that the Messiah is eternal and paternal in relation to His people.” (Victory Buksbazen, *Isaiah*, page 165).

The fourth two-fold name is: “Prince of Peace,” *Sar Shalom* in the Hebrew. In the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, the prophet expands upon the reign of this Prince, whom Isaiah refers to as a shoot that will spring from the stem of Jesse and a branch. In verses 6-9 of this chapter, the reign of peace is described and the reason for this peace is given in vs. 9: “*For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.*” Not only will the earth be at peace during the reign of its divine prince, but God and man will be reconciled and be at peace forever through this Prince’s reconciliation work on the cross. Colossians 1:19-20 states: “*For the Father was pleased that all his fullness should dwell in him; and through him to reconcile to himself all things, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross, whether things on earth or things in heaven.*” See also Romans 5:10, 2 Corinthians 5:18-21.

Again, Victor Buksbazen instructs:

“Sar Shalom – The Prince of Peace

On another occasion Isaiah prophesied that the Messianic kingdom will be a kingdom of universal peace and harmony. Now the prophet presents the Messiah as the Prince of Peace, the King of the Messianic Kingdom. The Messiah is the King of Peace. The Hebrew word *shalom* has a much wider meaning than our term “peace.” Shalom is not merely absence of war and strife but prosperity, well-being, harmony within and without, peace in one’s heart and peace with God, it is the perfect state of man.

Taken together the four names of the coming Messiah are an extension of the name Immanuel. They are not names in the modern sense, but rather attributes of the one to whom they are given.” (Victor Buksbazen, *Isaiah*, page 165).

Isaiah, in vs. 7 gives more detail about the eternal kingdom of the Son. *First*, the increase of His government and peace will never end, indicating that it will be limitless. This comment should be seen as referring to the eternal kingdom and not just to the millennial kingdom of Christ. *Second*, the Son will reign on the throne of David over His kingdom for a limitless period of time. This is a very important statement of Scripture verifying the prophecy of 2 Samuel 7:12-17, Psalm 89:4, and all of Psalm 89 in context, and in the future at the birth of Christ: Luke 1:32-33. *Third*, the kingdom of the Son will be established and upheld with justice and righteousness forever. The Holy King will reign over a Holy kingdom. *Fourth*, these promises will be fulfilled because they will be accomplished by the zeal of the Lord of hosts. There need not be any doubt as to their fulfillment for the Lord Himself has a great burning desire (zeal) to ensure that they will be put into place just as Isaiah has prophesied. As a concluding note, it is important to understand that the above details regarding the kingdom of the Son will begin with His millennial kingdom on earth and proceed without end into the eternal state.

Regarding the rule of the Messiah, David L. Cooper comments:

THE destruction of all Israel's foes and the introduction of this new era of righteousness will be the result of the birth of Immanuel, because the prophet exclaimed: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (vs. 6). This child is none other than that of the virgin concerning whom we studied in Isaiah 7:14.

This one is born unto the Jewish people--He sustains a relationship to the nation such as no other has ever done. Jesus came in fulfillment, as we have seen, of Isaiah 7:14, but He was not recognized by the nation as the God-man of whom this verse speaks. When, however, Israel as a nation accepts Him and pleads for Him to return--as the Scriptures have foretold that she will do--He will return and will be recognized by not only Israel, but the entire world as this Wonderful One, this Counsellor, this Mighty God, this Everlasting Father, this Prince of Peace!

When Israel receives her long-rejected Messiah and He returns, He will establish His rule and authority over His Chosen People. The Jews will then, as we learn from other passages, go forth into all the world, proclaiming the one everlasting gospel to the nations that survive the Tribulation, and convert them to Christ. As each nation receives the light and accepts Christ, it will apply to be incorporated into Messiah's kingdom. This turning to Christ by the nations of the world will continue until all will be brought under His benign and righteous reign. This growth and development of His kingdom is foretold in the following words: "Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this" (Isa. 9:7). (D.L. Cooper, *Commentary on Isaiah*, Biblical Research Monthly-December 1943).

For a thorough treatment on the Messiah as King with an eternal rule, see *The Footsteps of the Messiah: A Study of the Sequence of Prophetic Events*, Revised Edition, Ariel Ministries, 2004, Chapter Eighteen: The Government of the Messianic Kingdom, pages 387-401.

Teaching Outline for Isaiah 9:1-7

- 9:1 Place and Proclamation of the Promised King
- 9:2-5 Prosperity and Peace of the Promised Kingdom
- 9:6 Preeminence and Power of the Promised King
- 9:7 Perpetuity and Piety of the Promised Kingdom

7. The Anger of the Lord: 9:8 –10:4

Following the glorious announcement of the birth and everlasting rule of the promised Son, Isaiah turns his attention to the northern kingdom of Israel (Ephraim). The last section of Isaiah chapter 9 and first four verses of chapter 10 is a burning indictment against the arrogance, pride, false teaching, godlessness, evilness, foolishness, and wickedness of the people of the northern kingdom. As awful as is the list of the sins of the people, so is the list of the punishments by the Lord. This section is distinctively marked by the phrase: "*Even after all this, His anger is not turned away but his hand is still stretched out still.*" This phrase is stated in 9:12, 17, 21 and 10:4. See also Isaiah 5:25. This phrase marks the divisions of this declarative statement of the anger of God upon His disobedient and rebellious people. An outline of this section resulting from these divisions is suggested:

- 9:8-12: The Proud Confronted
- 9:13-17: The Populace Cleaved
- 9:18-21: The People Consumed
- 10:1-4: The Prosecutors Condemned

9:8-12: The Proud Confronted

9:8 *The Lord sent a word against Jacob,
and it has fallen on Israel.*

Isaiah begins this section with a declaration that Lord is delivering a message (of judgment) against Jacob which is for or will fall upon Israel. Isaiah often described the people of God as “Jacob” meaning the entire twelve tribes of Israel named after the sons of Jacob. In the context of this section Isaiah states that the message of judgment will fall upon the northern kingdom, Israel containing ten of the twelve tribes of Jacob. It is unlikely that Isaiah travelled to Israel to deliver this message during a time of warfare. See Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah*, Vol. 1, page 243. The message was about Israel but spoken to Judah to confront the southern kingdom with their need to consider their failure to seek God and take action by repenting and turning to God.

Isaiah was not the only eighth century B.C. prophet to declare a message of judgment upon Israel. Hosea, who may have been a native of Israel, primarily had his prophetic ministry to that nation although his message was also for Judah. The prophet Amos, although from Tekoa in Judah, ministered mostly to Israel (Amos 7:15). Micah had his prophetic ministry mostly among the people of Judah although some of his messages were for Israel (Micah 1:5-7). Jonah, another eighth century prophet, may have had an unrecorded prophetic ministry to Israel, was sent by God to bring a message of judgment (unless repentance came) to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria.

Thomas Constable comments:

The prophet announced that God had pronounced a message (Heb. *dabar*, word) of judgment against the Northern Kingdom. It had all the force of Yahweh's sovereign power behind it, but it would come subject to Ephraim continuing on the course it presently pursued. Prophetic announcements of judgment usually allowed for the possibility of repentance. If the people under God's promised judgment repented, the judgment would not fall (cf. Jer. 18:7-10; Jon. 3:4-10). (Thomas Constable, *Isaiah*, page 65).

9:9-10 *All the people will know it,
Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria,
who in pride and in arrogance of heart, say,
¹⁰ "The bricks have fallen,
but we will rebuild with carefully crafted stone;
the sycamores are cut down,
but we will replace them with cedars."*

The message of judgment Isaiah brought from God was not hidden or obscure. All of the people of Israel, signified by the words Ephraim, one of the largest tribes (7:2, 17) and Samaria, the capital city of Israel, knew or were to know the content of the judgment declaration of God. The first indictment of God against the northern kingdom in this specific message is that even though the people of Israel knew the message of God, they responded by declaring with pride and

arrogance in their heart. They like king Ahaz of Judah, refused to humble themselves before God and repent of their stubborn willfulness. They would not acknowledge nor trust in God for protection nor worship Him as their sovereign Ruler and Holy God.

The people of Israel mocked God in their arrogance, by stating that they will just rebuild with smooth stones because the bricks have been knocked down and will replant with cedars because the sycamores have been cut down. This is more than just stating that they will rebuild in times of calamity. It is a statement that no matter what God can throw at them, they will simply just work around it and get things back to normal. This response may have referred to the first assault on their land by the Assyrians (733-732 B.C.), in which many of their cities were destroyed. But as the later verses declare there will be no more normal in their land.

Students of the Bible must be discerning about the proper interpretation and application of this verse. In its historical and grammatical context, this verse is only stating the response of the sinful and hard-hearted people of the northern nation of Israel to the attack of a foreign nation on their land and their failure to seek God in repentance and trust. Those who would lift the words of 9:10 from the book of Isaiah and apply it to a far future event are miss-applying the words of Scripture.

9:11-12 *Therefore the LORD has raised their adversaries against them,
And has stirred up his enemies,
12 Aram on the east,
and the Philistines on the west;
they will gobble up Israel with an open mouth.
Even after all this, his anger is not turned away,
but his hand is stretched out still.*

The Lord will raise up adversaries against them consisting of the Arameans from the northeast and the Philistines from the southwest. These local enemies however are just irritants in contrast to Assyria who will come against them to totally destroy them. (Isaiah 10:1-11). The NKJV in vs. 11 has “*the adversaries of Rezin*” thus it is not Rezin and his army that is indicated but the foes of Rezin who are the Assyrians. The main point of these verses is that Israel is not to think they have been attacked just by the imperialistic designs of these nations but these nations have been stirred into action by God who is sending them on His behalf to punish the nation for their repetitive and unrelenting sins against Him.

Vs. 12 ends with the refrain, “*Even after all this, his anger is not turned away, but his hand is still stretched out.*” This is the same phrase Isaiah has employed before in 5:25 and again in chapter 9 in verses 17 and 21 and chapter 10 vs. 4. Gary V. Smith comments:

This oracle ends with a refrain that characterizes this whole unit. The refrain has three parts: (a) even though God has already brought all these judgments to pass; (b) his anger has not stopped; and (c) his sovereign hand is still outstretched and ready to punish more. Although it would have been wise to turn to God as soon as the first punishment came (Exod 7–11; Amos 4:6–11), the

people did not repent. Consequently God will continue to exert more and more pressure to convince his people in Israel to turn to him, rather than to rely on themselves. The continued work of God's wrath parallels Amos's repeated reminder to the Israelites that because of three sins and even four, God will not turn back his wrath against any sinful nation (Amos 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13). Either punishment for sin must be exacted before God's wrath is satisfied and removed (Deut 13:17; Josh 7:26) or else one must seek to atone for these sins (Exod 32:12, 20, 31-32; Lev 4-5). The image of the "outstretched hand" (*yādô nēṭ ûyâ*) of God is a symbol of power ready to act, either for good, as in the exodus (Exod 15:12; Deut 4:34; 5:15; 7:19), or for punishment of sin (Jer 21:5; Ezek 6:14; Zeph 2:13). God's outstretched hand demonstrates his power to carry out his plans for all the nations of the earth (Isa 14:26-27). In this case God's outstretched hand still has plans to enact more punishment against Israel. (Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah*, Vol. 1, pages 246-247).

9:13-17: The Populace Cleaved

9:13: *Yet the people have not turned to him who struck them,
neither have they sought the LORD of hosts.*

The Lord sent judgment upon the northern kingdom of Israel because they continually refused to acknowledge Him. They also failed to repent of their wickedness and seek Him in trust and faith. The people did not discern that the invasion of their land was punishment sent from God. God sent this judgment so that they could turn back to Him. This verse is a dramatic insight into the thoughts and intents of God. He brings a rod of correction which damages and destroys in order that the ones being disciplined will repent of their evilness and return in faith to Him. Refer also to Psalm 119:75 Proverbs 3:11-12; Jeremiah 5:3, Hosea 7:7-10, Amos 4:1-11 and Hebrews 12:5-6 for similar insights from God as to the reason why He inflicts those who are called His people with such corrective discipline.

9:14 *Therefore the LORD will cut off from Israel
head and tail,
palm branch and reed in just one day.*

Because of Samaria's refusal to repent and return to God. He will, in a single day, cut off the "head" which represents the elders and dignitaries (vs. 15), and God will also, in the same day, cut off the "tail" which represents the false prophets (also vs. 15). The "palm branch and reed" are most likely descriptive terms for the same two groups. That day will be soon forthcoming, in about 10 years, in 722 B.C. when the Assyrian armies will sweep in like a flood and capture the people of Israel and take most of them away as captives. The northern kingdom would come to an end. See a similar expression using head/tail and palm branch/bulrush in Isaiah 19:5 in the context of the Lord's judgment on Egypt.

9:15-16 *The elder and the dignitaries, are the head;
the prophets who teach lies, are the tail.*

¹⁶ *For those who lead this people have led them astray;
those who are led by them are destroyed.*

The meaning of the words “*head and tail*” from vs. 14 are explained. The head were the elders and dignitaries, representing the religious and government heads of Israel who, as false guides were causing the people to be led astray. The tail represents the false prophets who spread lies among the people. The people therefore were confused for they were not taught to trust in the Lord but to put their confidence and trust in evil kings and their kingdoms. Isaiah had previously mentioned this issue in 3:12 will address it again in 28:7 and 32:5-7. See also Jeremiah 23:13-21, 32; 50:6; Hosea 4:12; Amos 2:4; and Micah 3:1-12. In the New Testament, similar warnings are found in 2 Peter 2:1-22 and Revelation 2:20-23.

9:17 *Therefore the Lord is not pleased with their young men,
nor will he have compassion on their orphans and widows;
for everyone is godless and an evildoer,
and every mouth speaks folly.
Even after all this, his anger is not turned away,
but his hand is stretched out still.*

The whole nation of Israel had become godless and everyone from the highest in society to the lowest in rank were evil continually provoking the Lord to remove His pleasure from even the orphans and widows who were counted among the evildoers. The Lord as recorded in Scripture took special care of orphans and widows. Isaiah for example has already mentioned this need in 1:17, 23 and will again in 10:2. It is first mentioned in Exodus 22:22 and often in Deuteronomy (chapters 10, 14, 16, 24, 26 and 27). Jeremiah spoke of it in 7:6; 22:3 and 49:11. See also Hosea 14:3; Zechariah 7:10 and Malachi 3:5. A well-known admonition of the Lord in James 1:27 states: “*Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained by the world.*” However, in this rare occurrence (Isaiah 9:17), the Lord will not defend them because they also have become evil and godless (see note below). At the end of this second division (9:13-17) of the larger section (9:8-10:4), Isaiah repeats the phrase stated in vs. 12 and again in vs. 21 and vs. 4 of chapter 10. For an enhanced comment on this repetitive phrase see notes on vs. 12 above.

The word “godless” in vs. 17 is translated “hypocrite” in the KJV. Victor Buksbazen comments:

“The word “hypocrite” (*honef*) primarily means “a flatterer.”⁵ The false prophet and lying teacher always flatters his audiences, telling them the things they like to hear, that they are not as sinful as the true prophets of God would have them believe, and that their grim predictions will not come to pass. By flattering their people they mislead them. Note 5: In referring to some of the Pharisees as, “hypocrites,” Christ had this passage of Isaiah as a precedent. In the 4th century B.C., Socrates and Plato, called the sophist, who were manipulators of ideas and words in order to mislead people, *kolax* – flatterers. Dante places “flatterers and hypocrites” in “nether hell.” Dante, *Inferno*, Canto XVIII. (Victor Buksbazen, *Isaiah*, Page 169 for comment and page 179 for note).

9:18-21: The People Consumed

9:18 *For wickedness burns like fire;
it devours the briars and thorns;
it also burns the thickets of the forest,
so that they go up in smoke.*

The wickedness of the people of Israel burns as quickly and intensely as a fire would consume briars, thorns and thickets of the forest with smoke rising upward in a column as a sign of the fire. Evil consumes a people and spreads as fiercely as a raging fire devouring all in its path. This nation of wicked people (vs. 17) will become the source of their own desolation as they all become engulfed as a fire that would ravage them. They reap what they have sown.

9:19 *Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts the land is burnt up
and the people are like the fuel for the fire;
no one spares even his brother.*

A second fire is consuming the nation. This fire is the “wrath” or fierce anger, or fury of the Lord who in fiery judgment upon them burns up their land and it is the people who are the fuel for the fire. The anger of the Lord is often depicted in Scripture as a consuming fire. Isaiah mentions the fire of the anger of the Lord in 5:25; 13:9; 24:6; 30:27; and 33:10-14. See also Lamentations 2:3; Ezekiel 20:47; Nahum 1:6; Zephaniah 2:2; 3:8; and Malachi 4:1. In the New Testament see John 15:6. The last phrase of vs. 19 states: “*no one spares even his brother.*” This is explained in the following verses (20-21) and provides justification for the Lord’s fury which devours the people like fire.

9:20-21 *They devoured on the right, but were still hungry;
he ate on the left, but they were not be satisfied.
They will all eat the flesh of their own children.*

²¹ *Manasseh devours Ephraim,
and Ephraim, Manasseh;
both will fight against Judah.*

*Even after all this, his anger is not turned away,
but his hand is stretched out still.*

The depraved peoples of Israel snatched and devoured whatever they could grab from both the right and the left and yet they were never satisfied. These greedy, ungrateful, and self-absorbed people were always discontent with everything around them. The phrase: “*They will all eat the flesh of their own children,*” is translated in the NKJV as “*Every man shall eat of the flesh of his own arm*” and points to vs. 21 where it is described that inter-tribal warfare has been an ongoing plague upon Israel for many years. They have been devouring or killing their own brothers as if they were eating the flesh of their own arms or children.

Two of the larger tribes of the northern kingdom, Ephraim and Manasseh had been involved in civil war and also had been in the past as recorded in Judges 12: 1-6. These two tribes were descendants from the sons of Joseph and thus were part of the same family roots as was Judah whom they also attacked in the current war, which many scholars describe as the Syro-Ephraimite war. See 2 Kings 16:5 and 2 Chronicles 28:5-15. For an enhanced comment on this repetitive phrase see notes on vs. 12 above.

10:1-4: The Prosecutors Condemned

The larger section of this series of messages covers 9:8 – 10:4 and comprises of four parts or stanzas each with the same refrain. See notes on 9:12 above. The first three stanzas (9:8-12; 9:13-17 and 9:18-21) are judgments against the northern kingdom of Israel but Isaiah addresses these messages to his own nation of Judah. Isaiah was describing the sinful condition of the people of Israel and the judgment from God that would come upon these northern kinsmen. Isaiah's audience would certainly have listened with interest and they would have derived some pleasure in learning about the judgment that is to come upon the people of Israel because of Israel's vicious attack upon the land of Judah. Now in this last stanza, Isaiah suddenly turns his attention to the people of Judah and declares an oracle of woe upon them in an attempt to persuade them that the same judgment from God that is decreed upon Israel because of the wickedness of that nation will be coming upon Judah. The people of Judah need to repent and turn to God, yet it seems they still will not listen to Him.

10:1-2 *Woe to those who make unjust decrees,
and to the writers who write oppressive laws;
to turn aside the needy from justice,
and to rob the poor of my people of their rights,
that widows may be their spoil,
and that they may make the orphans their prey!*

An oracle of woe (vs. 1) is declared. Although Isaiah does not state that this woe is directed to his own country there are a few indications that the last stanza of the four-fold message of judgment is for Judah. The "woe" is against those who are in places of political and judicial authority in Judah. They are corrupt and wicked for they enact laws that have an evil intent. The judges of the land declare judgments that are "unjust" which protect the criminals and further punish the victims who are in need of honest judgment. The people of Judah are stripped of their "rights" and in contrast to the plight of orphans and widows in Israel (9:17), those in Judah are under God's care and He speaks out against their unjust treatment. The widows and orphans are plundered and what resources they have, however limited, are taken as spoil by the wickedness of those responsible for the care and protection of the nation. Geoffrey W. Grogan, (Isaiah, page 78), notes that this section is similar to the judgment declarations of the prophet Amos: Amos 2:6-7; 5:11-12; and 8:4-6.

10:3-4 *What will you do in the day of punishment,
when devastation comes from far away?
To whom will you flee for help?
Where will you leave your wealth?*
⁴ *Nothing is left but to huddle down with the prisoners,
or fall among the slain.
Even after all this, his anger is not turned away,
but his hand is stretched out still.*

Isaiah asks these leaders of Judah, in vs. 3: what would they do in their day of punishment and to whom will they flee for help and where would they leave their wealth? The answer Isaiah gives in vs. 4 is a just response from God, stating that they will have no help from the Assyrians who will kill them and all who are not slain will be taken into captivity. Also, God Himself will not help them. Their plight is hopeless. It appears from Isaiah's declaration that even though God has offered an object lesson in the plight of the people of Israel, the people of Judah, will not repent and trust in God. Isaiah does not wait for their answer but drives to his conclusion that these leaders of Judah will receive the just punishment for their wickedness. Just as God will cause the destruction of Israel, He will also be the source of Judah's ruin. For an extended comment on the last phrase of vs. 4 see notes on 9:12 above

Teaching Outline for Isaiah 9:8-10:4

9:8-12 God's Indictment against Flippant Temerity
9:12 Refrain
9:13-17 God's Indictment against False Teaching
9:17 Refrain
9:18-21 God's Indictment against Family Treachery
9:21 Refrain
10:1-4 God's Indictment against Fraudulent Tyrants
10:4 Refrain
 Refrain: "In spite of this, His anger does not turn away
 and His hand is still stretched out."

8. Assyria: God's Choice for Punishing the Nation: 10:5-19

Assyria was chosen by God to be the rod of His anger against the people of Judah whom the Lord describes as a "godless nation" who are the people of His wrath. God was sending the Assyrians to seize plunder and spoil from His people. However, a woe is pronounced on the Assyrians and their king because they were not content to be God's instrument of judgment. They failed to acknowledge God as the One whom had sent them and had their own evil plans to destroy and remove nations for their own imperialistic designs. By assigning to themselves wisdom and understanding and refusing to give God His proper honor, the Assyrians would themselves be subject to the judgment of God. Their doom is declared and it will be certain.

10:5 *Woe to Assyria, the rod of my anger,
the club in their hands is my rage!*

The second “woe” oracle of chapter 10 is directed to Assyria whom God calls” “*the rod of My anger and the club in their hands is My rage!*” The prophet Isaiah has used the portrait of the rod and the bar (staff) as instruments of warfare in 9:4 and would again in 10:24. This is in stark contrast to King David’s portrayal of the rod and staff of the Lord as a source of comfort as written in Psalm 23:4. See Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah*, Vol. 2, page 256 for an extended discussion on the Scriptural use of God’s rod and staff. God describes His emotions against His people as that of anger and indignation. The Hebrew word for “anger” is *’aph* and usually has the meaning of nose or nostrils indicating the face. In this context, it is interpreted as anger (or wrath) meaning that God has turned his face against His people in His just and righteous wrath against them. The Hebrew word for “rage” (or indignation) is *za’am* which has the meaning of such fury that one literally froths or foams at the mouth. The combination of these two words (anger and rage) therefore gives a vivid picture of just how full of fury God was with the wickedness of His people. God’s fury was so intense that His face demonstrated outwardly what He was feeling inside. This of course is an anthropological description as God is a Spirit and does not have a “face” but God often expresses Himself in these ‘human like” terms to express His emotions.

10:6 *I am sending him against a godless nation,
and against the people of my wrath.
I will give him an order,
to take the spoil,
to seize the plunder,
and to stomp them down
like the mud in the streets.*

God’s rod and club (staff), as implements of His judgment were sent against a godless nation and the people of His fury (Judah) and were commissioned by God for the bearer (Assyria) to “capture booty and to seize prey.” This call by God was demonstrated by the meaning of Isaiah’s second son, Maher-shalal-hash-baz as a sign against Judah. See notes on Isaiah 8:1-4 above. Isaiah 10:5-34 is a declaration of God’s intention to (1) punish Judah for that nation’s refusal to trust Him and for calling upon Assyria for help and (2) to reserve to Himself a faithful remnant is graphically displayed by the names of Isaiah’s two sons: Maher-shalal-hash-baz (quick to the plunder, swift to the spoil), (Isaiah 8:2) and Shear-jashub (a remnant shall return) (Isaiah 7:3, 10:21). This section (10:5-34) also describes God’s righteous judgment against Assyria whom He used to punish His people. But the Assyrians went too far in their assigned role (10:7-11) and were arrogant and boastful failing to acknowledge God as the sovereign Lord over His creation and all of the nations of the earth. The last phrase of vs. 6 is descriptive of God’s intended judgment on Judah. God had commissioned Assyria to trample down the people of Judah like mud in the streets. They were to be trod upon so heavily that they would be completely humbled and have no option but to look up to God in repentance. Isaiah’s declaration of woe on Judah (10:1-4) is also a descriptive portrait of this humbling of God’s people due to their inciting of God to wrath. See also Isaiah 3:8-9.

10:7 *Yet this is not what he intends,
nor is this what his heart is planning;
it is in his heart to destroy,
and to cut off many nations.*

Assyria, however, rather than humbling God's people as God intended, set out to completely destroy Judah and other nations for its own imperialistic purposes. The nations of earth seldom have acknowledged God's directive purposes for them. They exist to fulfill God's plans and purposes yet they act as though God has no control or affect upon them. Assyria was one of the ancient world's most brutal and cruel aggressors. Victor Buksbazen comments:

"Of all the nations which inhabited ancient Mesopotamia, the Assyrians were the most warlike and ruthless. They lived for war and gloried in their military exploits and cruelty. They developed a highly advanced war machine and used naked terror as a means of conquest and as a method of holding their defeated enemies in abject fear and submission.

They Assyrians were apparently among the first in history to apply psychological warfare. Approaching the walls of a city which they were about to attack, they would address the defenders in their native tongue, demanding their surrender. Just such an incident is vividly described in Isaiah 36:4-21. If the defenders refused to surrender, the Assyrians would then lay siege to the city and attack the walls with battering rams, or dig tunnels underneath or kindle huge fires under the city gates and walls until they collapsed. After the capture of the city, the Assyrian king would sit upon his throne at the gate of the city, surrounded by his resplendent court.

The conquered population was marched before him, headed by their king or ruler. Most of the captives, young and old, would then be killed, or burned alive as a sacrifice to the national god of Assyria, Assur. Sometimes the captives would be flayed alive, or blinded, or would have their heads impaled on sharp stakes, sometimes with hooks in their noses. The city itself would be plundered and its accumulated wealth carried away into Assyria." (Victor Buksbazen, *Isaiah*, pages 171-172).

10:8-9 *For he boasts, "Are not my princes all kings?"*

⁹ *Is not Calno like Carchemish?*

Is not Hamath like Arpad?

Is not Samaria like Damascus?

Assyria in vs. 8 is described as "he" which reveals that the words spoken are from Tiglath-Pileser III who was the king of Assyria at the time of Isaiah's declaration of this woe oracle and to the other Assyrian kings up to the time of the disastrous (for Assyria) siege upon Jerusalem in 701 B.C. See also the proud and arrogant boasting of king Sennacherib recorded in chapters 36 and 37. The boastful words of the Assyrian king is that his princes (commanders in the NIV) are as powerful as kings of smaller nations the Assyrians had conquered. The king's boast continues to list six cities Assyria had already or perhaps would in the future capture. (1) Calno (Calneh) was located in the plains of Shinar (Genesis 10:10) although by its association to Carchemish in vs. 9, it may have been located more to the north. See also: Ezekiel 27:23 and Amos 6:2. (2)

Carchemish (modern city of Jerablus) was located in northern Aram (Syria) and was captured by the Assyrian king Sargon II in 717 B.C. It was subsequently conquered by Pharaoh Neco II of Egypt in 609 B.C. and by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in 605 B.C. in a famous battle (Jeremiah 46:2). (3) Hamath was a city of ancient Syria located along the Orontes River 125 miles north of Damascus. It was first captured by the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III but completely destroyed by Sargon II in 720 B.C. After the conquest of Samaria in 721 B.C., the Assyrians transported people from other parts of their empire, including Hamath and re-settled them in Samaria. (2 Kings 17:24, Isaiah 11:11). Arpad was located in northern Syria, near to the city of Hamath. (4) Arpad was conquered first by Tiglath-Pileser III in 740 B.C. and in 720 B.C. by Sargon II. See references to this city as a proverb for a conquered city in 2 Kings 18:34; 19:13; Isaiah 36:19 and 37:13. (5) Samaria was the capital of Israel and is often referred to as representing the entire kingdom of Israel. Much of the history of the failure and downfall of Samaria is recorded in 2 Kings. Following a siege of three years by the Assyrians under two kings, the city was finally conquered by the new king Sargon II in 721 B.C. (6) Damascus, capital of Syria, has a long history both in Biblical and modern times. In the context of the boast by the king(s) of Assyria, the city was captured by Tiglath-Pileser III in 733 B.C. See 2 Kings 16:7-9. For a detailed historical description of the conquest of cities mentioned in Isaiah 10:9, see: *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 1975, General Editor, Merrill C. Tenney.

10:10-11 *As my hand has reached the kingdoms of the idols,
whose images excel those of Jerusalem and of Samaria,
¹¹ shall I not do to Jerusalem and her idols,
exactly as I have done to Samaria and her idols?*

The boast of the king(s) of Assyria continues in verses 10-11 to include kingdoms (including city-states) which the king(s) claimed had greater idols than either Jerusalem or Samaria. The king(s) claim that they will do to (conquer) Jerusalem and her idols just as they had done to Samaria and her idols. It is obvious from this boast that: (1) Jerusalem was not yet under siege by the Assyrians and therefore the timeframe for Isaiah's message was prior to 701 B.C. and more likely just after 721 B.C. The Assyrian invasion of Samaria was certainly a most immediate event. (2) It is also obvious that the Assyrians either did not know about or recognize the God of the people of Israel who was sovereign over His created world and was the One who called Assyria to trample the people of Samaria (10:6) because of the wickedness and unrepentant hearts of the people of the nation of Israel. The Assyrians were but instruments in God's hands (10:5-6; 15) and who were now to learn of God's judgment upon them (10:12 and following verses). There was truth however to the claims of the king(s) of Assyria that both Jerusalem and Samaria were cities where idols were worshiped. The Assyrians assumed wrongly that these idols alone were the only God the Israelites had to contend with. The Mighty God, the Lord of hosts, the Holy One of Israel and the light of Israel would soon rise to make His name known to the nations whom are less than nothing and meaningless before Him (Isaiah 40:17).

10:12 *When the Lord has finished his whole work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, he will say,*

"I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria, and the haughty look of his eyes.

The Lord next describes His planned judgment on the king of Assyria. In the context of verses 12-19 and 22b-34, God is describing His judgment upon the Assyrian king Sennacherib who approached Jerusalem to lay siege to it. The Assyrian army was prevented from its planned siege and destruction of Jerusalem. Instead of Jerusalem being destroyed it was the army of Assyria that was annihilated and later king Sennacherib was assassinated (Isaiah 37:36-38). Before God would deal with Assyria, He would first complete all His work He had planned for Mount Zion and Jerusalem. Isaiah later addressed this work as recorded in 28:21: The Lord will be stirred up to: *"perform his deed, his extraordinary deed, and bring to pass his work, His unusual work."* This deed (task or work) was such that God was stirred up to work against His own people by bringing devastating judgment upon them. Instead of working for them, God was working against them. Instead of working to bring safety and comfort to His people, He was working to bring them death and exile. When this work was decreed upon His people God would also turn do "work" against the *"fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria and the haughty look of his eyes."* The "fruit" of the king of Assyria was destroying instead of punishing God's people and ascribing this destruction to his own abilities and pompously praising himself for these deeds.

10:13-14 *For he says, "By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I have understanding.*

I have removed the boundaries of the peoples, and have robbed their treasures, and like a powerful conqueror I have brought down those who sat on thrones.

¹⁴ *My hand has found the riches of the peoples like a bird's nest; like one gathers eggs that are abandoned, I have gathered all the earth. There was not one that flapped a wing, or that opened its mouth, or chirped."*

The Prophet lists the proud and arrogant words of the Assyrian king which is a reminder of King Nebuchadnezzar's similar words of hubris at a later time as recorded in Daniel 4:28-30. The Assyrian king ascribes to himself strength, wisdom, understanding, and most deserving of judgment he called himself in vs. 13 "a powerful conqueror" (NIV: like a mighty one). This self-ascribed exaltation would be similar to stating that he was like a god. There is only One mighty God as Isaiah would soon state in vs. 21. This mighty God would bring His just and righteous judgment upon the proud human head of the self-exalted king of Assyria.

The king of Assyria boasted of his accomplishments as: conquering nations and removing their borders, plundering the nations his armies had conquered and destroying the peoples. The king's arrogant boast reaches the pompous height of hyperbole declaring in vs. 14 that he had "gathered all the earth" and no one resisted. The king used the metaphor of gathering eggs from an abandoned nest without any resistance from the birds of the nest. For another section of boasting by the king of Assyria see Isaiah chapter 36. This proud self-exalting declaration by the king of Assyria demanded an answer and God was quick to respond as recorded in verses 15-19.

10:15 *Does the axe boast against the one who wields it?*

Does the saw extol itself over the one who saws with it?

As if a rod should wave the one who lifts it up,

or as if a staff should lift up the one not made of wood.

God commences His response to the insolence of the king of Assyria by rhetorically asking: are the tools of men, (the axe, the saw, the rod and the staff) to exalt themselves over those who wield them? God was stating that He was the One who used Assyria and its might just like a craftsman would wield an instrument to accomplish his purposes. The tools being used have nothing to say or boast about as if they were mightier than their employer. As recorded in vs. 5 God calls Assyria, "*the rod of my anger and the club in their hands is My rage!*" In vs. 6 God states that He sent it, Assyria as the rod and club (staff), against a godless nation: Judah. See also vs. 24 where God applies this analogy:

*O my people who live in Zion,
do not be afraid of the Assyrian,
though he strikes you with the rod,
and lifts up his club against you,
just as Egypt did.*

There is much to think about in these verses in chapter 10. God is the sovereign One who claims to use a cruel pagan aggressive nation as an axe, saw, club, rod and staff as His instruments of punishment against His own people. God initiates the action and applies judgment. Yet God righteously and with true justice condemns the "instruments" used (the Assyrians) due to their wicked intension to completely destroy instead of punish God's people. The people being targeted, Judah and Israel, although they deserve to be judged and punished by a holy God are told in vs. 24 not to fear the fierce Assyrian who strikes them yet it is plain for God has told them, it is really He who is striking them. There is in Scripture a tension between God's sovereign acts and the responsibility of humans, whom God has created, to be responsible for their acts. Humans, individually and nationally cannot claim that because God did this or that, it therefore absolves them of any blame or of any responsibility for what has happened to them. God knows the heart of everyone who has ever lived or will ever live and His just appraisal of all humans is that none are righteous, none who seek God, none who have done good as recorded in Psalm 14:1-3 and 53:1-3. The Apostle Paul cites these Scriptures and under the inspiration of God states in Romans 3:23: "*for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God.*"

The great issue here is that God alone created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them. All, everything in all creation, belongs to God. He has the sole right to do with His creation as He deems desirable. Those who are created have no rights, no voice, no power, no standing or no ability to demand of God anything, including an explanation of why God created the universe and why He acts in any capacity. Further God has declared that no one has any righteous standing before Him for everyone has sinned. Yet and solely on the basis of God's most boundless grace, He has provided a way for humans to come into a "right" relationship with Him. Humans did nothing to deserve this grace or indeed can do nothing to benefit from it. It is God's sole work or act to provide this grace which Paul explained in his letters and Jesus described in the four Gospel accounts. The only thing humans can do is respond to the offer of grace by faith. Isaiah also describes the act of God in providing this grace in 1:18 and 52:13-53:12. Therefore God has in all righteousness and justice brought His judgment upon both His people (Judah and Israel) and upon the instrument of His fury, the nation of Assyria. However, even in the midst of God's wrath, He remembers mercy (Habakkuk 3:2), for in Isaiah 19:23-25, it is recorded that God indeed will bestow mercy on both Assyria (and Egypt) and His people. See also Isaiah 30:18.

10:16-19 *Therefore the sovereign LORD of hosts
will send among his burly warriors emaciation;
his glory will be incinerated like the burning of fire.*

¹⁷ *The light of Israel will be for a fire,
and his Holy One for a flame.*

*It will burn and devour in just one day
his thorns and his briers.*

¹⁸ *He will consume the grandeur of his forest,
and his fruitful field,
both body and soul.*

It will be like when a sick person wastes away.

¹⁹ *There will be so few surviving trees in his forest,
that even a child could write them down.*

Isaiah declares in verses 16-19 what God will do to the Assyrians: a) a wasting disease (emaciation) will be sent among the stout Assyrian warriors; b) God Himself will kindle a fire and He (Israel's Holy One) will be a flame to burn and devour the Assyrians (called thorns and briers) in a single day; and c) the glory of the Assyrians described as the grandeur of his forest and his fruitful field (both body and soul) will be consumed like some-one who is sick wastes away. The fulfillment of this prophecy of destruction against Assyria came in three historical events. The *first* was the defeat of the Assyrians by Babylon in 609 B.C.; the *second* was the capture of the Assyrian capital Nineveh in 612 B.C. by the Babylonians; and the *third* was the final defeat of the Assyrians by the Babylonians in the battle of Carchemish in 605 B.C. Prior to these events, the Assyrian army was destroyed by God in 701 B. C. See Isaiah 37:36.

God uses the metaphor in vs. 17 of Himself as “*the light of Israel*” who will become a fire and his Holy One (will become) a flame. The picture here is of God holding a torch that provides both light and fire. The torch provides light to guide His people in the darkness but it also is a fire that burns and consumes. The first picture of God as light to Israel is seen in Exodus 14:20 when a cloud separated the camps of Egypt and Israel just prior to God opening a walkway in the Red Sea for His people to cross to the other side and escape from the pursuing Egyptians. During the wilderness wanderings of the people of Israel, God appeared to them as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night as a light. Exodus 13:21-22, 40:38; Numbers 14:14 and Nehemiah 9:12, 19. God also is described as a light, providing salvation: Psalm 27:1. He Himself is described as light: 1 John 1:5. God shines His light into our hearts to reveal the glory of Jesus Christ: 2 Corinthians 4:4-6. God’s Son, Jesus Christ is the light that shines in the darkness for all to see: John 1:4-5 and Christ is the light of the world: John 8:12 and 12:46. God is also a fire that consumes: Isaiah 33:14 and Hebrews 12:29. The Servant of the Lord has the ministry of being a light to the nations: Isaiah 42:6 and 49:6. See also Luke 2:32; Acts 13:47 and 26:23 which ascribe this ministry of light to the nations to Jesus Christ.

Teaching Outline for Isaiah 10:5-19

10:5-14 The Evil Design of the Assyrians

10:16-19 The Eventual Destruction of the Assyrians

9. The Return of the Remnant: 10:20-34

In the section: Isaiah 10:20-34, Isaiah records a prophecy of hope for those who will escape the scourge of the Assyrians and he also provides a further word on the certain destruction of the Assyrians. The hope is found in the concept of a remnant of the Jewish people that will truly rely on the Lord instead of on a pagan foreign nation. This hope however is a double-edged sword. On one side, at least some will survive who will follow the Lord. On the other side, the larger majority of the people who will not trust completely in the Lord, will not survive.

10:20-23 *In that day the remnant of Israel,
and those who survive from the house of Jacob,
will no longer depend on the one who struck them,
but they will rely on the LORD,
the Holy One of Israel, in truth.*

²¹ *A remnant will return,
the remnant of Jacob to the mighty God.*

²² *For though your people, Israel,
be as the sand of the sea,
only a remnant of them will return;
a destruction is decreed,
overflowing with righteousness.*

²³ *For the sovereign LORD of hosts
will execute complete destruction,
in the midst of the whole land.*

Isaiah identifies the hope of a surviving number of people with the word “remnant” but this hope has been previously declared in chapter 4 and in chapter 8:9-15. The hope of the survival of a remnant was first recorded in Scripture in Genesis 45:7 where Joseph in responding to his brother’s grief for previously selling him into slavery, declared: “God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance.” In 2 Kings 19:30-31, which is a parallel passage to the events recorded in Isaiah 37, Isaiah states: *“Then the surviving remnant of the house of Judah will again take root downward, and produce fruit upward. A remnant will go out of Jerusalem, and from Mount Zion survivors will escape. The zeal of the LORD will do this.”*

God was often angry with His chosen people for their rebellious acts against Him and often threatened to destroy them. Yet his anger would not abide forever and He later gave a promise of hope and forgiveness. In Micah 7:18, the prophet states:

*Who is a God like you, that pardons iniquity,
and passes over the transgression
of the remnant of his possession?
He does not remain angry forever,
because he delights in loyal love.*

Isaiah discusses the hope of the remnant again in 11:11, 11:16, 28:5, 37:4, 37:31, 37:32 and 46:3. Other references to the hope of the remnant in the Old Testament are found in: Jeremiah 23:3, 31:7, 42:2 and 50:20; Ezekiel 6:8; Amos 5:15; Micah 2:12, 4:7, 5:7, 5:8 and 7:18; Zephaniah 2:7, 2:9 and 3:12-13; Haggai 1:12, 1:14 and 2:2; Zechariah 8:6, 8:11, 8:12 and 9:7. In the New Testament the hope of the remnant is found in Romans 9:27 and 11:5. The Lord is still preserving a remnant to Himself to this very day who *“will rely on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel”*. Isaiah 10:20. The Lord is still the Holy One of Israel and Israel will survive so that the Lord can fulfill all of His promises to His chosen people. For a more detailed study on the remnant of Israel, see Ariel Messianic Bible Study MBS191, *The Remnant of Israel: Past, Present and Future*, Ariel Ministries.

As recorded in Isaiah 10:20, the prophet begins the message of hope with the words, *“In that day”*. In the immediate context, the phrase *“in that day”* must certainly refer to those who will escape the destroying armies of the Assyrians. Yet in many Scriptural passages this phrase also has a future reference to the *“day of the Lord”* where God will establish a kingdom of peace on the earth ruled by His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ who is the Messianic hope to all who trust in Him. See discussion on this day in the notes on Isaiah chapter 2 and chapter 4.

David L. Cooper suggests:

IN VERSES 20-30 we have a prediction that there will also be a remnant a of Israel which will escape the judgment of that time--the great Tribulation as we learn from parallel passages--and which will return to God. At that time this faithful remnant will no longer lean upon any human government or group of nations for protection as Israel has done in the past. This remnant will see

the mistake which their ancestors have made through the centuries and will return "unto the mighty God." Who is this Mighty God? The answer is found in a verse which we considered in our study last month, Isaiah 9:6: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

The remnant of Israel will be taught the facts concerning this child born unto the Jewish nation who is none other than "the Wonderful One, the Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." This passage, studied in the light of related ones, is a messianic prediction which foretells the coming of the second person of the Holy Trinity to earth and His being born in the form of the Christ-child. When the time arrives here foretold by the prophet in chapter 10, Israel--the generation living at that time--will be convinced of the truthfulness of the message and will accept Him as Redeemer and Messiah.

The prophet looks into the future and sees the great increase of the Jewish people as at the present time. Hence he declares that, though the people of Israel shall be as the sands of the sea, only a remnant will return, the reason being that there is a destruction decreed upon even the Chosen People of God--a destruction which will overflow with righteousness. From the last paragraph of Zechariah, chapter 13, we learn that there will be two-thirds of the nation of Israel which will succumb to the mighty strokes of God's judgment during this Tribulation. Only a third of the nation therefore will survive. These will return to this Mighty God. The Lord has decreed a full end to be made concerning the present order of affairs. He is going to make a clean sweep of the present situation. In righteousness will He perform all His acts. (D. L. Cooper, *Commentary on Isaiah*, Biblical Research Monthly-December 1943).

This remnant of Jacob will return to the "mighty God" Isaiah 10:21. In one sense this refers to the repentance of the few who will fully trust in God and in another it is a definite prophecy of those who will trust in their Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ who is called "Mighty God" in Isaiah's earlier prophetic declaration as recorded in chapter 9:6.

The prophet continues his discussion on the remnant in vs. 22 by reminding the people of God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 22:17: "*I will surely bless you, and I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will possess the gate of their enemies.*" Yet this promise of great numbers of people is not a guarantee that all of them would be spiritually saved, as Isaiah in 10:22 reminds them, "*only a remnant of them will return.*" The Apostle Paul also made reference to Isaiah 10:22 in his Epistle to the Romans: "Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel, "*If the number of the children of Israel are as the sand of the sea, only a remnant will be saved.*" Romans 9:27

In the second half of vs. 22 and in vs. 23, Isaiah reminds the Jewish people of the other blade of the double edge sword of the promise of the remnant: "*A destruction is decreed, overflowing with righteousness. For the sovereign LORD of hosts will execute complete destruction in the midst of the whole land.*" Yet a remnant of the people will survive who will trust in the Lord but the greater number will not survive because they turned away from the Lord to put their ill-fated trust in Assyria.

- 10:24-27** *Therefore this is what the sovereign LORD of hosts says,
"O my people who live in Zion,
do not be afraid of the Assyrian,
though he strikes you with the rod,
and lifts up his club against you,
just as Egypt did.*
- ²⁵ *For in a few moments my fury will be over,
then my anger will be directed to their destruction.*
- ²⁶ *The LORD of hosts will beat them with a whip,
just like he struck Midian at the rock of Oreb.
He will lift his rod over the sea,
just as he did in Egypt.*
- ²⁷ *In that day his burden will be removed from off your shoulder,
and his yoke from off your neck,
and the yoke will be broken because you will be so brawny.*

The prophet exhorts the Jewish people who trust in God, to not fear the Assyrian threat for God will turn His indignation away from His people and He will spend His anger on the destruction of the Assyrians. In vs. 26, God reminds them of His previous actions when He: *struck Midian at the rock of Oreb*" (Judges 7:24-25) and of His destruction of the Egyptian armies in the midst of the Red Sea and the salvation of the fleeing Israelites (Exodus chapter 14). In vs. 27 God promises: to remove the burden from their shoulders and to remove the yoke from their neck and to break the yoke (of the Assyrian threat), because of their prosperity or fatness. The DASV "because you will be so brawny" seems to miss the point as does the NKJV "because of the anointing oil". The reference to the fatness of the Assyrians may refer to the fact that they have become wealthy from the tribute exacted from the people of Judah for "promising" to protect them from Aram and Ephraim (northern country of Israel). The Assyrian promise was broken and the people of Judah would receive no help from Assyria. Indeed, they would receive only destruction. The "fat" Assyrians who were rich from the tribute of the nation of Judah were soon to receive a righteous judgment from God and the fat destroyer would soon be destroyed. (See Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah*, Vol. 1, pages 264-265).

- 10:28-34** *He has come to Aiath;
he has passed through Migron;
at Michmash he stores his baggage.*
- ²⁹ *They are gone over the pass;
they have taken up their lodging at Geba;
Ramah trembles;
Gibeah of Saul has fled.*
- ³⁰ *Shriek, O daughter of Gallim!
Listen, O Laishah!
O poor Anathoth!*

- ³¹ *Madmenah flees;
the inhabitants of Gebim run for cover.*
- ³² *This very day he will halt at Nob;
he shakes his fist at the mount of the daughter of Zion,
the hill of Jerusalem.*
- ³³ *Look, the sovereign LORD of hosts,
will lop off the boughs with an awful crash.
The tallest trees will be cut down,
and the lofty brought low.*
- ³⁴ *He will cut down the thickets of the forest with an iron axe,
and Lebanon in its majesty will fall.*

Isaiah declares a message detailing the destruction of the “fat” Assyrians. In verses 28-32 the cities, destined for destruction by the Assyrians, start in the north and continue southward to Hob in close proximity to Jerusalem. Yet the Assyrians will get no closer to Jerusalem for God will cut them down like trees and thickets of the forest “*with an iron axe*” vs. 33. The reference to Lebanon in vs. 34 is a reference to the utter devastation of the Assyrians. They will be cut down just like the Lebanon forests. Reference: Ezekiel 31:1-14 and specifically Ezekiel 31:3. David L. Cooper, states that these verses have a past historical and a future reference:

The prophet, in verses 28-32, described in a most graphic manner the approach of the Assyrian to Jerusalem. Like an on rushing flood he comes within sight of the city and hurls defiance at her. He can go only so far and no farther. The Lord sets the limit beyond which he cannot pass, just as He does with reference to the mighty, roaring billows: "though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it" (Jer. 5:22). The Lord knows how to deliver His people out of every danger.

When the Assyrian thus came against Jerusalem to subdue it, he was hindered by the power of God. The topmost boughs of his forest were lopped off, the high of stature were hewn down, and the mighty thicket of his forest was laid low. This prediction was fulfilled as we see in Isaiah, chapter 37, and parallel passages.

The world ruler in the end-time will bring his armies against Jerusalem to battle. He will be unable to conquer the city completely, for at a critical moment the Lord Jehovah will descend from heaven and His feet will stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives. He will stop the battle and inaugurate the period of peace. These future events will be the complete fulfillment of this prediction.” (D. L. Cooper, *Commentary on Isaiah*, Biblical Research Monthly-December 1943).

Teaching Outline for Isaiah 10: 20-34

10:20-27 The Remnant Restored

10:28-34 The Destroyer Destroyed

10. The Kingdom of the Righteous Branch: 11:1-10

Chapter 11 of Isaiah is a high peak of enlightenment for those studying the Scriptural evidence for the rule of the Messiah in the coming Messianic kingdom. The chapter reveals a great deal about the ruler Himself and His righteous reign. It gives hope for the nations who will benefit from living in a golden age where God Himself, in the person of Jesus Christ will be visibly present to preside in righteous judgment and gracious governance over them. The kingdom will be one characterized by unparalleled peace where the animals will live in peace with one another and with humans who will not harm them nor will they harm even a small child. It will be the restoration of the earth as God first intended when He placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. It will also be a time when God's numerous promises of restoration and peace to His chosen people will be fulfilled. Revelation chapter 20 provides the duration of this peaceful kingdom: 1,000 years. The preceding volumes of Scripture including Isaiah chapter 11, gives details about this kingdom. The first five verses of Isaiah 11 discuss the Ruler of the Kingdom and verses six to ten discuss the Kingdom of the Ruler. The remaining verses of Isaiah 11 discuss the remnant peoples who will live in the future restored kingdom.

The Ruler of the Kingdom: 11:1-5

11:1 There will grow up a shoot out of the stump of Jesse,
and a branch out of his roots will bear fruit.

This chapter begins with "then" in the NASB. It is a reminder that Lord will cut down the Assyrians who are described as tall trees like the forests of Lebanon. Following this descriptive picture of the felling of the proud Assyrians the Lord announces that a humble shoot will spring from a stem or a stump of a tree. The shoot from Jesse is a person who is from the line of Jesse, the father of David. This person is described as a "branch" which will bear fruit from the roots of the tree of Jesse. Vs. 10 of this chapter provides additional details about the root of Jesse who is the "branch."

The "shoot", which is the lineage stemming from Jesse, was a slender and vulnerable offshoot from the stump or stem which has fallen due to sinful condition of the line of Jesse. Successive kings from this lineage had rejected the Lord's direction and they had sought refuge in vain idols and in the disastrous pursuit of seeking aid from powerful but evil kings. Even though the lineage appeared on the verge of drying up, a branch was to come which would bear fruit. This branch was first introduced by Isaiah in the second verse of the fourth chapter. (Refer to notes on Isaiah 4:2). Additional details about this branch are given in Scripture in Jeremiah 23:5, 33:15; and Zechariah 3:8, 6:12. The branch, in light of the Scriptural evidence, could only refer to the coming Messiah, who will bear fruit by giving His life as a ransom (Matthew 20:28) and guarantee salvation by rising from the dead. This "shoot" of Jesse would also bear fruit by

rescuing a remnant of His people, restoring them to their land, and ruling them in person from Mount Zion during the time of a future Messianic kingdom.

The Apostle Matthew, speaking about the Messiah, Jesus Christ, quoted from this verse in Matthew 2:23: "*He went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.*" It may be that Matthew was referencing the word "shoot," which is *hoter* in the Hebrew, and has the meaning of being insignificant. The town of Nazareth was a small and lesser known town in the northern area of Galilee. Residents of Nazareth were despised by the residents of the other towns of Galilee as Galilee itself were despised by those from the southern area of Judea. Nathanael, who came from Cana of Galilee (John 21:2), when he heard that Jesus had come from Nazareth, spoke these famous words: *Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?* John 1:46.

11:2 The Spirit of the LORD will rest upon him,
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

The prophet in vs. 2 provides some descriptive detail of the person who is the branch. In this verse, Isaiah introduces the Holy Spirit. Isaiah speaks of the Holy Spirit more than any other writer in the Old Testament. References to the Holy Spirit in Isaiah's prophecy following this verse, can be found in: 30:1, 32:15, 34:16, 40:13, 42:1, 44:3, 48:16, 59:21, 61:1, 63:10-11 and 63:14. Isaiah 11:2 begins with the statement: "*The Spirit of the LORD will rest upon him.*" The "him" is a person who is described as a "branch" in the preceding verse. The following verses in Isaiah chapter 11 provide sufficient detail about Him for the student of Scripture to discern the identification of this person. He will have the Holy Spirit rest on Him. In Matthew 3:13-17, the Apostle describes the baptism of Jesus Christ. Matthew records in verses 16-17: "*After Jesus was baptized, when he came up out of the water, suddenly, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him. A voice from of heaven, said, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'*" The very next verse in the Matthew's gospel, Matthew 4:1 begins: "*Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.*" It was the Holy Spirit who Isaiah prophesized about Who would rest on Christ the Messiah, who is the branch. When the Spirit "rested" on Him, the Spirit would endow the Messiah's human nature with spiritual "fruit" or qualities which are described in the remainder of the second verse of the 11th chapter of Isaiah.

The branch (His human nature) would be endowed with the spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge and the fear of the Lord. Much could be written about the character qualities of each word and a Biblical word study on each word would be a beneficial undertaking. Some comments are useful in this regard. These character qualities were those chosen by God for the earthly ministry of the "branch" (the Messiah). They were endowed on Him to enable His specific ministry which the Father gave Him. This is not an exhaustive listing as Jesus Christ certainly had many other divine character qualities while He faithfully completed His ministry on the earth. The prophecy of the endowment of the character qualities by the Spirit

on the “branch” enabled the Messiah as fully human (He was also fully God) to carry out His assigned ministry. A short comment by Victor Buksbazen is very worthy of our attention:

“The new Twig would be the Messianic king upon whom the spirit of the LORD would rest. This spirit of the LORD would manifest itself in a sixfold way, forming together as it were a seven branched candlestick. Each of the branches is inter-related with and indivisible from the central stem, which is the Spirit of the Lord.” (Victor Buksbazen, *Isaiah*, page 181).

11:3-4 *His delight will be in the fear of the LORD.*

*He will not judge after the sight of his eyes,
neither decide after the hearing of his ears.*

⁴ *But he will judge the poor with righteousness,
and decide for the oppressed of the earth with equity.*

*He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth;
with the breath of his lips, he will kill the wicked.*

The prophet continues his description of the character qualities of the “branch”. The One to come will delight in the fear of the Lord. This delight will be a characteristic of this One who is intimately acquainted with God His Father and He will show His “fear” in obeying His Father. The “fear” is a profound reverence perhaps so deep that no one else who has ever lived could possibly comprehend. It is a reverence that stems from eternity and is far beyond the experience of a created being. Verses 3 and 4 continue with what may be an outcome of the future Messiah’s delight in the fear of the Lord, for He will judge and make decisions not with what His eyes see or His ears hear but He will judge with righteousness. These words may be misunderstood. It is not that there will be anything wrong with the Messiah’s hearing or eyesight. He will simply not just react when reports come to Him regarding some issue needing His judgment. Nor will He make a hasty decision based upon what He sees immediately in front of Him for even visual events can be orchestrated by others to convey a meaning that hides the truth. The Messiah will be completely righteous and just in all of His decisions for He knows intimately the thoughts and intents of the hearts of all people and therefore He will make fair decisions regarding the afflicted of the earth. Verses 3 and 4 give the clear understanding, as well as the rest of the chapter, that these actions of the Messiah happen during the return of the Lord to the earth as a Warrior King and during the millennial kingdom He will establish. The latter half of the 4th verse is very conclusive on the time frame of the actions of the Messiah. The prophecy that “*He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth*” and with “*the breath of his lips he will kill the wicked*”, can only have proper understanding if applied to the time of the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Messiah. Revelation 19:15 makes this certain: “*Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it he might strike the nations. He will rule them with a rod of iron.*” When He returns to the earth, the Messiah will not take much time to subdue His enemies, for He will slay the wicked with the breath of His Lips. Isaiah 11:4. As ruler over the kingdom He will establish, He will rule over the earth with a rod of iron. Psalm 2 is a prophecy of this time when the Messiah will be installed as a King upon Zion, God’s holy mountain, to rule the nations which are His inheritance from His Father.

11:5 *Righteousness will be the belt around his hips,
and faithfulness the belt around his waist.*

Isaiah gives further details about the character qualities of the Messiah as ruler over His kingdom. The Messiah will wear righteousness and faithfulness like a belt. These characteristics are definitely a portrayal of One who is Divine as Isaiah earlier recorded, “*But the LORD of hosts will be exalted by justice, and God Holy One will demonstrate his holiness by righteousness.*” Isaiah 5:16. See also Isaiah 65:16. King David extols these same virtues of God in Psalm 40:10. Another writer of the Psalms does so again in Psalm 119:75, as does another prophet, see Zechariah 8:8.

David L. Cooper comments on verses 3-5:

THE BLOCK of scripture consisting of Isaiah 11:3-5 foretells Christ's judgment of the living nations when He returns to earth. This scene is set forth graphically in Matthew 25:31-46. When these two passages are studied carefully and compared, it will be seen that they are not speaking of a general judgment as we frequently hear mentioned. On the contrary these passages speak of the judgment of the living nations--those persons who survive the Tribulation and who are upon the earth when the Lord returns. In neither passage is there anything said about a resurrection, nor is there anything suggested concerning the necessity for the new birth. The basis of that judgment is the attitude and conduct of these toward our Lord's brethren according to the flesh--the Jews. He will separate these people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. Some will be put on the right hand and others upon the left. Those upon the right hand will be placed there because of their kindly feeling toward Christ as manifested in their attitude and actions toward the least of His brethren during the time of their national sorrow and distress. From Psalm 24 we see that these people will receive a blessing from the Lord, even righteousness from the God of Jacob. They will be clothed in the righteousness of Christ when they see the facts regarding Him and receive Him. They will accept Him with their whole hearts at that time and thus be clothed with His righteousness. On the other hand, those placed upon the left side will be consigned to everlasting punishment because of their hatred toward our Lord, which feeling manifests itself in their refusal to be kind and gentle to His brethren, the Jews, during their national crisis throughout the Tribulation. (D. L. Cooper, *Commentary on Isaiah*, Biblical Research Monthly-December 1943).

The Kingdom of the Ruler: 11:6-10

It will be a unique place, unlike any except Adam and Eve would have experienced. It is a restored Eden where the animals will be at peace with one another and with humans. Infant children will be safe from any harm from the beasts of the earth and even a small child will lead these domesticated animals. It is also a place where the entire earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord, “*as the waters cover the sea*” (vs. 9). At no other time since the placement of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, will the earth witness such peacefulness and unhindered knowledge of the Lord. No one will need to search for the source of true knowledge, for the earth's residents will know where to find it. As earlier recorded by Isaiah in 2:3:

*Many peoples will come and say,
"Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob.
He will teach us of his ways,
and we will walk in his paths."
For out of Zion the law will go forth,
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.*

The prophet Jeremiah also spoke of this time, Jeremiah 31:33-34

*"But this is the covenant
that I will make with the house of Israel
after those days," says the LORD.
"I will put my law within them;
I will write it in their hearts.
I will be their God,
and they will be my people.
³⁴ Each person will no longer have to teach his neighbor,
or each one his brother, saying,
'Know the LORD.'
For they will all know me,
from the least to the greatest of them," says the LORD.
"For I will forgive their iniquity,
and remember their sin no more."*

11:6-9 *The wolf will dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard will lie down with the young goat;
the calf, the young lion, and the fattened cow
will lie down together;
and a little child will lead them.
⁷ The cow and the bear will graze together;
their young ones will lie down together;
the lion will eat straw like an ox.
⁸ The nursing child will play near the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child will put his hand into the viper's hole.
⁹ They will not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.*

These verses describe the peace and security of Messiah's future kingdom. To accentuate the extent of the pervading peace, Isaiah in verses 6-7 describes this time as one in which the animals will be in perfect harmony with each other and with humans. Carnivorous animals will no longer hunt and kill other animals for food. Lions will eat straw and likely other grains. Wolves will co-exist in peace with lambs which were once a preferred food source. Other fierce predators such as the leopard and the lion, representatives of the magnificent large animals, will live peacefully along-side of other animals who were once their prey. Domestic animals such as cows will graze with wild animals such as the bear and even their young will share the same pasture lying down together. Verses 8-9 portray the human-animal relationship which has been restored to a pre-curse existence. Isaiah describes a remarkable scene in which a very young child, one who is nursing, is playing beside the hole of a cobra and a weaned child would be able to put his hand on (or in) a viper's den without fear of any harm.

The expression of the extent of this peaceful co-existence in vs. 9, "*in all My holy mountain*" may lead some to believe that it will only be upon Mount Zion where such peaceful co-existence occurs. However, this is not the case. For example, see J. Alec Motyer, Isaiah, page 105. Other portions of Scripture provide similar details regarding this time when David's throne is re-established and David's greater Son, the Messiah will rule His Kingdom with righteousness and judgment and all who live upon the earth, including the animals will be free from the harm and destruction of the curse of God upon the earth: Ezekiel 34:23-31; Hosea 2:18-23; and Romans 8:19-23.

11:10 *In that day the root of Jesse will be raised for a sign of the peoples;
the nations will seek guidance from him;
his resting place will be glorious.*

Vs. 10 concludes this short vignette of the nations in the millennial kingdom. The words, "*in that day*" in this verse is a plain reference to a future time for in no other time or place has the Lord stood on the earth as a signal (or a banner) for the nations to come to worship Him as ruler of a restored kingdom. Also in no other time or place on the earth has the Lord's "*resting place*" (place of residence) been described as glorious. It will only happen when He returns to His kingdom when all nations of the earth have been subdued and will acknowledge Him as the rightful King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Thomas Constable comments on vs. 10:

"In that day" points to the time when Messiah would rule (vv. 1-9). Then the Gentile nations would seek out the king who would represent His people, the Jews. The signal or standard in view seems to refer to a rallying point. The fulfillment could not be the return from Babylonian exile as the fulfillment, and the rallying of all sorts of people around Christ—as preached in the church age—does not fit the picture either.

Many liberal interpreters prefer the first explanation, and amillennialists 176 prefer the second. It must refer to a future worldwide turning to Messiah in which the Jews will be prominent (cf. Rom. 11). No resting place of Messiah was especially glorious during His first advent, but when He returns, Jerusalem will become "a glory" because He will rule there.

The title "root of Jesse" presents the Messiah as the *source* of the Davidic line (cf. Gen. 3:15; 17:6), not just the *product* of that line (v. 1). It also suggests His humble origin, as opposed to being described as coming from a King's line." [Note 176: E.g. Young, 1:396]. (Thomas Constable, *Isaiah*, page 74).

Teaching Outline for Isaiah 11:1-10

11:1-5 The Ruler of the Kingdom

11:6-10 The Kingdom of the Ruler

11. The Victory of the Remnant: 11:11-16

The section, Isaiah 11:11-16 shifts its focus to the remnant who will be gathered by the Lord from the ends of the earth to come and live with Him in his glorious kingdom. The themes of peace and prosperity are again prominent in this prophecy which again begins with "on that day" which in the context of the entire chapter, must refer to a time which has not yet come but is promised for those who remain faithful to the Lord. Thus, all of chapter 11 of Isaiah is a prophecy of the coming Messianic kingdom and there is no place for attempts to allegorize it to describe it as anything other than its plain meaning.

11:11 *In that day the Lord will set his hand again the second time
to recover the remnant of his people that remains,
from Assyria and from Egypt,
from Pathros and from Cush,
from Elam, and from Shinar,
from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.*

Isaiah provides details of from where the Lord will recover the remnant and an interesting time frame. As noted above the words, "*in that day*" in the context of this chapter plainly refers to a time in the future that has not yet come. It belongs to a wider understanding of the "day of the Lord" (previously discussed in these notes). It will occur in connection with the future messianic kingdom and from the details of the verses to follow, it must refer to the time when the kingdom will be in the beginning of its foundation. The Lord will recover the second time with His hand the remnant of His people who will remain. It is the mention of the "second time" that has generated much discussion among scholars who have published works on Isaiah. It is best to understand that this reference is to a time in the future as the prior phrase, "on that day" indicates. The first restoration of the Jewish people occurred following the Babylonian captivity which was still future for the time of the prophet Isaiah. The locations, stated in the latter half of vs. 11, from where the remnant were to be recovered, this second time, do not fit any other historical event since the days of the return of the Jews to Judah. Also, the re-uniting of Ephraim (Israel) and Judah has not yet occurred.

The Jewish nation under the Roman oversight did not have harmony between these two peoples as the Jews of the southern nation of Judah were antagonistic at best with the blended peoples of Samaria. Also, the locations from where the remnant would originate according to vs. 11 included “*the islands of the sea*” which would indicate locations from a much wider geographical area than the countries surrounding the nation of Israel. Thus, with all these details provided by Isaiah, it is evident that this restoration is yet to come and will originate from nations from afar where the “people who remain” will migrate to Israel.

The reference to the “*of his people that remains*” in its future context, just prior to the establishment of the Messianic kingdom, are those Jewish people who have survived the terrors of the Great Tribulation. Scriptural references to this time and the people involved have been provided in the essay “A Study on the Kingdom” which is an appendix to this study. It is recommended that the Study on the Kingdom be read in conjunction with the notes on Isaiah 11. A specific reference to Ezekiel chapter 37 is suggested also to be read as background to Isaiah 11:11.

11:12 *Then he will set up a signal flag for the nations,
and will assemble the outcasts of Israel,
and gather together the dispersed of Judah
from the four corners of the earth.*

The prophet refers again to the Messiah who will be a “signal flag” (a banner) for those who are to be assembled from the banished and dispersed peoples of Israel (Ephraim) and Judah, from the “*four corners of the earth*”. From this description, it is very plain that this restoration of the remnant (vs. 11) will be world-wide in its scope and certainly has not yet occurred. Also, all tribes of Israel will be involved in this assembling of the dispersed and outcasts of His people. A confirmation of this is in Revelation 7:4-5 where it is revealed that 144,000 people, who will be selected for a special sealing, will be taken from every tribe of Israel.

11:13 *The jealousy of Ephraim will depart;
those hostile to Judah will be cut off.
Ephraim will not be jealous of Judah,
and Judah will not be hostile to Ephraim.*

Vs. 13 gives additional details about the peace of the newly formed kingdom. The Jewish people for the first time in history will be at peace with each other. Compare this with Isaiah 9:21. In the Messianic kingdom, there will be no divisive religious factions between the Jews and no political enmity between those whom the Messiah chooses to assist in ruling and those who have been chosen to perform other tasks. There will only be One Ruler. All the Jewish people who remain and have survived the period just prior to the foundation of the kingdom will be at peace with this Ruler and with each other. See also Jeremiah 3:18; Ezekiel 37:15-28; and Hosea 1:11.

11:14 *They will swoop down on the shoulder of the Philistines on the west;
together they will plunder the people of the east.
They will put forth their hand on Edom and Moab,
and the Ammonites will obey them.*

The events recorded in vs. 14, must certainly occur before the regathered tribes of Israel set up their habitation in the messianic kingdom. These events may occur during their journey to the kingdom from the nations of the earth. Isaiah describes how the Jewish people will have the funds to begin a new life in this kingdom and have the prosperity to change the bleak and desolate landscape into a garden of green where vegetable and animal life can flourish abundantly. Israel's long-time enemies will be subdued and their plunder will be the basis for Israel's new wealth. Those they have plundered will also be in subjection to them and will serve them. It is possible that their previous enemies will willingly give of their wealth to the returning remnant of Israel as these nations will then have witnessed the horrors of the Tribulation and will themselves be waiting in expectation for the blessings of the kingdom that will be ruled in peace by the triumphant Messiah.

11: 15-16 *The LORD will divide the gulf of the Egyptian sea;
with his scorching wind he will wave his hand
over the Euphrates River.
He will split it up into seven streams,
and enable people to cross over in sandals.
¹⁶ There will be a highway for the remnant of his people
that remain from Assyria,
like there was for Israel in the day
that they came up out of the land of Egypt.*

The prophet describes what the Lord will do with the geographical features of the surrounding countries so that the Jewish remnant can walk unencumbered from these nations to the Israel. The statement of a "highway" for the remnant to use to travel to Israel is a common subject of Isaiah's prophecy. References in Isaiah: 35:8-10, 43:19-21, 49:10-13, 57:14, and 62:10-12.

Thomas Constable comments on these final verses of chapter 11:

"God will defeat Israel's ancient enemies, Egypt and Babylonia. His judgments on them will involve the drying up of major barriers: the Red Sea and the Euphrates River (cf. Exod. 14:21; Rev. 16:12). This judgment will allow the Jews to return to the Promised Land, unhindered, from those parts of the world. They will be able to leave the territory of Assyria, where God had said He would send them captive, as easily as their forefathers left Egypt and crossed the Red Sea in the Exodus. Dividing the Euphrates into seven seasonal streams (Heb. nahal) may connote a perfect and complete taming, or even re-creation, by God.

Thus, this section of the book, dealing with the hope of God's deliverance (10:5—11:16), culminates in the reign of Messiah on the earth. Israel will re-gather in the Promised Land—from all over the world—trusting in God. The Gentiles, too, will acknowledge His sovereignty, which both they and His own people have forever resisted.” (Thomas Constable, *Isaiah*, pages 74-75).

Teaching Outline for Isaiah 11:11-16

- 11:11-12 The Remaining Remnant Restored
- 11:13-14 The People's Peace and Prosperity
- 11:15-16 The Hopeful's Holy Highway

12. The Praise of the Remnant: Chapter 12

Chapter 12 is the culmination of the events recorded in Chapter 7 of Isaiah. The people of Judah faced an invasion from the kingdoms of Aram and Israel. The Lord gave Isaiah a message of safety and protection to king Ahaz if Ahaz and the people would simply trust in the Lord. But this message was rejected and Ahaz wickedly rejected the Lord's offer and sought military assistance from the evil nation Assyria against the two nations threatening Judah. Later, after invading both Aram and Israel, the Assyrian king turned against Judah and sought to destroy Jerusalem just as the Assyrian army had destroyed many Judean towns and cities. But the Lord would not let this happen and Isaiah recorded the complete destruction of the army of Assyria (Isaiah 37:36). Chapter 12 of Isaiah is a prophecy of the thanksgiving and praise that the remnant of the future will give to the Lord for His promised rescue of them and the Lord's restoration of the promised land.

Victor Buksbazen comments on verses 1-6 of chapter 12:

“When the Lord delivered Israel from their bondage in Egypt, Moses and the children of Israel intoned a triumphant song of praise extolling the mighty deeds of God (Ex. 15:2-18).

Now that the Lord is about to deliver His people for a second time the prophet puts in the mouth of redeemed Israel a new song, similar in character to the former song, which they sang after they left Egypt.

The new hymn of Israel is divided into two strophes (not into two separate hymns as some maintain). The first verse 1-3, is a psalm of praise, extolling God's compassion, expressing a renewed confidence in the Lord, as the fountain of their salvation.

The second strophe, (v. 4-6) exhorts God's people to declare among the nations His great salvation and the presence in their midst of the Holy One of Israel. The whole hymn is saturated with an exuberant and joyful missionary spirit.” (Victor Buksbazen, *Isaiah*, page 186).

12:1 *In that day you will say,
"I will give thanks to you, O LORD;
for though you were angry with me,
but now your anger is turned away
and you comfort me.*

The chapter and the song of Isaiah (verses 1-6) begins with “*In that day you will say*”. As with many passages in this section, chapters 7 to 12, the context of “*that day*” is a reference to the Messianic kingdom to come. In that day, the remnant who have been called from the “*four corners of the earth*”, (Isaiah 11:12), will give thanks to God for comforting them. God had been angry with the people of Judah but His anger had been “*turned away.*” See also Isaiah 10:24-25 and 60:10. The anger (also fury, wrath and indignation) of God is one of the great yet terrifying themes of Isaiah’s prophecy. Selected verses in Isaiah describing the anger of the Lord include: 5:25; 9:9, 12, 17, 21; 10:4-6, 25; 12:1; 13: 5, 9, 13; 14:6; 26:20; 30:27, 30; 34:2; 42:25; 48:9; 51:17, 20, 22; 54:8; 59:18; 60:10; 63:3, 5, 6; and 66:15.

After His anger had been turned away or spent, God was now a source of comfort to His people. See Isaiah 40:1-2 for another declaration of the comfort of God. See also Isaiah 49:13; 51:3, 12, 19; 52:9; 57:18; 61:2; and 66:13 (selected verses only). This verse projects forward to the second great division of the book of Isaiah, chapters 40-66, which can be characterized as the section of comfort. The first great division of Isaiah’s book, chapters 1-39 can be understood as the section of judgment.

12:2 *God is my salvation;
I will trust and not be afraid;
for the LORD, yes the LORD,
is my strength and song;
he has become my salvation.*

The prophet records that God is being praised for He is the people’s salvation, strength and song and the people say, they will trust in God and will not be afraid (of any circumstance or situation). Again, a comment from Victor Buksbazen is appropriate:

“Having experienced salvation Israel shall be filled with a new confidence and a new song. The word salvation, “Yeshua”, occurs three times in verses 2 and 3, and is the central theme of this passage. Here “salvation” implies not mere release from physical bondage, but a renewal of the spirit, resulting from Messiah’s reign and a true knowledge of God.

It is no sheer accident that the Messiah of the New Testament is called “Yeshua” – (anglicized “Jesus”), which in the Hebrew means salvation, or the Lord’s salvation: “...thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.” (Mt. 1:21b).

Apparently Jesus Himself was fully aware of the significance of His name, when He declared in the home of Zaccheus: “This day is salvation come to this house....For the son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” (Lk. 19:9, 10) Thus salvation, according to Isaiah, is inextricably inherent in the very name and mission of the Messiah.” (Victor Buksbazen, *Isaiah*, page 187).

There are three main parts to verse 2:

(1) ***God is my salvation*** (repeated at end of verse: *he has become my salvation*).

Salvation is a perhaps the overarching theme of the entire prophecy of Isaiah. Isaiah’s name has the meaning of “the Lord is salvation”. The prophet summarizes chapters 1-12 in this verse with the exclamation that “God is my salvation”. Salvation is such an important and critical theme to the message of Isaiah, that every mention of this word and its word group in Isaiah is worthy of a careful study by the student of Scripture. Some of the verses listed below speak of salvation (save) from harm and from enemies and some definitely speak of eternal salvation. For example, Isaiah states in 45:17:

*But Israel will be saved by the LORD
with an everlasting salvation;
you will never be put to shame
or humiliated.*

The student of Scripture must examine each occurrence of the salvation word group in its context to determine the intent of God’s message regarding salvation. Refer to the notes in this study of Isaiah on the verses listed below for a brief description of the context and meaning of the salvation word group.

The major verses where Isaiah employs the word **salvation** are: 12:2 (twice), 12:3; 17:10; 25:9; 33:2, 6; 45:8, 17; 46:13; 49:6, 8; 51:5; 6, 8; 52:7, 10; 56:1; 59:16, 17; 60:18; 61:10; 62:1, 11; and 63:5. Major occurrences of the word “**save**” in Isaiah are: 25:9; 30:15; 33:22; 35:4; 37:35; 38:20; 43:12; 45:17, 22; 49:25; 59:1; 63:1 and 9. A precious part of the salvation word group is Savior which refers to the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ (in the N.T.). All occurrences of the word **Savior** in Isaiah are: 19:20; 43:3,11; 45:15, 21; 49:26; 60:16 and 63:8. A more extensive discussion will be provided in the notes for the verses which include the word “Savior”.

A closely related word to salvation is “redeemed” (and redeemer). Refer to the notes on the verses where the redeemed word group is recorded for a brief discussion on its importance to the overall message of salvation in Isaiah. Major occurrences of the word “**redeemed**” in Isaiah are: 1:27; 29:22; 35:9; 43:1; 44:22, 23; 48:20; 51:10; 52:3,9; 62:12; and 63:9. The occurrences of the word “redeemer” are worthy of a very detailed study. All occurrences of the word “**redeemer**” in Isaiah are: 41:14; 43:14; 44:6, 24; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7, 26; 54:5, 8; 59:20; 60:16; and 63:16. As with the word “Savior” an extensive discussion will be provided for these verses in the notes for this study. Special attention in this study will be given to the meaning of redeemer which implies

that the Lord is Israel's "kinsmen redeemer" See notes on the verses for "redeemer" for this discussion.

Isaiah has already described a portrait of salvation in chapter 1: 18 in terms of having one's sins become white like snow or wool. He also had the personal experience of having his iniquity taken away and having God's forgiveness for his sins in 6:4-7. He will later in 53:6 describe a Servant whom "*the LORD has laid on him the sin of us all.*" Also in 53:11, this Servant will "*justify many as he will bear their sins.*" Some scholars tend to point to Isaiah's understanding of God's salvation in 12:2 as saving from something that would destroy them rather than salvation based upon faith that leads to an eternal destination. For example, see discussion on this point from Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah, Vol.1*, pages 282-283 and Geoffrey W. Grogan, *Isaiah*, page 93. However, Isaiah's understanding of God's salvation seems to point to both a saving from external dangers and to an eternal salvation as Isaiah 45:17 clearly states. How otherwise could the Apostle Paul declare to Timothy that "*from early childhood have known the Scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*" (2 Timothy 3:15). King David had an understanding of this salvation as being eternal as the last words of Psalm 23 testify. Also, the writer of Hebrews in chapter 11 clearly describes the faith of the Old Testament saints who looked forward to an eternal destination with God even though they did not arrive at this destination while they lived on the earth.

(2) *I will trust and not be afraid.*

Isaiah adds to his deep understanding that God is his salvation with the practical declaration of how he should respond to this great truth (salvation). Because Isaiah knows assuredly beyond any doubt or confusion that God is his salvation, the prophet can positively and confidently avow that he will trust God (for everything) and he will not be afraid (of anything). The word "trust" is the Hebrew word *batach* which has the meaning of "taking refuge in" and "being confident and sure," and to be "reliant upon". The word *batach* is translated as "trust" in 12:2; 26:3, 4; 30:12, 15; 31:1; 36:7, 9, 15; 37:10; 42:17; 50:10; and 59:4. It is translated as "confidence" in 32:17 and 36:4. *Batach* is translated as "trusting" in 36:5, and 6; and is translated as "trusted" in 47:10. It is also translated as "complacent" in 32:9, 10 and 11.

(3) *the LORD is my strength and song.*

Isaiah can have confidence in God and have no fear of anything or anyone "for" or because the LORD GOD is his strength and song. See J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah*, pages 108-109. The acknowledgement that God is "**strength**" to the believer is a common theme in Scripture. Isaiah for example makes frequent reference to God being his strength: (selected verses only): 28:6; 30:15; 33:2 (strong arm); 35:3 (strengthen); 40:29, 31: 41:1, 10 (strengthen); 45:24; 49:5; and 58:11 (strong). A close parallel to 12:2 is the words of Moses in his song to God following the miraculous escape from the pursuing Egyptians through the Red Sea: Exodus 15:2:

*The LORD is my strength and song,
and he has become my salvation.
This One is my God, and I will praise him;
my father's God, and I will exalt him.*

This is a common praise in many of the Psalms. Psalms 37:39; 46:1, and 118:14 are but a few excellent examples. Other prophets also delighted in the strength of the Lord: Jeremiah 16:19 and Habakkuk 3:19. In the New Testament the authors often praised God for providing strength. Examples include Paul in Ephesians 3:16; 6:10; Philippians 4:13; and Colossians 1:11; the writer of Hebrews, 12:12 and Peter in 1 Peter 4:11 and 5:10.

Isaiah also stated that God is his “**song**.” When a believer meditates on his creator as the Lord of the heavens and the earth, this meditation often results in praising God in song. Isaiah does more than offering praises to God in song. Isaiah proclaims that God Himself is his song. Isaiah here is expressing the greatest joy possible in declaring this truth. See also Psalm 40:3; 118:14 and Colossians 3:16.

12:3 *Joyfully you will draw water
from the wells of salvation.*

The prophet records, the words of the people who are rejoicing over the Lord who will “*joyously... draw water from the wells of salvation.*” These words may have been in the mind of Jesus as being prophetic for his message to the Samaritan women whom came to a well to draw water as recorded in the fourth chapter of the gospel of John. Again, they may be prophetic for the message of Jesus proclaimed during the feast of Tabernacles (Booths) as recorded in John 7:37-39. See also Psalm 116:13. As this praise to the Lord in the context of Isaiah 12:3 is for a future kingdom, it nonetheless is a recurring theme of the Lord in being the One who provides salvation, like freely flowing waters to the thirsty.

12:4 In that day you will say,
"Give thanks to the LORD,
call on his name;
declare his deeds among the peoples,
proclaim that his name is exalted.

Verses 4-6 are the second stanza of Isaiah’s song to the Lord. See above notes on this two-stanza (strophe) song in the introduction to chapter 12. In this second stanza (strophe) Isaiah prophesizes that the redeemed remnant will give thanks to God for His excellent deeds and make His name known among the nations. In vs. 4, the prophet records a call for the rescued and restored remnant, “*in that day*” to give thanks to the Lord and call on His name and to make known the deeds of the Lord among the peoples. These are all the peoples of the newly formed messianic kingdom. The message of the Lord’s wondrous deeds and of His exalted name and of His Holy presence in Zion is to be made known to all who will be alive at this time. It is a message that the people will both seek, (Isaiah 2:3) and know (Isaiah 11:9; Jeremiah 31:33-34).

12:5 *Sing to the LORD,
for he has done wonderful things;
let this be known in all the earth.*

Isaiah emphasizes that because the Lord has accomplished “wonderful” things, the people in the millennial kingdom of the Messiah are to praise Him in song. The word “wonderful” is *ge’uwth* in the Hebrew. This word is translated as “glorious” in the NIV and “gloriously” in the ESV. Isaiah recorded *ge’uwth* five times. In the DASV it is translated as “wonderful” in 12:5. It is translated as “go up” in 9:18; as “majesty” in 26:10; as “glorious” in 28:1; and as “proud” in 28:3. It also occurs three times in the psalms: In 17:10 it is translated as “arrogantly;” in 89:9 as “swelling;” and in 93:1 as “majesty.”

One of the most beautiful and majestic aspects of the eschatological messianic kingdom is that the excellent (and glorious) things that the Lord has accomplished will be known throughout the earth. Isaiah in this song (12:1-6) echoes many of the same praises to God as does the psalmist in Psalm 98. This Psalm is also a song about the majesty of the Lord which will be displayed in His millennial kingdom. See also Isaiah 24:14-16a; 42:10-12; and 44:23.

12:6 *Shout out and cheer, O inhabitant of Zion,
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.*

Isaiah ends this very brief song of praise with a call for people who will live in Zion during the messianic kingdom to loudly exclaim a joyous shout for the great One in their midst who is proclaimed by Isaiah as “*the Holy One of Israel.*” This title of the Lord is one of the most common names that Isaiah gives to the Lord as it describes His most central characteristic: “holiness”. This title occurs 25 times in Isaiah, twice in Jeremiah, three times in the Psalms and once in 2 Kings. For an extended discussion on this exalted title of the Lord, “*the Holy one of Israel,*” see notes on Isaiah 1:4.

Teaching Outline for Isaiah 12:1-6

12:1-3 The Salvation of the Lord Praised

12:4-6 The Name of the Lord Proclaimed