

ISAIAH

ISAIAH — INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPHETIC SCRIPTURES

None of the prophets from the time of Solomon to the period when they began to write their prophecies (that is, for two centuries) mention the Messiah or His kingdom. The reason is that during that period the Messiah could not have been the object of hope to either kingdom taken as a whole, because the moral conditions were lacking. The promises respecting him appealed to faith, and the prophets could not speak of future spiritual blessings to those who had no ear to hear. Their mission during that period was to convince the people of sin and seek to bring them to repentance, which was never expressed in any national sense. There were individuals who appreciated the Messianic hope, as our study of the Psalms showed, but this was not true of either Kingdom as such.

WHY PROPHECY CAME TO BE WRITTEN

It was about the eighth or ninth century before Christ when the prophets began to record their prophecies. Before that time, God was present with His people in the theocratic sense, and communicated His will to them as need existed, by means of the Shekinah (^{<D252>}Exodus 25:22), and the words spoken by the prophets (^{<F1818>}Deuteronomy 18:18-22). These spoken words were for that time and generation in which the prophets lived, and were not necessary to be written. When, however, this necessity arose, it spoke of the future withdrawal of God's presence and the consequent cessation of prophetic utterances. This meant in turn, a delay or postponement of the Messianic kingdom (compare ^{<F1811>}Amos 8:11-12 and ^{<F1119>}Lamentations 2:9). The prophets' words now were preserved for future generations because it became evident that both the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were to be scattered, in punishment for their sins.

THE MISSION OF WRITTEN PROPHECY

Written prophecy, therefore, had a twofold mission, one for the immediate present, and the other the remote future. The written messages revolve around three points:

- (1) The temporal and spiritual blessings which God would give Israel and Judah, if faithful;
- (2) the judgments that would fall upon them if unfaithful; and
- (3) the renewed grace to them when they should be come penitent.

There is variety in the detail with which the prophets write, but their points of agreement are as follows:

- (1) A day of retribution is coming on Judah and Israel, the end of which will bring repentance and prepare the way for the Messianic kingdom. While these judgments will affect Israel and Judah chiefly, yet they will fall also on the Gentile nations of the whole earth;
- (2) the tribes of Israel and Judah will be regathered to their own land, and a remnant purified by discipline will form the nucleus of the restored nation, where God will again dwell in temporal and spiritual blessing; and
- (3) this restored nation will be the germ of the Messianic kingdom extending over the whole earth.

WHY THE GENTILES ARE ADDRESSED

But written prophecy embraces God's words to Gentile peoples also. These words could not in the nature of the case always have been spoken to them, and even so, those peoples have long since ceased to exist as peoples.

Why, then, written and preserved? Not simply that we of these latter days may see their fulfillment, and thus have our faith confirmed, for this fulfillment cannot in many cases be proved because of our historical ignorance. They were written rather because the purpose of God in the Jews as a people, both as wanderers and when restored and dwelling in their own land, brings them into continued relations to other peoples, and especially to those dwelling immediately around them. And although the earlier peoples, as Edom and Moab, Syria and Egypt, may cease to exist,

yet other peoples arise and the same relations in substance continue. As His own chosen nation, through whom He will reveal Himself to the nations, the Jews hold through all time an official position and have a sacred character, and in the day of their restoration and of the judgment of the nations, the great question will be, how far have the other nations regarded them as His people, and so treated them?

For the substance of the above, indebtedness is acknowledged to Andrews' "God's Revelation of Himself to Man."

QUESTIONS

1. Indicate the period marked by the absence of written prophecies in Judah and Israel.
2. Why was this true?
3. At about what period did written prophecy begin?
4. Prior to that time, how had God communicated with His people?
5. Was the change from spoken to written prophecy a hopeful one?
6. State the twofold mission of written prophecy.
7. Around what three points does written prophecy revolve?
8. On what three things do the prophets all agree?
9. Why were the prophecies concerning the Gentile nations recorded?
10. What kind of a position and character do the Jews hold through all time with reference to the Gentile nations?
11. What will be the great criterion of judgment upon the Gentile nations in the day of the restoration of Israel?

ISAIAH 1-5 — GENERAL DISCOURSES

The first five chapters of Isaiah form a natural division, to which, for want of a better title, we give that of General Discourses, or messages. The first is limited to chapter 1, the second covers chapters 2-4, and the third chapter 5.

But first notice the introduction, verse 1. By what word is the whole book described? What genealogy of the prophet is given? To which kingdom was he commissioned, Israel or Judah? In whose reigns did he prophesy?

Examine 2 Kings, chapters 15-20, and the parallel passage in 2 Chronicles for the history of this period. It will be seen later that the prophet received his vision in the last year of Uzziah, so that few of his messages belong to that reign. In the days of Jotham and Ahaz Judah was menaced by Syria and Israel, and shortly after Ahaz came to the throne he made an alliance with Assyria against them. This was contrary to the divine will and gives occasion for much of Israel's prophecy, especially in the early part of the book. Assyria at first a friend, afterwards became the enemy of Judah, to the latter's serious loss. When Hezekiah came to the throne however, he placed his trust in Jehovah and was able to resist the further inroads of Assyria. Familiarity with these facts is necessary to understand the allusions in Israel.

FIRST DISCOURSE (1:2-31)

This discourse opens with an indictment against the people for their sin (vv. 2-4), ingratitude and sinful ignorance being emphasized. The name of Israel in these verses is to be taken in a generic sense as including Judah. Now follows a description of the present consequences of their sin (vv. 5-9). Notice the figure of speech — "a cottage in a vineyard." The cottage was the shelter of the keeper of the vineyard, but Judah's desolation at this time represented a vineyard without fruit, the cottage alone indicating that it was a vineyard. In other words Jerusalem "the daughter of Zion" and the capital of the kingdom was about all that remained to her at this time. A remonstrance follows (vv. 10-15). The names Sodom and Gomorrah are used metaphorically. The people were hypocritical in their religious worship, and God was weary of it. He appeals to them (vv. 16-20). The appeal is recognized as fruitless, and judgments must follow, out of which purification and redemption shall come (vv. 21-27). This period of judgment runs throughout the history of Judah down to the end of this age, as indicated by verses 26-27, which speak of a time not yet realized in her experience. In other words Jerusalem on this earth shall some day be known as "the city of righteousness." This will be when Zion, or the kingdom of Judah, shall have been redeemed with judgment. The discourse closed with a further note of warning (vv. 28-31).

SECOND DISCOURSE (CHAPS. 2-4)

This discourse opens where the previous one ends, viz. "in the last days" (v. 2). Then the kingdom shall have been restored to Judah, and that nation shall have become the head of the Gentile nations on the earth, for such is

the meaning of chapter 2:2-4. The millennial age is brought into view, when the other peoples of the earth are learning of God through the converted Jew, and when peace is reigning among them. This vision of future blessing for Judah is following by a repetition of the indictment against the people for their present sin (vv. 6-9). They have been affiliated with the Gentile nations, luxuriating in their wealth, and worshiping their idols. The coming penalty on Judah is predicted (2:10-4:1). In these verses note the rebuke to the pride of the men of Judah and the luxury of the women. The details of the attire of the women (3:16-26) has had light thrown upon it recently by oriental exploration. Seventeen of the twenty-one ornaments spoken of were those worn by the heathen goddess Ishtar. The Baby-Ionian women copied the dress of their favorite goddess, and the Jerusalem women adopted their fashions. The discourse closes with a repetition of the future blessing promised (4:2-6).

THIRD DISCOURSE (CHAP. 5)

The vineyard spoken of, and of which such care was taken is Judah (vv. 1-3). How Judah repaid God for this care is shown (v. 4). The penalty is indicated figuratively (vv. 5-7). The remainder of the chapter gives in plain language the details of Judah's sin, and the penalty to be inflicted upon her.

QUESTIONS

1. How many discourses are in the section?
2. Have you refreshed your memory by reading the chapters in Kings?
3. Give in your own words an outline of the first discourse.
4. How does the second discourse open and close?
5. Under what figure is the story of God's goodness and Judah's unrighteousness repeated in chapter 5?

ISAIAH 6 — PROPHET'S CALL

This makes a short lesson but a distinctive one. The prophet is giving an account of himself, relating the circumstances under which he entered the prophetic office, and the authority by which he speaks.

The story divides itself thus: the vision (vv. 1-4); the effect of the vision in producing conviction and confession of sin (v. 5); his cleansing from sin (vv. 6-7); his call to service (v. 8); the dedication of himself to that service (v. 8); the divine commission given him (vv. 9-10). This commission is of a discouraging character. The people will hear his messages but fail to be influenced by them. They will become more and more blind and deaf to the divine warnings, and neither will be converted nor spiritually healed.

This discouraging outlook brings the inquiry from the prophet (v. 11), to which the Lord replies down to the end of the chapter. In other words, the people's blindness and sin will continue for a long while, but not forever. The oak tree retains its substance even after it is felled to the ground, and though Judah will be cast away, a remnant will be saved in the last day. This is the significance of the last clause of verse 13, which speaks of the holy seed as the substance, or the stock of the kingdom. By "the last day" is meant the end of the present age, which will be a period of great tribulation of the Jewish people, but, out of which a remnant will be delivered to become the nucleus of the millennial kingdom.

You have had attention called to the law of recurrence in earlier lessons, and will have noted its operation here. In each of the discourses in this book, and now in the story of the prophets' call, the same ground is being covered over and over again, only with added detail here and there. It is always, sin, penalty, repentance, restoration, deliverance, future blessing. What was said under "Introduction to the Prophetic Scripture" is thus verified.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the prophet doing in this chapter?
2. Can you give its outline from memory?
3. Have you been impressed with its value as a Bible reading or theme for exposition?
4. What is the significance of "the last day"?
5. Can you recall the definition of "the law of recurrence"?

ISAIAH 7-9 — JUDAH'S ALLIANCE WITH ASSYRIA

Syria and Israel menaced Judah through Jotham's reign but the situation has become acute now that Ahaz is on the throne (7:1-2).

THE PROMISED SIGN

The Lord, through Isaiah, counsels and encourages the king at a crisis (vv. 3-16). Notice where the prophet is to meet Ahaz (v. 3): where he and his military engineers may be conferring as to the water supply during the expected siege. Notice who accompanies the prophet, and his name, which means "a remnant shall return" (margin). The name was doubtless known to the king and was intended to inspire hope; it pointed to God's purpose of ultimate blessing for Judah. Notice the design of Syria and Israel to overthrow the throne of Judah and set up their choice in place of Ahaz (v. 6). Ahaz' unwillingness to ask a sign (v. 12) was not piety but the opposite, since he intended to invite the aid of Assyria and cared nothing for Jehovah.

The virgin is not identified, but within the period when she would become a wife and mother and her offspring old enough to discriminate between good and evil, a few years at the most, Ahaz' present enemies would be past the power to harm him.

Such is the immediate application, but the Holy Spirit had in mind a grander and fuller application, as we know from ⁴⁰²³Matthew 1:23. This gives occasion to speak of another principle in the interpretation of prophecy known as the law of double reference. That is, when the precise time of particular events is not revealed, the prophets sometimes speak of them as continuous, and sometimes blend two events in one. The latter is the case here, and the birth of this child of the virgin, who became married in Ahaz' time, is a foreshadowing of the birth of Jesus Christ who was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the virgin Mary, who remained a virgin until after the birth of her firstborn Son.

COMING JUDGMENTS ON JUDAH (7:17-8:8)

Ahaz' rejection of God and his confidence in Assyria call forth a prophecy of punishment (v. 17). Assyria will ultimately become Judah's enemy (vv. 18-20), and the land be desolate of population and laid waste (vv. 21-25).

After a parenthesis, in which similar catastrophes are spoken of in the case of Syria and Israel (8:1-7), Judah is again alluded to (v. 8). When the king of Assyria is passing through Israel, and leading her people into captivity, he will sweep down into Judah also, and spare only Jerusalem, the capital of the nation. This prophecy was fulfilled in the story of Sennacherib and Hezekiah with which the book of Kings has familiarized us.

A FORECAST OF THE END OF THE AGE (8:9-22)

The law of double reference finds another illustration in the verses following. From the immediate judgments falling on Judah, the Holy Spirit leads out the prophet to speak of those to come at the end of the age.

Verse 9 is a picture of the Gentile nations federated under the man of sin, with whose character and work we have become partially acquainted. This federation will come to naught (v. 10). The faithful remnant of Israel in that day are urged to make God their trust (vv. 11-18), while the nation as a whole will be walking in moral and spiritual darkness (vv. 19-22).

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST (9:1-7)

This darkness and gloom will not continue forever (9:1-3 RV). The day is coming when the Gentile yoke will be removed from Israel under miraculous conditions foreshadowed by Gideon's victory over the Midianites (v. 4). It is the coming of the Messiah to reign that will effect this (vv. 6-7). Notice the law of double reference in these verses, where the first and second advents of Christ are referred to as continuous, or blended together in one. The last verse shows conclusively that the mind of the Holy Spirit is resting upon the millennial age.

QUESTIONS

1. What nations are Judah's enemies at this time?
2. What was the design in Isaiah's being accompanied by his son?
3. Quote ^{<4023>}Matthew 1:23.
4. State the law of double reference.
5. What is the interpretation of 8:8?
6. To what period, presumably, does 8:9 apply?
7. Explain ^{<2304>}Isaiah 9:4.

ISAIAH 10-12 — JUDGMENT ON ASSYRIA

The verses intervening since the last lesson apply to Israel, and are comparatively unimportant; but at ^{<3015>}Isaiah 10:5 a discourse begins concerning Assyria, running continuously to the close of chapter twelve. Assyria, an ally of Judah, is to become her enemy, but the chastisement she is to inflict on Judah is in the divine purpose, up to a certain point (vv. 5-6).

Assyria's motive is not the divine glory, however, but her own aggrandizement, which leads her to go further in afflicting Judah than God intends. She cares nothing for Jehovah, and esteems the God of Jerusalem no greater than the idols of the surrounding nations which she has overcome (vv. 7-11). Therefore, her day of retribution is coming (vv. 12-19).

But the day of her retribution is that of Israel's deliverance and triumph (vv. 20-34). "Israel" is used interchangeably with Judah when the history of that people at the end of the age is in mind. And that such is the case here is evident because Israel is found trusting no longer in any Gentile nation, but in Jehovah himself (v. 20). Also the saved remnant is spoken of (vv. 20-21). Comforting language is used (vv. 24-25). Israel's enemy shall be miraculously overcome, as were the Midianites under the Gideon (vv. 26-27). Thus we have another illustration of the law of double reference, and two events wide apart in time are spoken of as though continuous.

As strengthening the thought that the end of the age is referred to, we find the second coming of Christ indicated and blended with His first coming (11:1-5; compare v. 4 with ^{<5115>}2 Thessalonians 2:8). A description of millennial conditions follows (vv. 6-9). The Gentiles are seen fellowshipping Israel (v. 10), while the latter are being gathered "from the four corners of the earth," the ten tribes and the two once more united in a single kingdom (vv. 11-13). The section closes with a song of rejoicing which will be heard in Jerusalem in that day, as recorded in chapter twelve.

QUESTIONS

1. To which kingdom does the last part of chapter 9 seem to refer?
2. When is the name "Israel" used interchangeably with "Judah"?

3. Give four reasons for believing verses 20-24 refer to the end of the age.
4. Quote ~~2~~ Thessalonians 2:8.
5. To what period did verses 6-9 refer?
6. When will the song of rejoicing (chap. 12) be sung in Judah?

ISAIAH 13-27 — JUDGMENT ON GENTILE NATIONS

This is a long lesson to read, but the study put upon it need not be proportioned to its length. There is a sameness in the chapters, and their contents are not unlike what we reviewed in the preceding lesson. Note the names of the nations and their contiguity to God's chosen people. They have come in contact with their history again and again, which is why they are singled out for special mention. It will be well here to review what was said about these Gentile nations in the "Introduction to the Prophetic Scriptures." Seven nations are named, a perfect number, indicating Gentilism as a whole, construed as the enemy of Israel. In their order we have Babylon (chaps. 13-17); Moab (chaps. 15-16); Syria (chap. 17); Ethiopia (chap. 18); Egypt (chaps. 19-20); Medo-Persia (chaps. 21-22); Tyre (chap. 23).

Then follows a picture of judgment in which all the nations seem to be included; but following the judgments on the Gentile nations, Judah is seen redeemed from her iniquity, delivered from her tribulations, and restored to her land (chaps. 25-27). This whole section of the book, wherefore, is on an enlarged scale, that which has been set before us several times.

For the purpose of the present study, therefore, and as a matter of convenience, these discourses might be grouped as one — climaxing, as in the other instances, in the ultimate triumph of the chosen people.

This idea, however, involves one of two things: Either these nations typify Gentile dominion in the earth at the end of this age, or else they themselves will be revived as nations with reference to the judgments of that day.

The evidence for their revival, however, is not apparent except in one case, that of Babylon (chaps. 13-14). The chapters referring to the overthrow of Babylon by the Medes and Persians, seem not to have been fulfilled in that

event, except in part; from which the conclusion is gathered that a later and completer fulfillment is in store. There are corresponding passages in other prophets indicating this, and the book of Revelation (chap. 18) seems almost to require it.

There are at least nine features of prophecy in these chapters not fulfilled in the earlier overthrow of Babylon referred to: The whole land was not then destroyed (13:5); the Day of the Lord did not then come (v. 6); the physical phenomena were not then seen (v. 10); the city itself was not then destroyed as Sodom, for the Persian victory was without blood, and the scepter passed gently into their hands. Moreover, the land still yields a princely income to its Turkish rulers, and a city and a village exist on the site of Babylon (vv. 19-22); the Lord did not then visit Jacob with rest, nor has He done so as yet (14:1-3); the king of Babylon therein minutely described, has not yet arisen, and seems to point to a greater and more august being than the world has ever seen (4:22); the Assyrian was not then trodden down in the land of Judah, nor was the yoke then removed from her (v. 25); finally, the divine purpose on the whole earth was not then fulfilled (v. 26).

QUESTIONS

1. Have you examined the location of these seven Gentile nations on a map?
2. How is the law of recurrence illustrated in this lesson?
3. What two ideas about these nations are suggested in this lesson?
4. Have you read ~~Genesis~~ Revelation 18?
5. What existing evidence is there that Babylon has not yet been destroyed as Sodom?
6. What great person seems to be referred to in chapter 14:4-22?

ISAIAH 28-35 — JUDAH AND EGYPT

These chapters make a unit since, with the exception of the opening part of chapter 28, they chiefly deal with Judah's futile alliance with Egypt.

CHAPTER 28

Israel, or the kingdom of the ten tribes, is addressed under the name of her leading tribe "Ephraim" (v. 1). Her great sin is strong drink. "The head of the fat valley" is Samaria the capital, which is soon to be overthrown by the Assyrians (vv. 2-4). Observe, however, the usual forecast of the end of the age and the coming deliverance and triumph of the faithful remnant (v. 5). This is a parallel to what we have seen in so many instances hitherto.

At verse 14, Jerusalem rather than Samaria, is addressed, Judah rather than Israel. The end of the age is in mind and the covenant with the Antichrist at this time (compare v. 15 with ^{2700E}Daniel 9, especially v. 27). The Messiah is seen coming in judgment, and destroying the power of the Antichrist (compare ^{3100E}2 Thessalonians 2).

CHAPTER 29

Ariel, which means "the lion of God," is one of the names of Jerusalem (vv. 1-2). A siege is predicted (vv. 3-6), and while this may primarily refer either to that of the Assyrians under Sennacherib, or the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar, yet before the close of the chapter, the time of blessing portrayed for Judah shows a further fulfillment in the last siege of the united Gentile nations under the Antichrist. Again we find the parallel to earlier chapters, especially 10, and an illustration of the law of recurrence. Read also ^{2710E}Daniel 11, ^{3301E}Micah 4:11; 5:4-15, and ^{3302E}Zechariah 12-14.

CHAPTER 30

When Jerusalem was besieged by Sennacherib, and later by Nebuchadnezzar, she sought aid from Egypt, her natural ally, because of her proximity, but also because Egypt was Assyria's and Babylon's natural rival for world-power. This was contrary to the divine will, for Judah should have trusted in God. Egypt's aid on both occasions was to no purpose as other Scriptures show, and the whole circumstance is typical of the end of the age. When, in that day, Jerusalem for the last time shall be besieged by the Gentile nations, again will her hope turn to the world which Egypt represents, and in vain. All this is set before us in what follows. We have

- (1) the alliance and its failure (vv. 1-7);

- (2) the nation warned but to no purpose (vv. 8-17);
- (3) the customary encouragement to the faithful remnant (vv. 18-21);
and
- (4) all of which is to be accomplished by the return of the Lord (vv. 22-23).

CHAPTER 31

The alliance with Egypt is again condemned (vv. 1-3), and is quite unnecessary in view of Jehovah's purpose towards His faithful people in that day (vv. 4-9). It must be clear that these latter verses refer to the future since no such defense of Jerusalem by Jehovah has yet taken place.

CHAPTER 32

The connection with the preceding is close. There Jehovah, the second person of the Trinity, is seen interposing on behalf of Judah, and here He is seen actually reigning over her in the millennial period following. Jesus Christ is this King (v. 1). Millennial blessings are portrayed (vv. 2-5). The Holy Spirit is poured out, and peace ensues (vv. 15-20). Read Joel 2.

CHAPTER 33

Practically the same ground is covered here as in the preceding chapters. Judgment is pronounced on the enemy (v. 1); the prayer of the faithful remnant is heard (vv. 2-6); the judgment is seen in execution (vv. 7-12); the faithful are dwelling in safety and beholding the King in His beauty (vv. 13-24).

CHAPTER 34

This is a parallel to chapter 24, and one of the darkest chapters in the Bible, describing a judgment world-wide. The indignation of God is upon all the nations and their armies, an enlargement of that spoken of upon the Assyrian, and of which that was a type (compare ~~3005~~ 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10).

CHAPTER 35

After these judgments, blessing and glory are resting upon Judah. Evidently the millennium is once more pictured here.

QUESTIONS

1. What central fact unifies these chapters?
2. To which kingdom does the opening prophecy of chapter 28 apply?
3. What specific sin is judged?
4. How was Samaria located topographically?
5. To what does ~~23815~~ Isaiah 28:15 apply?
6. Are you familiar with ~~58111~~ 2 Thessalonians 2?
7. What does Ariel mean, and to what is the word applied?
8. Why, naturally speaking, should Judah have sought aid from Egypt?
9. What makes it clear that chapter 31 is future in its application?
10. Are you familiar with ~~29111~~ Joel 2?
11. Name two of the darkest chapters thus far met in the prophets.
12. What are some of the millennial features foretold in the last chapter of this lesson?

ISAIAH 36-39 — HISTORICAL PARENTHESIS

These chapters are a dividing line between what may be called Parts 1 and 2 of this book. They deal with Hezekiah's reign whose history has been considered in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles.

The chapters are not arranged chronologically, as the event of chapter 38, Hezekiah's sickness and recovery, occurred prior to the siege of Sennacherib (chaps. 36-37).

The prophecies preceding these chapters predict the rise of the Assyrian power as the enemy of Judah and God's rod of punishment for them, which were fulfilled in Hezekiah's time; while those following look upon the nation as in captivity to Babylon, the successor to Assyria. It is in connection with Hezekiah's pride (chap. 39) that this captivity is first definitely announced.

While the chapters following look upon the nation as already in Babylon, they do so chiefly for the purpose of assuring the faithful remnant of ultimate deliverance not only from the Babylonian captivity, but from all the nations whither the Lord has driven them, in the latter days.

In brief, chapter 36 reveals the Assyrian army before Jerusalem, and the effect upon the Jewish people. Chapter 37 shows the king in supplication to Jehovah with the effect on the invaders. Chapter 38 is the story of the king's sickness and healing, in which the prediction of the king's death alarms him because at this time he had no heir. Had he died thus, the messianic hope would have died with him.

In chapter 39 we have the circumstance of Hezekiah's boasting to the Babylonian ambassadors — exalting himself rather than Jehovah. It is in this connection that the prophecy of Babylonian supremacy is given. This is impressive, when we recall that Babylon had not yet risen into the place of power which was still held by Assyria. Only supernatural power could have revealed this to Isaiah. The reason why these Babylonians visited Jerusalem at this time may have been connected with their subsequent overthrow of that sacred city. Had the king glorified His God instead of himself might not the result have been different?

QUESTIONS

1. To whose history does this parenthesis allude?
2. What is the relation of these chapters in Kings and Chronicles?
3. Have you reviewed the chapters in Kings and Chronicles?
4. Where is Judah supposed to be historically, in the latter part of Isaiah?
5. Why do those later prophecies so regard Judah?
6. Give a brief outline of each chapter of the lesson.
7. What special cause of alarm was there in the announcement of the king's death?
8. What is the supernatural feature about the prophecy of Babylon's supremacy?

ISAIAH — INTRODUCTION TO PART TWO

The chapters of Part 2 (chaps. 40-46) are chiefly millennial, and so different from the prevailing themes preceding, as to raise a query whether they were not written by some other author — a second, or deutero-Isaiah, as some call him. We do not hold that opinion, the reasons for which are briefly stated in the author's Primers of the Faith.

In Synthetic Bible Studies, it was found convenient to treat this part as a single discourse — though doubtless, such is not the case in fact. As such its theme may be discovered in ^{<240>}Isaiah 40:1-2 — "Comfort." The prophet, through the Holy Spirit, sees the nation in the latter days, forgiven and at rest in Judah again. This is the "comfort" he is to minister to the faithful, and in the chapters following the elements of this comfort are explained. Or, to change the figure, on the assumption that the nation shall be forgiven and restored, these chapters reveal the factors or events leading up to that experience and that happy time.

These are in brief, seven:

1. God's providential care for the people of Judah during their scattered condition (for example, see the last half of chap. 40)
2. The work of the Messiah on their behalf, suffering for them first, and triumphing for them afterwards (see chaps. 42, 50, but especially 53)
3. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon them (chap. 44)
4. The overthrow of Babylon and all Gentile power as opposed to them (chaps. 45-48)
5. Their recall to God's service (chap. 49)
6. The divine oath concerning their redemption (chaps. 54-59)
7. The predicted millennial glory (chaps. 60-66).

Another way to treat this part of the book is to subdivide it again into three sections to which consideration will be given in the lessons following.

QUESTIONS

1. What chapters are included in Part 2?
2. What is the general character of the discourses of Part 2?
3. To what question has Part 2 given rise?

4. Is this opinion here entertained?
5. How may these chapters be treated homiletically?
6. What theme might be given them in such event?
7. How would you explain or justify this theme?
8. What other figure of speech might be applied to the interpretation of these chapters
9. Can you name in their order the seven elements of comfort?
10. How much of ~~2530~~ Isaiah 53 can you repeat from memory?

ISAIAH 40-48 — DELIVERANCE THROUGH CYRUS

In this lesson Israel is seen prophetically in Babylon, but about to be delivered and restored. Primarily, the reference is to her restoration after the seventy years captivity, in which Cyrus, King Persia, is the instrument.

In chapter 40, the people are comforted (vv. 1-11), in the thought that God is so great they can not be forgotten (vv. 12-31). The first and second coming of Christ are blended in the first part of the chapter, and John the Baptist is the voice crying in the wilderness (~~4101~~ Luke 3:1-6; ~~4102~~ John 1:23).

In chapter 41, Cyrus and his plans are predicted (vv. 1-7, but Israel is seen as God's chosen servant, and comforted in the midst of the coming turmoil (vv. 8-20). Jehovah challenges all false gods to foretell things to come, as He does (vv. 21-29).

Chapter 42 returns to the thought of the Servant of Jehovah, only now that Servant is the Lord Jesus Christ, rather than national Israel (vv. 1-4, compare with ~~4124~~ Matthew 12:14-21). Observe His work among the Gentile nations which is still future (vv. 5-16), and the appeal to deaf and blind Israel which must be awakened before that work shall begin.

Chapters 43-45 are connected, in which God is comforting Israel. See what he is and promises to be (43:1-7); How He will chastise their enemies (vv. 8-17); the good things to come (vv. 18-20); especially the forgiveness of their sin (vv. 22-28); accompanied by an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, producing a great revival (44:1-5). Idolatry is again rebuked (vv. 6-20), the faithful are called upon to rejoice (vv. 21-23), and Cyrus is definitely

named as their deliverer, between two and three hundred years before his birth (vv. 24-28). Josephus, the historian of the Jews, says, that when the attention of Cyrus was called to this fact, probably by Daniel, he was stirred to fulfill the prophecy. In chapter 45 Cyrus is first addressed (vv. 1-13), then Israel (vv. 14-17), and then the ends of the earth (vv. 18-25).

Chapters 46-47 belong together, describing the fall of Babylon under Cyrus, and yet carrying us forward to her final destruction at the end of the age (see chapter 14). Her idols are carried by beasts (46:1-2), while Jehovah carries His people (vv. 3-7). Chapter 47 shows its application on its face.

Chapter 48 is a review of Jehovah's messages to Israel in the preceding chapters.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the title of this lesson?
2. Under what condition is Judah seen?
3. What Gentile potentate is prominent?
4. What is the means of comfort in chapter 40?
5. What New Testament prophet is predicted?
6. What two servants of Jehovah are referred to?
7. Quote ^{<234B>} Isaiah 44:3-4.

ISAIAH 49-57 — THE MESSIAH REVEALED

The thirty-two chapters deal particularly with the Person and work of the Messiah. Isaiah has sometimes been called the evangelical prophet because of the large space he gives to that subject — a circumstance the more notable because of the silence concerning it since Moses. The explanation of this silence is hinted at in the lesson on the introduction to the prophets.

In chapter 49, the Messiah speaks of Himself and the failure of His mission in His rejection by His nation (vv. 1-4). This rejection works blessing to the Gentiles (vv. 5-6; compare Romans 11). Ultimately Israel shall be brought to Him and indeed the whole earth (see the remainder of chap. 49). Zion, i.e., Israel, may doubt this (v. 14), but is assured of it in what follows.

Chapter 50 is connected with the preceding verses 1-3 referring to Zion's restoration. But at verse 4 the Messiah bears witness to himself again, His obedience, suffering and triumph down to the end of the chapter.

These verses furnish rich material for a Bible discourse or exposition on The Training of Jesus:

- (1) His Teacher: "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned";
- (2) the object of His teaching: "That I should know how to speak a word in season,";
- (3) the method of its impartations: "He wakeneth morning by morning";
- (4) the spirit of the pupil: "I was not rebellious";
- (5) the encouragement He receives: "The Lord God will help me";
- (6) the counsel He offers to others: "Who is among you that feareth the Lord?" and
- (7) the warning to the disobedient: "Behold all ye that kindle a fire."

In like manner chapter 51 is linked to chapter 50, by the words of comfort to Zion which shall be brought to her through the Messiah's work on her behalf. Verses 9-11 are a prayer of faith of the faithful remnant which is answered in the remainder of that chapter and in the following, down to and including verse 12.

Chapters 52:13-53:12 are a unit in their Messianic character. Christ's personal suffering and glorious triumph are depicted in the closing verses of chapter 52. His rejection by Israel in 53:1-6; His submission, deliverance and reward (vv. 7-12).

Chapter 54 exhibits the result of this in Israel's conversion, restoration and earthly glory in the millennium. Observe the divine oath that this shall be brought to pass (v. 9).

Chapter 55 is the offer of this salvation to Israel, and requires no comment. Chapter 56 shows that when this offer is at last accepted and the salvation experienced by Israel, it will mean similar blessing to the whole earth (vv. 1-8).

The rest of this chapter, and nearly the whole of the following one, describe the sad condition of Israel at present, but especially at the end period under the Antichrist (57:9). The section concludes with the customary promises to the faithful (57:15-19).

QUESTIONS

1. What is the chief topic of this lesson?
2. What name has Israel sometimes received, and why?
3. Explain the silence about the Messiah until this period.
4. Who speaks in chapter 49?
5. Have you read Romans 11?
6. Who speaks in chapter 50?
7. Memorize Israel 53.
8. State the connection between chapters 53 and 54.

ISAIAH 58-66 — MEETING OF THE AGES

We are drawing to the end of the present, and the opening of the Millennial age. The prophet's eye rests on the time when Israel is back in her land, the majority still unconverted to Christ and worshipping in a restored temple. There is a faithful remnant waiting for Him, though enduring the persecution of the false christ. This persecution may often be felt at the hands of their own brethren after the flesh. These facts must be assumed in the interpretation of these chapters, though they will not appear strange to any who have studied the preceding books in this commentary.

Chapter 58 opens with a renewal of the prophetic commission, suggesting that at the time of the end there will be a special heralding of the Lord's coming as there was at His first coming (³⁰¹⁵ Malachi 4:5-6). Indeed the whole chapter suggests the preaching of John the Baptist. Their complaint in verse 3 is answered in the verses that follow (vv. 4-7). Their blessing depends on obedience (vv. 8-14).

Chapter 59 continues the thought, leading into a revelation of the divine purpose to interpose on their behalf in the person of the Redeemer. This interposition is for judgment (vv. 15-19), but to the penitent and believing it means forgiveness, sanctification and blessing forever (vv. 20-21).

Chapter 60 carries on the description of the blessing. It has actually come. The rest of the world may yet be in darkness, but not Israel (vv. 1-2). Moreover, the latter has become light for all the rest. Millennial blessing pervades the earth (vv. 3-11). Israel is the arbiter of the Gentile nations (v. 12), and the latter are contributing to her greatness and benefit (vv. 14-16). Now the whole of Israel is converted and she has become great (vv. 21-22).

Chapter 61 shows the cause of the foregoing to be the work of the Messiah on Israel's behalf (vv. 1-3). The first part of this prediction was fulfilled at the first coming of Christ (see ^{<4016>}Luke 4:16-20). The first part ended at the proclamation of "the acceptable year of the Lord" (v. 3), but the second part begins "at the day of vengeance of our God." This is the second coming. The rest of the chapter repeats what was said of the future blessings in the preceding one.

Chapter 62 carries on the thought of 61. Help will be found by reading the Revised Version side by side with the King James, and especially by observing the marginal readings.

Chapter 63 begins with the picture of judgment. The day of vengeance is ushered in by the coming of the Avenger, Christ, on behalf of His people against the oppressing Gentiles (vv. 1-6). The remainder of the chapter is identified with the following one, the two composing the intercessory prayer of penitent Israel in that day. Read and compare it with Nehemiah's prayer in Nehemiah 1 and with that of ^{<2300>}Daniel 9. It also suggests many of the psalms. The closing two chapters are the answer to this prayer, and require no comment in the light of the principles of interpretation illustrated before.

QUESTIONS

1. What period is in view here?
2. Whose later work is suggested in chapter 58?
3. How does chapter 60 show that the blessing on Israel is to precede that of the rest of the earth?
4. Have you read ^{<4016>}Luke 4:16-20?
5. What time period is represented by the comma after the word "Lord," in ^{<2300>}Isaiah 61:2?
6. Are you careful to note the marginal renderings in your Bible?
7. How would you designate the last part of chapter 63 and chapter 64?