

The Messiah Is Coming

# ISAIAH



**BIBLE STUDY COURSE BY  
RUSTY RUTHERFORD**

# THE MESSIAH IS COMING

## *So Says Isaiah the Prophet*

Then the Lord will set up a trusted king.  
He will rule faithfully.  
He is from the tent of David.  
He judges and searches for justice.  
He is quick to do what is right. **Isaiah 16:5**

Written and taught by  
**Richard “Rusty” David Rutherford**

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## Author's Preface



Isaiah is my favorite book in the Bible after the Gospel According to John. Some call it the 5th Gospel. I call it the First Gospel because it portrays Jesus, the Messiah, so clearly especially in Isaiah 52:13-53:12. Isaiah was the first to tell us that Jesus is in heaven now interceding for us.

Isaiah is interspersed with the history of Israel from 740 BC when Assyria first invaded Israel to 535 BC when the first Judeans returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon. More importantly, Isaiah provides descriptions of Israel's wickedness and unfaithfulness to God, praise to God as King, the coming of Cyrus of Persia to conquer Babylon, and ending with God building a New Heaven and a New Earth with the Messiah reigning in Jerusalem through the Israelites and punishing his enemies.

Isaiah ministered to Israel from 742 to 698 BC; however, scholars extend his reign to 686 BC because the death of King Sennacherib of Assyria is cited in the book. Using my dates, Isaiah ministered 40 years to Israel during the reigns of four kings: Uzzah or Azariah 767-740 BC, Jotham 750-735 BC, Ahaz 735-715 BC, and Hezekiah 715-687 BC.

What is remarkable is that God revealed visions to Isaiah of Israel's returning from exile in Babylon to Jerusalem in 535 BC. As Isaiah's prophecies were available to the exiles in Babylon, these visions were a powerful



encouragement to the exiles. Isaiah also had a vision of God building a new heaven and a new earth. On this new earth, the Messiah would reign in Jerusalem ruling the entire world through the Judeans. Gentiles would come to Jerusalem to worship God in his new temple.

In severe contrast to the prophet John who wrote his book, The Revelation of Jesus Christ, in 96 AD, Messiah's kingdom portrayed by Isaiah is an earthly kingdom where John sees Messiah's kingdom as a spiritual kingdom. In Isaiah's kingdom, there is wickedness and people give birth to children and die. Messiah punishes his enemies.

Isaiah's particular appeal to Christians is his portrait of the Messiah revealed in four songs of the Servant of YHWH. Although there are vivid prophecies of his coming, the songs reveal what Messiah's life on earth will be like. There are remarkable details of Jesus ministry on earth from 6-4 BC to 30 or 33 AD.

What is confusing about Isaiah's book is that it is a collection of the sermons he preached during his 40-year ministry. Like the Book of Jeremiah, these are not strictly in chronological order and it is difficult to date many of them.

Isaiah is quoted 53x in the New Testament including quotes by Jesus in the Gospels. <https://www.csmediar.com/htaj.org/where-is-isaiah-quoted-in-the-new-testament.pdf>

I hope you enjoy studying Isaiah as much as I do.

**Rusty**

## Introduction

Seek the Lord while he may be found.  
Call on him while he is near.  
Let wicked people abandon their thoughts.  
Let them return to the Lord  
and he will show compassion to them.  
Let them return to our God  
because he will freely forgive them. **Isaiah 55:6-7**

These verses demonstrate why the Book of Isaiah is so memorable. There are so many verses that one wants to remember, thoughts that bring comfort and consolation in difficult times. One hundred years after Isaiah died the Babylonians began deporting Judeans to Babylon.

Beginning in 605 BC, the Babylonians deported the prophet Daniel and others, then again in 597 BC deporting the prophet Ezekiel and many others, and coming in 586 BC destroying the city and the temple and deporting many others, 4,600 men and their families went to Babylon. **Jeremiah 52:30**

Seventy years later in 535 BC, the exiles returned to Jerusalem, a total of 42,360 men and their families returned led by Zerubbabel, a descendant of King David and High Priest Joshua. **Ezra 2:64**

The words of Isaiah written from 742 to 698 BC were read by the exiles during their time in Babylon as the priests took copies of the Vision of Isaiah with them. For many of them, these words gave them the comfort that Jeremiah prayed for. **Lamentations 1:17**. The word comfort appears 22x in the Vision of Isaiah.

## Isaiah Quoted in the Gospels 28x

Isaiah 6:9	Matthew 13:14; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10
Isaiah 6:10	John 12:39
Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:23
Isaiah 9:1	Matthew 4:15
Isaiah 29:13	Matthew 15:7; Mark 7:6
Isaiah 40:3	Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:2; Luke 3:4; John 1:23
Isaiah 42:1	Matthew 12:18
Isaiah 42:4	Matthew 12:21
Isaiah 42:6	Luke 2:32
Isaiah 49:6	Luke 2:32
Isaiah 53:1	John 12:38
Isaiah 53:4	Mark 15:28; Luke 22:37
Isaiah 53:12	Mark 15:28; Luke 22:37
Isaiah 54:13	John 6:45
Isaiah 56:7	Matthew 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46
Isaiah 61:1	Luke 4:17
Isaiah 66:24	Mark 9:48

<https://www.simplybible.com/f591-isaiah-in-new-testament.htm>

### NOTE:

The words in **ten point bold-face type** are the transliterated Hebrew words spelled according to Strong's Concordance furnished by [www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org). I use this website to look up these words, to count the number of times they occur in the Bible, and for various meanings these words have. It is a free website. I don't use any other Bible software and highly recommend its use.

## PART I -

# GOD HAS A SERIOUS PROBLEM WITH HIS PEOPLE

The time of the Vision of Isaiah really begins with the death of King Uzziah in 742 BC and the call of the prophet in the temple in Jerusalem. However, the book itself begins with a summary of the status of the Kingdom of Judah. Isaiah will wait until Chapter 6 to describe his call by God.

In Chapter 1, we are introduced to the horrible state of religion in Judah. They have abandoned the Lord. They have despised **the Holy One of Israel** (Isaiah's favorite title for God.) They have turned their backs on him. **Isaiah 1:4**. God compares Judah's rulers to Sodom and Judah's people to Gomorrah, two cities God wiped from the earth with sulfur and brimstone in the days of Abraham. **Genesis 19:24-25**

Isaiah prophesies that Zion will be pardoned by the Lord's justice **mishpat** and those who return to the Lord will be pardoned by the Lord's righteousness **tsedaqah**. Rebels and sinners will be crushed at the same time and those who abandon the Lord will come to an end. **Isaiah 1: 27-28**

God's justice and righteousness will be the principle themes of the entire Vision of Isaiah.

## PERICOPE I

### God Accuses Judah and Jerusalem of Sinning Against Him

1:1 This is the vision which Isaiah, son of Amoz, saw about Judah and Jerusalem at the time of:

King Uzziah,	783-742 BC	16 years old also known as Azariah
King Jotham,	750-735 BC	25 years old
King Ahaz,	732-716 BC	20 years old
King Hezekiah.	716-698 BC	25 years old

<sup>2</sup> Listen, heaven, and pay attention, earth.

The LORD has spoken,  
I raised my children and helped them grow,  
but they have rebelled against me.

<sup>3</sup> Oxen know their owners,  
and donkeys know where their masters feed them.  
But Judah doesn't know its owner.  
My people don't understand who feeds them.

<sup>4</sup> How horrible it will be for a nation that sins.  
Its people are loaded down with guilt.  
They are descendants of evildoers  
and destructive children.

They have abandoned the LORD.  
They have despised the Holy One of Israel.  
They have turned their backs on him.

<sup>5</sup> Why do you still want to be beaten?  
Why do you continue to rebel?  
Your whole head is infected.  
Your whole heart is failing.

<sup>6</sup>From the bottom of your feet to the top of your head  
there is no healthy spot left on your body –  
only bruises, sores, and fresh wounds.

They haven't been cleansed, bandaged,  
or soothed with oil.

<sup>7</sup>Your country is devastated.  
Your cities are burned down.  
Your fields are destroyed right before your eyes by foreigners.  
Your fields are devastated and taken over by foreigners.

<sup>8</sup>My people Zion are left like a hut in a vineyard,  
like a shack in a cucumber field,  
like a city under attack.

<sup>9</sup>If the LORD of Armies hadn't left us a few survivors,  
we would have been like Sodom and Gomorrah.

### **Jerusalem's Corrupt Religion**

<sup>10</sup>Listen to the LORD's Word, you rulers of Sodom.  
Pay attention to the teachings from our God,  
you people of Gomorrah.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD asks:  
What do your many animal sacrifices mean to me?  
I've had enough of your burnt offerings of rams  
and enough fat from your fattened calves.  
I'm not pleased with the blood of bulls, lambs, or male goats.

<sup>12</sup>When you appear in my presence,  
who asked you to trample on my courtyards?

<sup>13</sup>Don't bring any more worthless grain offerings.  
Your incense is disgusting to me,  
so are your New Moon Festivals, your days of rest—holy days,

and the assemblies you call.  
I can't stand your evil assemblies.

<sup>14</sup> I hate your New Moon Festivals and your appointed festivals.  
They've become a burden to me,  
and I'm tired of putting up with them.

<sup>15</sup> So when you stretch out your hands in prayer,  
I will turn my eyes away from you.  
Even though you offer many prayers,  
I will not listen because your hands are covered with blood.

### **God Invites Israel to Turn Away from Sin**

<sup>16</sup> Wash yourselves. Become clean.  
Get your evil deeds out of my sight.  
Stop doing evil.

<sup>17</sup> Learn to do good.  
Seek justice.  
Arrest oppressors.  
Defend orphans.  
Plead the case of widows.

<sup>18</sup> Come on now, let's discuss this, says the LORD.  
Though your sins are bright red,  
they will become as white as snow.  
Though they are dark red,  
they will become as white as wool.

<sup>19</sup> If you are willing and obedient,  
you will eat the best from the land.

<sup>20</sup> But if you refuse and rebel,  
you will be destroyed by swords.  
The LORD has spoken.

## Jerusalem's Future

<sup>21</sup> How the faithful town has become a prostitute.  
She was full of justice **mishpat**,  
and righteousness **tsedeq** lived in her.  
But now murderers live there.

<sup>22</sup> Your silver is not pure.  
Your wine is watered down.

<sup>23</sup> Your rulers are rebels, friends with thieves.  
They all love bribes and run after gifts.  
They never defend orphans.  
They don't notice the widows' pleas.

<sup>24</sup> That's why the Lord, the LORD of Armies,  
the Mighty One of Israel, says,

How horrible it will be  
when I take revenge on my opponents!  
I will avenge myself against my enemies.

<sup>25</sup> I will turn my power against you.  
I will remove your impurities with bleach.  
I will get rid of all your impurities.

<sup>26</sup> I will give you judges like you had long ago,  
advisers like you had in the beginning.  
After that you will be called the Righteous City,  
the Faithful Town.

<sup>27</sup> Zion will be pardoned by the LORD's justice **mishpat**,  
and those who return will be pardoned  
by the LORD's righteousness **tsedaqah**.

<sup>28</sup> Rebels and sinners will be crushed at the same time,  
and those who abandon the LORD will come to an end.



<sup>29</sup> You will be ashamed of the oaks that you wanted to worship  
and embarrassed by the garden that you have chosen for your gods.

<sup>30</sup> You will be like an oak whose leaves wither  
and like a garden without water.

<sup>31</sup> Strong people will become tinder for a fire,  
and their work will be the spark.  
Both of them will burn together,  
and there will be no one to put out the fire.

## **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?**

It sounds like this nation of Judah in 742 BC was in terrible shape from God's perspective. From its leaders to its people, they were offending God by worshipping the Canaanite god Baal on the high places and worshipping the goddess Asherah in the groves where there were evergreen trees.

When David's son King Solomon died in 925 BC, David's kingdom split in two. King Jeroboam led ten tribes to form the Northern Kingdom of Israel with its capital at Samaria. Right from the start, this king did not want his people to worship in Jerusalem at the temple in the Southern Kingdom of Judah so he set up two Golden Calf Idols at Bethel in the south and Dan in the north.

The Southern Kingdom had two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, and their king was a descendant of King David. God had made a covenant with King David that his descendant would always rule on the throne of Israel. **2 Samuel 7:16**. This is where the concept of a Messiah or Anointed One came from.

Because of the idolatry of the Northern Kingdom, God allowed the Assyrian King Tiglath-Pileser III to invade the country beginning in 732 BC. Because the Kingdom of Aram (Syria) and the Northern Kingdom of Israel attempted to replace the King of Judah, King Ahaz of Judah contracted King Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria agreeing to become his vassal if he would protect him.

The Assyrian king quickly destroyed Aram and deported many of its inhabitants throughout Assyria. In 732 BC, he did the same thing in Israel. By 722 BC, the Assyrian kings had deported most of the population of Israel including their King Hoshea and his court and began looking at invading Judah.

In 701 BC, the Assyrian King Sennacherib moved westward through Syria. He made quick work of Phoenicia. The cities of Tyre and Sidon fell without a fight. Then he conquered the Philistines. Finally, he captured all 46 of the cities of Judah. King Hezekiah attempted to bribe him. Sennacherib took the bribe and continued fighting.

Finally, Sennacherib blockaded the city of Jerusalem. But would God allow his Holy Mountain to fall to pagans? Isaiah will tell us the story.

NOTE: Isaiah will refer to the Northern Kingdom as Israel or Ephraim, its largest tribe. But sometimes he will refer to both kingdoms as Israel.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. God invites Israel to change. What does he want them to do?
2. The Holy One of Israel is Isaiah's favorite term for God. How many times does he use it in his Vision? Does this title appear in any other books of the Bible?
3. God says: I'm not pleased with the blood of bulls, lambs, or male goats. **Isaiah 1:11**. Didn't God command these sacrifices in the Torah?
4. How can Judah's sins turn from bright red to white as snow?
5. Isaiah loves the word **mishpat** meaning justice. He uses the word **mishpat** 42x in the Vision. But it can also mean judgment. Explain.
6. Isaiah loves the word righteousness. This word appears in the Vision 36x. What does this word mean?

7. Isaiah will say that God's judgment usually comes with fire. Explain the meaning of **Isaiah 1:31**.

### **EXTRA CREDIT**

Why do I say that **Isaiah 1:27-28** is the theme of the entire Vision of Isaiah? Explain the meaning of this verse.

## PERICOPE 2

### God's Dream for Jerusalem

**2:1** This is the message **dabar**-word that Isaiah, son of Amoz, saw about Judah and Jerusalem.

**2**In the Last Days the mountain of the LORD's House will be established as the highest of the mountains and raised above the hills.

All the nations will stream to it.

**3**Then many people will come and say:  
Let's go to the mountain of the LORD,  
to the House of the God of Jacob.

He will teach **arah** us his ways **derek**  
so that we may live **yalak**-walk by them.

The teachings **torah** will go out from Zion.

The LORD's Word **dabar** will go out from Jerusalem.

**4**Then he will judge disputes between nations  
and settle arguments between many people.  
They will hammer their swords into plow blades  
and their spears into pruning shears.

Nations will never fight against each other,  
and they will never train for war again.

**5**Come, descendants of Jacob,  
let's live **yalak**-walk in the light of the LORD **YHWH**.

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Jerusalem sits on top of a mountain surrounded by hills. Rabbis say that Israel is in the center of the earth and Jerusalem is in the center of Israel. God envisions Jerusalem as the highest of the mountains 2,500 feet above sea level but the highest mountain in Israel is Mount Hermon 9,232 feet above sea level.

I call this pericope God's dream because for God, Jerusalem is his Holy Mountain. Isaiah will use this expression in **Isaiah 11:9; 56:7; 57:13; 65:11, 65:26; 66:20.**

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Zion appears 46 times in Isaiah. What does Zion mean?
2. **Isaiah 2:4** appears on the United Nations building in New York. Why is this verse important to them?
3. What is the Torah? Is it the Lord's Word?
4. Isaiah says *the nations will flow or stream into Jerusalem*. Why will they come there?
5. Why is the Jerusalem temple called *the Mountain of the Lord's House*?
6. Why does Isaiah mention the descendants of Jacob? Jacob's name was changed by God to Israel. When did this happen and why? HINT: **Genesis 32:22-32**. The word *Jacob* appears 42 times in Isaiah.
7. Micah was a compatriot prophet who prophesied in the country of Judah at the same time Isaiah prophesied in Jerusalem. Read **Micah 4:1-4**. Who copied from whom?

## PERICOPE 3

### God Will Judge His People Because of Their Sin

<sup>2:6</sup> LORD, you have abandoned your people,  
the descendants of Jacob,  
because they are filled with Eastern influences.  
They are fortunetellers like the Philistines,  
and they make deals with foreigners.

<sup>7</sup>Their land is filled with silver and gold,  
and there is no end to their treasures.  
Their land is filled with horses,  
and there is no end to their chariots.

<sup>8</sup>Their land is filled with idols,  
and they worship what their hands have shaped  
and what their fingers have molded.

<sup>9</sup>People will be brought down.  
Everyone will be humbled.  
Do not forgive them.

<sup>10</sup>Go in among the rocks and hide underground  
*because of the LORD's terrifying presence  
and the honor of his majesty.*

<sup>11</sup>The eyes of arrogant people will be humbled.  
High and mighty people will be brought down.  
On that day the LORD alone will be honored.

### The Day of the LORD's Judgment

<sup>12</sup>The LORD of Armies will have his day  
against all who are arrogant and conceited  
and all who are proud of themselves.  
They will be humbled,

<sup>13</sup>against all the towering and mighty cedars of Lebanon  
and all the oaks of Bashan,

<sup>14</sup>against all the high mountains  
and all the lofty hills,

<sup>15</sup>against every high tower  
and every fortified wall,

<sup>16</sup>against all the large ships of Tarshish  
and all the beautiful boats.

<sup>17</sup>Then arrogant people will be brought down,  
and high and mighty people will be humbled.  
On that day the LORD alone will be honored.

<sup>18</sup>Then idols will disappear completely.

<sup>19</sup>People will go into caves in the rocks  
and into holes in the ground  
*because of the LORD's terrifying presence  
and the honor of his majesty  
when he rises to terrify the earth.*

<sup>20</sup>On that day people will throw to the moles and the bats  
the silver and gold idols that they made  
for themselves to worship.

<sup>21</sup>They will go into caves in the rocks  
and into cracks in the cliffs  
*because of the LORD's terrifying presence  
and the honor of his majesty  
when he rises to terrify the earth.*

<sup>22</sup>Stop trusting people.  
Their life is in their nostrils.  
How can they be worth anything?

## The LORD's Judgment on Sinners in Zion

**3:1** See now, the Lord, the LORD of Armies,  
is going to take from Jerusalem and Judah  
every kind of support  
and their entire supply of food and water.

<sup>2</sup> He will take their heroes and soldiers,  
judges and prophets,  
fortunetellers and statesmen,

<sup>3</sup> military leaders and civilian leaders,  
counselors, skilled workers, and experts in magic.

<sup>4</sup> I will make boys their leaders.  
Children will govern them.

<sup>5</sup> People will oppress each other,  
and everyone will oppress his neighbor.  
The young will make fun of the old,  
and common people will make fun of their superiors.

<sup>6</sup> A person will grab one of his relatives  
from his father's family and say:  
You have a coat.  
You'll be our leader.  
This pile of ruins will be under your control.

<sup>7</sup> When that day comes the relative will cry out:  
I'm not a doctor.  
I don't have any food or a coat in my home.  
Don't make me a leader of our family.

<sup>8</sup> Jerusalem has stumbled, and Judah has fallen,  
because what they say and what they do is against the LORD.  
They are defiant in his honored presence.



<sup>9</sup>The look on their faces will be held against them.  
They boast about their sins,  
which are like those of the people of Sodom.  
They don't even bother to hide them.

How horrible it will be for these people,  
because they have brought disaster on themselves.

<sup>10</sup>Tell the righteous that blessings will come to them.  
They will taste the fruit of their labor.

<sup>11</sup>How horrible it will be for the wicked.  
Disaster will strike them.  
What they have done will be done to them.

<sup>12</sup> Children will oppress my people.  
Women will rule them.  
My people, your guides mislead you,  
and you don't know which way to go.

<sup>13</sup>The LORD takes his place in the courtroom.  
He stands to judge his people.

<sup>14</sup>The LORD presents his case to the respected leaders  
and the officials of his people:  
You have burned down the vineyard.  
Your houses are filled with goods stolen from the poor.

<sup>15</sup>The Almighty LORD of Armies asks:  
How can you crush my people  
and grind the faces of the poor into the ground?

### **God Criticizes Trophy Wives**

<sup>16</sup>The LORD adds:  
The women of Zion are arrogant.  
They walk with their noses in the air,

making seductive glances,  
taking short little steps,  
jingling the ankle bracelets on their feet.

<sup>17</sup>The Lord will cause sores to appear  
on the heads of the women of Zion,  
and the LORD will make their foreheads bare.

<sup>18</sup>On that day the Lord will take away their fine things: jingling anklets,  
headbands, crescent-shaped necklaces, <sup>19</sup>pendants, bracelets, scarfs, <sup>20</sup>hats,  
ankle bracelets, blouses, perfume boxes, charms, <sup>21</sup>signet rings, nose rings,  
<sup>22</sup>fine robes, coats, shawls, purses, <sup>23</sup>mirrors, underwear, headdresses, and  
veils.

<sup>24</sup>Instead of the smell of perfume,  
there will be the smell of decay.  
They will wear ropes instead of belts.  
They will have bald heads instead of beautiful hair.

They will wear sackcloth instead of expensive clothes.  
Their beauty will be scarred

<sup>25</sup> Women, your warriors will die in combat.  
Your mighty men will die in battle.

<sup>26</sup>The gates of Zion will cry and grieve,  
and Zion will sit on the ground, exhausted.

**4:1** When that day comes, seven women will grab one man and say:  
We'll eat our own food and provide our own clothes.  
Just let us marry you for your name.  
Take away our disgrace.

## **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?**

God says that his people are filled with foreign influences. God wants his people to be different from all the nations. God says they are his treasure

**cegullah**-special possession. *They are to be my Kingdom of Priests and a Holy Nation. Exodus 19:5*

God says the land is filled with horses and chariots. But God says Israel's king is not to have a lot of horses. **Deuteronomy 17:16**. God says the land is filled with idols.

What disturbs God most is peoples' arrogance and pride. Isaiah especially picks out the women who wear expensive items and walk so that others will notice them.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. A theme of this pericope is: *The eyes of arrogant people will be humbled. High and mighty people will be brought down. On that day the Lord alone will be honored. Isaiah 2:11*. What will the Lord do to achieve this?
2. Isaiah says *people hide because of the Lord's terrifying presence and the honor of his majesty when he rises to terrify the earth. Isaiah 2:2:19*. What will the Lord do?
3. Isaiah uses the expressions *on that day* or *when that day comes*. What is Isaiah indicating by using these expressions?
4. The God's Word translation uses the expression *how horrible it will be* for the KJV word *woe* **owy**. This word appears 4x in Isaiah, 4x in Ezekiel but 8x in Jeremiah, the most of any book of the Bible. What does this word mean?
5. God appears in the courtyard saying to Israel's leaders: You have burned down **ba'ar**-eaten up the vineyard **kerem**. **Isaiah 3:14**. The people of Israel live mostly in the mountains where they grow grapes. The vineyard is Israel. This word **kerem** appears 14x in Isaiah. What is God accusing Israel's leaders of doing?

## PERICOPE 4

### God Gives New Glory for Zion

4:2 When that day comes, the Branch **tsemach** Messiah of the LORD will be beautiful and wonderful. The fruit of the land will be the pride and joy of Israel's survivors **peleta**-escapees.

3 Then whoever is left in Zion and whoever remains **yathar**-remnant in Jerusalem will be called holy, everyone who is recorded among the living in Jerusalem.

4 The Lord will wash away the filth of Zion's people. He will clean bloodstains from Jerusalem with a spirit of judgment **mishpat** and a spirit of burning.

5 The LORD will create a cloud of smoke during the day and a glowing flame of fire during the night over the whole area of Mount Zion and over the assembly. His glory will cover everything.

6 It will be a shelter from the heat during the day as well as a refuge and hiding place from storms and rain.

### WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Isaiah is now speaking of a day far in the future when the Messiah arrives. Here is the first mention of the faithful remnant who will escape all the dangers of the past. Any sin that remains will be cleansed by God.

Then God will create his shekinah, his pillar of cloud and his pillar of fire similar to that with which God led the Israelites from Egypt **Exodus 13:21-22** and placed over the Holy of Holies in the Wilderness Tabernacle **Numbers 14:14**. This same of cloud or fire led the Israelites through the 40 years of wilderness wandering. **Exodus 40:36-38**. Once the Israelites enter the Promised Land, we no longer hear of it.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Isaiah is picturing the future days of the Messiah in the Age to Come. He sees Zion, the City of Jerusalem where everyone living there is holy. Why are human beings now holy?
2. Why does God wait until then to wash away all the filth of Zion's people?
3. Why does God now place his pillar of cloud and pillar of fire over the City? What does this symbolize?
4. Did the pillar of cloud provide moisture and shelter over the Israelites camp during their 40 years in the desert where there was little water and terrific heat?

## PERICOPE 5

### A Song about the Vineyard

5:1 Let me sing a love song to my Beloved *yediyd*  
about his vineyard:

My Beloved had a vineyard on a fertile hill.

<sup>2</sup> He dug it up, removed its stones,  
planted it with the choicest vines,  
built a watchtower in it,  
and made a winepress in it.

Then he waited for it to produce good grapes *enab*,  
but it produced only sour, wild grapes *be'ushiym*.

<sup>3</sup> Now then, you inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judah,  
judge between me and my vineyard.

<sup>4</sup> What more could have been done for my vineyard  
than what I have already done for it?  
When I waited for it to produce good grapes,  
why did it produce only sour, wild grapes?

<sup>5</sup> Now then, let me tell you what I will do to my vineyard.  
I will tear away its hedge so that it can be devoured  
and tear down its wall so that it can be trampled.

<sup>6</sup> I will make it a wasteland.  
It will never be pruned or hoed.  
Thorns and weeds will grow in it,  
and I will command the clouds not to rain on it.

<sup>7</sup>The vineyard of the LORD of Armies is the nation of Israel,  
and the people of Judah are the garden of his delight.  
He hoped for justice *mishpat* but saw only slaughter *mispach*,  
for righteousness *tsedaqah* but heard only cries of distress *tsa'aqah*-shriek.

## God Will Punish His Sinful Vineyard

<sup>8</sup> How horrible it will be for you  
who acquire house after house and buy field after field  
until there's nothing left  
and you have to live by yourself in the land.

<sup>9</sup> With my own ears I heard the LORD of Armies say:  
Many houses will become empty.  
Large, beautiful houses will be without people to live in them.

<sup>10</sup> A ten-acre vineyard will produce only six gallons of wine,  
and two quarts of seed will produce only four quarts of grain.

<sup>11</sup> How horrible it will be for those  
who get up early to look for a drink,  
who sit up late until they are drunk from wine.

<sup>12</sup> At their feasts there are lyres and harps,  
tambourines and flutes, and wine.  
Yet, they don't pay attention to what the LORD is doing  
or see what his hands have done.

<sup>13</sup> The Lord says: My people will go into exile **galah**-captivity  
because they don't understand what I'm doing.  
Honored men will starve,  
and common people will be parched with thirst.

<sup>14</sup> That is why the grave's appetite increases.  
It opens its mouth very wide  
so that honored people and common people will go down into it.  
Those who are noisy and joyous will go down into it.

<sup>15</sup> People will be brought down.  
Everyone will be humbled.  
The eyes of arrogant people will be humbled.

<sup>16</sup>The LORD of Armies will be honored when he judges.  
The holy God will show himself to be holy  
when he does what is right.

<sup>17</sup>Then lambs will graze as if they were in their own pasture,  
and foreigners will eat among the ruins of the rich.

<sup>18</sup>How horrible it will be for those  
who string people along with lies and empty promises,  
whose lives are sinful.

<sup>19</sup>They say:  
Let God hurry and quickly do his work  
so that we may see what he has in mind.

Let the plan of the Holy One of Israel happen quickly  
so that we may understand what he is doing.

<sup>20</sup>How horrible it will be for those  
who call evil good and good evil,  
who turn darkness into light and light into darkness,  
who turn what is bitter into something sweet  
and what is sweet into something bitter.

<sup>21</sup>How horrible it will be for those  
who think they are wise  
and consider themselves to be clever.

<sup>22</sup>How horrible it will be for those  
who are heroes at drinking wine,  
who are champions at mixing drinks,

<sup>23</sup>who declare the guilty innocent for a bribe,  
who take away the rights of righteous people.



## The LORD Will Use Assyria to Punish His People

<sup>5:24</sup> As flames burn up straw  
and dry grass shrivels in flames,  
so their roots will rot,  
and their blossoms will blow away like dust.

They have rejected the teachings of the LORD of Armies  
and have despised the Word of the Holy One of Israel.

<sup>25</sup> That's why the anger of the LORD burns hot against his people,  
and he is ready to use his power to strike them down.  
The hills tremble,  
and dead bodies lie like garbage in the streets.  
*Even after all this, his anger has not disappeared,  
and he is still ready to use his power.*

<sup>26</sup> The LORD raises up a flag for the nations far away.  
With a whistle he signals those at the ends of the earth.  
Look, they are coming very quickly.

<sup>27</sup> None of them grow tired or stumble.  
None of them slumber or sleep.  
The belts on their waists aren't loose  
or their sandal straps broken.

<sup>28</sup> Their arrows are sharpened; all their bows are ready to shoot.  
Their horses' hoofs are as hard as flint.  
Their chariot wheels are as quick as the wind.

<sup>29</sup> They roar like a lioness.  
They growl like a young lion.  
They growl as they snatch their prey  
and carry it off to where no one can rescue it.

<sup>30</sup> On that day they will roar over their prey as the sea roars.  
If they look at the land,

they will see only darkness and distress.  
Even the light will be darkened by thick clouds.

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

God planted the nation of Israel in his Promised Land and expected good grapes. But all he received were stink berries. So God will punish his Chosen People. He will lead them into captivity, the first mention of this.

God then mentions six sins, prefacing the description of each by the word *wœ*. He first mentions people who acquire many fields and houses not to live in them or farm them but simply to have them. Then there are the drunks who simply pleasure themselves. Then there are the liars who make empty promises and those who fail to tell the truth. There are arrogant people and those who take bribes.

God will punish these people. He will bring nations to punish his Chosen People. They will bring darkness and distress to God's Promised Land.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. The Hebrew word *yediyd* appears once in **Deuteronomy 33:12**, in **Psalm 45:1; 60:5; 84:1; 108:6; 127:2**, and once in **Jeremiah 11:15**. What meaning does this word convey about the relationship between God and his people?
2. Why did God plant good seeds expecting good grapes but the seeds produced stink berries? What went wrong?
3. God says he will punish his people by sending them into captivity. What does God anticipate his people will learn in captivity?
4. God says he will raise up a flag to signal far away nations to come to his Promised Land. His Chosen People will become a prey. What does this prefigure?
5. What animal are these nations coming to punish Judah compared to by God?

## PERICOPE 6

### God Calls Isaiah as His Prophet

**6:1** In the year King Uzziah died, <sup>742</sup>BC I saw the Lord sitting on a high and lofty throne. The bottom of his robe filled the temple.

<sup>2</sup>Angels **saraph** were standing above him. Each had six wings: With two they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew.

<sup>3</sup>They called to each other and said:

Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of Armies.  
The whole earth is filled with his glory.

<sup>4</sup>Their voices shook the foundations of the doorposts and the temple filled with smoke.

<sup>5</sup>So I said: O, no!

I'm doomed.

Every word that passes through my lips is sinful.

I live among people with sinful lips.

I have seen the king, the LORD of Armies!

<sup>6</sup>Then one of the angels flew to me. In his hand was a burning coal that he had taken from the altar with tongs.

<sup>7</sup>He touched my mouth with it and said: This has touched your lips. Your guilt has been taken away and your sin has been forgiven.

<sup>8</sup>Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying:

Whom will I send? Who will go for us?

I said: Here I am. Send me!

<sup>9</sup>He said: Go and tell these people:

No matter how closely you listen,  
you'll never understand.

No matter how closely you look,  
you'll never see.

<sup>10</sup> Make these people close-minded.  
Plug their ears.  
Shut their eyes.

Otherwise, they may see with their eyes,  
hear with their ears,  
understand with their minds,  
and return and be healed.

<sup>11</sup> I asked: How long, O Lord?  
He replied:

Until the cities lie in ruins with no one living in them,  
the houses have no people,  
and the land is completely desolate.

<sup>12</sup> The LORD will send his people far away  
and a large area in the middle of the land will be abandoned.

<sup>13</sup> Even if one out of ten people is left in it,  
the land will be burned again.  
When a sacred oak or an oak is cut down, a stump is left  
The holy seed will be the land's stump.

## **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?**

Uzziah or Azariah was King of Judah for 52 years from 783-742 BC. In Israel to the north, Jeroboam II was king, reigning from 786-746. During this time there was peace and both kingdoms prospered. An earthquake occurred in 760 BC. **Amos 1:1** mentions this earthquake. Most people associated an earthquake with God's anger, he is shaking the earth.

So in the year that King Uzziah died 742 BC, people wondered what was going to happen next. It was in that year that while Isaiah was in the

Jerusalem temple, perhaps acting as a priest offering incense, he saw the Lord sitting on his throne.

Seraphim, fiery angels perhaps copper colored, were standing above God. They called to each other and said: Holy **qadowsh**, holy, holy is the Lord of Armies or Lord of Hosts **tsaba**. The whole earth is filled with his glory **kabowd**.

When Isaiah saw God, he could only think of his own unholiness. So he confessed: I am a man of unclean lips. At this, God directed one of the seraphim to take a coal from the altar and touch Isaiah's lips with it. The angel told Isaiah: This has touched your lips. Your sin has been forgiven.

Then God asked: Who will I send? Isaiah offered: Send me. God then told Isaiah he would be his prophet but he would preach a message that the Chosen People would not accept. Isaiah then asked: How long would the people reject your message?

God replied: Until there is destruction in the land and the people are sent away in exile. Yet when a sacred oak is cut down, there remains a remnant, a stump. The holy seed will be the land's stump.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Ezekiel saw cherubim or living creatures surrounding God on his throne chariot when the Lord called him as a prophet in 592 BC. **Ezekiel 1:5; 9:3**. How are they different from the seraphim Isaiah saw?
2. Define holy. This word appears 51x in Isaiah, 5x in Jeremiah, and 35x in Ezekiel. Can a human being be holy?
3. Why does God cleanse Isaiah of his sin? What does this tell us about the reason our sin is forgiven by God?
4. Why would God send Isaiah to the people in Judah if they would not listen to him?
5. Why would God tell Isaiah people would not listen to him ahead of time?

6 Again we hear that God's People will be sent far away. Why will God do this?

7. Who is the holy seed and why is he the land's stump?

## PERICOPE 7

### King Ahaz Is Given a Sign by God

**7:1** When Ahaz, son of Jotham and grandson of Uzziah, was King of Judah, <sup>732 BC</sup> Aram's Syria King Rezin and Israel's King Pekah, son of Remaliah, went to Jerusalem to attack it but they couldn't defeat it.

**2** When word reached David's family Judah that the Arameans Syria had made an alliance with Ephraim Israel, the hearts of the King Ahaz and his people were shaken as the trees of the forest are shaken by the wind.

King Ahaz was only 20 years old.

**3** Then the LORD said to Isaiah: Go out with your son Shear Jashub to meet King Ahaz at the end of the ditch of the Upper Pool on the road to the Laundryman's Field.

**4** Say to him: Be careful, stay calm, and don't be afraid. Don't lose heart because of the fierce anger of King Rezin from Aram and Remaliah's son King Pekah. These two are smoldering logs.

**5** Aram, Ephraim Israel, and Remaliah's son King Pekah have planned evil against you, saying:

**6** Let's march against Judah, tear it apart, divide it among ourselves, and set up Tabeel's son as its king.

**7** This is what the Almighty LORD says:

It won't take place.

It won't happen.

**8** The capital of Aram is Damascus, and the leader of Damascus is King Rezin. Ephraim Israel will be shattered within 65 years so that it will no longer be a nation.

<sup>9</sup>The capital of Ephraim Israel is Samaria,  
and the leader of Samaria is Remaliah's son King Pekah.  
If you don't remain faithful,  
you won't remain standing.

<sup>10</sup> Again the LORD spoke to King Ahaz.

<sup>11</sup> Ask the LORD your God for a sign.  
It can be anything you want.

<sup>12</sup> But King Ahaz answered:  
I won't ask.  
I wouldn't think of testing the LORD.

<sup>13</sup> Listen now, descendants of David, Isaiah said.  
Isn't it enough that you try the patience of mortals?  
Must you also try the patience of my God?

<sup>14</sup> So the Lord himself will give you this sign:  
A virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son.  
She will name him Immanuel meaning God Is With Us.

<sup>15</sup> He will eat cheese and honey until he knows how to reject evil and choose good.

<sup>16</sup> Indeed, before the boy knows how to reject evil and choose good, the land of the two kings who terrify you will be deserted.

<sup>17</sup> The LORD will bring on you, your people, and your ancestor's family a time unlike any since Ephraim broke away from Judah 925 BC. He will bring the King of Assyria.

<sup>18</sup> On that day the LORD will whistle for the flies that are at the distant branches of the Nile River in Egypt and for the bees that are in Assyria.

<sup>19</sup> All of them will come and settle in the deep valleys, in the cracks in the cliffs, on all the thornbushes, and at all the water holes.



<sup>20</sup> On that day the Lord will hire the king of Assyria from beyond the Euphrates River to be a razor to shave the hair on your head, the hair on your legs, and even your beard.

<sup>21</sup> On that day a person will keep alive a young cow and two sheep.

<sup>22</sup> That person will eat cheese, because they will produce so much milk. Everyone who is left in the land will eat cheese and honey.

<sup>23</sup> On that day, in every place where there were 1,000 vines worth 1,000 pieces of silver, there will be briars and thorns.

<sup>24</sup> People will come there with bows and arrows to hunt because the whole land will be filled with briars and thorns.

<sup>25</sup> You will no longer be able to go to all the hills which used to be cultivated because they will be filled with briars and thorns. It will be a place for turning oxen loose and letting sheep run.

### **Isaiah's Younger Child is a Sign of the Coming of Assyria**

**8:1** The LORD said to me: Take a large writing tablet, and write on it with a pen: Maher Shalal Hash Baz meaning The Looting Will Come Quickly; the Prey Will Be Easy.

<sup>2</sup> I will have these dependable witnesses testify: the priest Uriah and Zechariah, son of Jeberechiah.

<sup>3</sup> I slept with the prophetess. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son. The LORD told me: Name him Maher Shalal Hash Baz.

<sup>4</sup> Before the boy knows how to say: Daddy or Mommy, the wealth of Damascus Aram's capital and the loot from Samaria Israel's capital will be carried away by the king of Assyria.

### **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?**

After Isaiah had been a prophet for ten years, God sent him to meet King Ahaz with his eldest son Shear Jashab, whose name means: *A Remnant Will*

*Return.* Ahaz was worried that the king of Aram and the king of Israel had united and attempted to capture Ahaz and replace him with another as king of Israel. Ahaz had already made up his mind to become a vassal of the king of Assyria, King Tiglath-Pileser III. That strong king would protect him.

But God sent Isaiah to attempt to persuade Ahaz to trust God to protect him instead of a human king. King Ahaz had already sacrificed his son to the Ammonite god Molech. **2 Kings 16:2**. He had also offered sacrifices and burned incense to pagan gods and goddesses at the pagan worship sites on hills and under large trees. **2 Kings 16:4**

Isaiah knew this, but he obeyed God and went to meet the king. He told him: God says that Ephraim, the Northern Kingdom, will be completely shattered within 65 years. If you don't remain faithful to God, you won't remain standing.

Ask God to give you a sign to prove this is what he says. Ahaz attempts to be pious and said: I wouldn't think of testing the Lord. Isaiah replied: Must you try the patience of my God? Here is the sign of God. A virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son. Before this son is 12 years old, the land of the two kings you fear will be deserted.

God will bring the king of Assyria and the Pharaoh of Egypt to Judah. They will destroy your land so that the few people left will possess a few animals. The whole land, however, will be filled with thorns and thistles. There will be no farming.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Isaiah is sent on an impossible mission. God already knows the heart of King Ahaz. He is an idolator who has sacrificed his son to an idol. Trust God instead of your idols, is Isaiah's message. God's sign is that a virgin will birth a son. Before this child comes of age at 12 years old in 721 BC, both Aram and Israel will be deserted.

Obviously, Isaiah's message is not heard by King Ahaz. But a child would be born to Isaiah's second wife as his first wife had died. Isaiah's younger son's

name would be *Maher Shalal Hash Baz* meaning: Speedy Plunder. Loot Easy.

In 735 BC, the king of Assyria, Tiglath-Pileser III, would come and kill or deport the citizens of Damascus, the capital of Aram. Then by 722 BC, he and two successor Assyrian kings would succeed in killing or deporting all the citizens of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

King Ahaz was so devoted to this king that he had an Assyrian altar placed in the Jerusalem temple. The Assyrians were the cruelest nation on earth. They enjoyed torturing and killing people. Whole villages would commit suicide rather than surrender to the Assyrian soldiers.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Isaiah has two sons with symbolic names. Shear Jashub and Maher Halal Hash Baz. Explain the symbolism of their names and what their meaning is for prefiguring Judah's history.
2. Ahaz died in 715 BC and King Hezekiah came to the throne when he was 25 years old. Describe how Hezekiah was a very different king from his father Ahaz and how he treasured Isaiah as God's prophet. **2 Kings 18:1-8**
3. How did King Tiglath-Pileser III, the King of Assyria 745-727, treat King Ahaz of Judah? How about his successor King Shalmaneser 727-722 BC? How about his successor Sargon II 722-705?
4. The Assyrian King Sargon II was the one who deported Hoshea, the last king of the Northern Kingdom in 722 BC and declared the territory an Assyrian Province. **2 Kings 17:1-41**. Israel was almost entirely devoid of Israelis being replaced by Gentiles from throughout the Assyrian Empire whom the Jews called Samaritans after the old capital city of the Northern Kingdom. The Philistine city of Ashdod rebelled against him in 715 BC so Sargon came and punished them ruthlessly destroying the city entirely.
5. When Ahaz was king, how did the people of Judah act? Did they worship Baal, Asherah, and Molech as the king did? What was God's reaction to this?

## PERICOPE 8

### **Assyria Will Invade, But It Will Not Conquer Judah**

8:5 The LORD spoke to me again. He said:

<sup>6</sup> These people have rejected the gently flowing water of Shiloah and find joy in King Rezin and Remaliah's son King Pekah.

<sup>7</sup> That is why the Lord is going to bring against them the raging and powerful floodwaters of the Euphrates River—the King of Assyria with all his power.

It will overflow all its channels and go over all its banks.

<sup>8</sup> It will sweep through Judah.

It will overflow and pass through.

It will be neck-high.

Its outspread wings will extend over your whole country, O Immanuel.

<sup>9</sup> Be broken, you people. Be terrified.

Listen, all you distant parts of the earth.

Prepare for battle, but be terrified.

Prepare for battle, but be terrified.

<sup>10</sup> Make plans for battle, but they will never succeed.

Give orders, but they won't be carried out,

because God is with us Immanuel.

### **Some in Jerusalem Will Stumble Because They Do Not Trust the LORD**

<sup>11</sup> This is what the LORD said with his powerful hand on me.

He warned me not to follow the ways of these people:

<sup>12</sup> Don't say that everything

these people call a conspiracy

is a conspiracy.

Don't fear what they fear.  
Don't let it terrify you.

<sup>13</sup> Remember that the LORD of Armies is holy.  
He is the one you should fear  
and the one you should be terrified of.

<sup>14</sup> He will be a place of safety for you.  
But he will be a rock that makes people trip  
and a stumbling block for both kingdoms of Israel.  
He will be a trap and a snare for those who live in Jerusalem.

<sup>15</sup> Many will stumble.  
They will fall and be broken.  
They will be trapped and caught.

## **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?**

In a poetic way, Isaiah describes the coming of Assyria to Judah. It was King Sennacherib <sup>705-681 BC</sup> who invaded Judah as described in *Isaiah 36-37*. Isaiah sees the Assyrians as the floodwaters of the great Euphrates River north of Judah sweeping down on Judah.

Isaiah says many Judeans will stumble because they do not seek the Lord. God will cause their stumbling as a punishment for their unbelief.

As a result of the idolatry of King Ahaz, Isaiah left the court with his family. He now has disciples who write down his preaching that we apparently have in this book.

Many people in Jerusalem are idolators getting information from mediums, fortunetellers, and necromancers. Isaiah preaches they should follow the Torah Moses wrote and prophets who are godly. Micah and Amos are preaching at this time besides Isaiah.

People without God will fear what has happened to the Northern Kingdom will now happen to Judah. The Assyrian are very close to destroying the

Philistines on the coast. It is but a short way east to Judah. Without God, all they see is distress, gloom, anguish, and darkness.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why didn't the Assyrians immediately attack Judah?
3. Why does Isaiah say that God will be a place of safety for some and a stumbling block for others?
4. What are the people of Jerusalem calling a conspiracy?
5. What did Isaiah do when Ahaz was king. Did he remain in the king's court or leave? **Isaiah 8:16-22**
6. Shiloah is perhaps the Gihon Spring where the Wilderness Tabernacle was located in the time of King David. King Solomon was anointed king there. Read **Isaiah 8:6**. What is being pictured here?
7. Both Assyria and Babylon were located north of the Euphrates River. Why does Isaiah characterize Assyria as raging waters of the Euphrates River?
8. Why does Isaiah refer to Judah as *Immanuel* in **Isaiah 8:8**?

## PERICOPE 9

### Isaiah Leaves the Court of King Ahaz

8:16 Tie up the written instructions *teuwdah-testimony*.  
Seal the teachings *Torah* among my disciples.

<sup>17</sup> I will wait for the LORD,  
who hides his face from the descendants of Jacob.  
I will hope in him.

<sup>18</sup> I am here with the children that the LORD has given me.  
We are signs and symbols in Israel  
from the Lord of Armies, who lives on Mount Zion.

<sup>19</sup> People will say to you:  
Ask for help from the mediums and the fortunetellers  
who whisper and mutter.

Shouldn't people ask their God for help instead?  
Why should they ask the dead to help the living?

<sup>20</sup> They should go to the teachings  
and to the written instructions.  
If people don't speak these words,  
it is because it doesn't dawn on them.

<sup>21</sup> They will pass through the land  
when they are hard-pressed and hungry.  
When they are hungry, they will be furious.  
Then they will look up, cursing their king and God.

<sup>22</sup> They will look at the earth  
and see only distress and gloom.  
They will go in anguish  
and be forced into darkness.

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Isaiah and his disciples leave the court of King Ahaz because of his idolatry. They follow the Towrah, the testimony of Moses. Isaiah says that God is now hiding face from Judah because of their idolatry. Isaiah and his two sons are God's signs and symbols for Judah.

Without God, the people of Judah are helpless. Their entire world has turned dark.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why does Isaiah have disciples but Jeremiah or Ezekiel do not?
2. Isaiah says his two sons and him are signs and symbols from God? What do they symbolize?
3. At this point many Judeans fear that Assyria will soon attack Israel. Who should they go to for help?



## PERICOPE 10

### God Will Send His Messiah, a Descendant of King David

9:1 But there will be no more gloom  
for the land that is in distress.

God humbled the lands of Zebulun and Naphtali in earlier times.  
But in the future he will bring glory to the road by the sea,  
to the land across the Jordan River,  
to Galilee, where foreigners live.

### A Child Will Be Born as the Prince of Peace

9:2 The people who walk in darkness will see a bright light.  
The light will shine on those who live in the land of death's shadow.

3 You will expand the nation and increase its happiness.  
It will be happy in your presence  
like those who celebrate the harvest  
or rejoice when dividing loot.

4 You will break the yoke that burdens them,  
the bar that is across their shoulders,  
and the stick used by their oppressor,  
as you did in the battle against Midian.

5 Every warrior's boot marching to the sound of battle  
and every garment rolled in blood  
will be burned as fuel in the fire.

### The Titles of the Messiah

9:6 A child will be born for us.  
A son will be given to us.  
The government will rest on his shoulders.  
He will be named:

Wonderful Counselor,  
Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father,  
Prince of Peace.

<sup>7</sup>His government and peace will have unlimited growth.  
He will establish David's throne and kingdom.  
He will uphold it with justice and righteousness now and forever.  
The LORD of Armies is determined to do this!

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

People in the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali are near to the Sea of Galilee. South of them is Samaria in the tribe of Ephraim. All of these people have relatives deported by the Assyrians. However, Isaiah prophesies that in the future, they will see a great light from God.

There will be a child born and the government of both Israel and Judah will rest on his shoulders. Then Isaiah calls him some very surprising names: Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Who can this be?

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. God has punished the people of the Northern Kingdom mightily for their idolatry. But he will bring a child who will be from Galilee with some surprising and what some would call blasphemous titles. Who is he?
2. When Isaiah says *this child will establish David's throne*, what does he mean?
3. Isaiah says the characteristics of the child's rule will be justice **mishpat** and righteousness **tsedaqah** now and forever. What does this mean?
4. Isaiah further says that God is with him, that is, the child will be acting according to God's plan. What does this mean?

## PERICOPE II

### The LORD's Message Against His People

9:8 The LORD sent a message against Jacob.  
The message is against Israel.

<sup>9</sup> All the people of Ephraim  
and the people who live in Samaria will know it.

With arrogant and conceited hearts they will say,  
<sup>10</sup> Bricks have fallen,  
but we will rebuild with hand-cut stones.  
Fig trees have been cut down,  
but we will replace them with cedars.

<sup>11</sup> The LORD will set Rezin's oppressors against Israel  
and will stir up its enemies—

<sup>12</sup> the Arameans from the east  
and the Philistines from the west.  
They will devour Israel with open mouths.

*Even after all this, his anger will not disappear,  
and he is still ready to use his power.*

<sup>13</sup> But the people have not returned  
to the one who struck them,  
nor have they sought the LORD of Armies.

<sup>14</sup> So in one day the LORD will cut off from Israel  
both head and tail,  
both palm branches and cattails.

<sup>15</sup> Respected and honored leaders are the head.  
Prophets who teach lies are the tail.

<sup>16</sup>Those who guide these people lead them astray.  
Those who are guided by them will be destroyed.

<sup>17</sup>That is why the Lord isn't happy with their young men,  
nor will he show compassion for their orphans and widows.  
Every one of them is a godless evildoer,  
and every mouth speaks foolishness.

*Even after all this, his anger will not disappear,  
and he is still ready to use his power.*

<sup>18</sup>Surely wickedness burns like fire.  
It burns up briars and thorns.  
It sets the underbrush in the forest on fire,  
and it whirls upward in clouds of smoke.

<sup>19</sup>The land is scorched by the fury of the LORD of Armies,  
and the people are like fuel for the fire.  
No one shows concern for others.

<sup>20</sup>On the right, one gobbles up food and is still hungry.  
On the left, another eats and is never full.  
Each person eats the flesh from his own arm.

<sup>21</sup>Manasseh is against Ephraim.  
Ephraim is against Manasseh.  
Together they attack Judah.

*Even after all this, his anger will not disappear,  
and he is still ready to use his power.*

**10:1** How horrible it will be for those who make unjust laws  
and who make oppressive regulations.

<sup>2</sup>They deprive the poor of justice.  
They take away the rights of the needy among my people.  
They prey on widows and rob orphans.

<sup>3</sup>What will you do on the day  
you are called to account for these things,  
when the disaster comes from far away?

Where will you run for help?  
Where will you leave your wealth?

<sup>4</sup>Nothing's left but to crouch among prisoners  
and to fall with those who are killed.

*Even after all this, his anger will not disappear,  
and he is still ready to use his power.*

### **The LORD's Message of Punishment Against Assyria**

<sup>10:5</sup>How horrible it will be for Assyria!  
It is the rod of my anger.  
My fury is the staff in the Assyrians' hands.

<sup>6</sup>I send them against a godless nation.  
In my fury I order them against the people  
to take their belongings, loot them,  
and trample on them like mud in the streets.

<sup>7</sup>But that's not what they intend to do.  
Their minds don't work that way.  
Their purpose is to destroy and put an end to many nations.

<sup>8</sup>They ask: Aren't all our commanders kings?

<sup>9</sup>Isn't Calno like Carchemish?

Isn't Hamath like Arpad?

Isn't Samaria like Damascus?

<sup>10</sup>My power has reached kingdoms which have idols.  
They had more carved statues than Jerusalem or Samaria.

<sup>11</sup>I will also do to Jerusalem and its idols  
what I've done to Samaria and its idols.

## God Will Punish All the Kings of Assyria

<sup>10:12</sup> When the Lord has finished all his work on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, he will punish the King of Assyria for all his boasting and all his arrogance.

<sup>13</sup> The king will say:

I did this with my own two powerful hands.  
I did this with my wisdom, because I am so clever.  
I've eliminated the boundaries of nations.

I've looted treasuries.  
I've brought down people like a mighty man.

<sup>14</sup> I've found the riches of nations as one finds a nest.  
I've gathered the whole world as one gathers abandoned eggs.  
Not one of them flapped a wing, opened its mouth, or peeped.

<sup>15</sup> Can an ax attack the person who cuts with it?  
Can a saw make itself greater than the person who saws with it?  
A rod cannot move the person who lifts it.  
A wooden stick cannot pick up a person.

<sup>16</sup> That is why the Almighty LORD of Armies  
will send a degenerative disease against brave men.  
A flame will be turned into a raging fire under his power.

<sup>17</sup> Israel's light will become a flame.  
Its Holy One will become a fire.  
He will burn up and devour the weeds and thornbushes in one day.

<sup>18</sup> The majestic forest and the orchard  
will destroy both body and soul.  
They will be like a sick person wasting away.

<sup>19</sup> The trees that remain in the forest will be so few that  
a child could count them.

<sup>20</sup> At that time the remaining few Israelites,  
the survivors of Jacob's descendants  
will no longer depend on the one who struck them.  
They will only depend on the LORD, **the Holy One of Israel**

<sup>21</sup> A few, the remaining few of Jacob,  
will return to the mighty God.

<sup>22</sup> Although your people Israel may be  
as numerous as the grains of sand on the seashore,  
only a few will return.  
Destruction will be complete and fair.

<sup>23</sup> The Almighty LORD of Armies will carry out this destruction  
throughout the world as he has determined.

<sup>24</sup> The Almighty LORD of Armies says:  
My people who live in Zion,  
don't be afraid of the Assyrians when they strike with a rod  
or when they raise their staff against you  
as the Egyptians did.

<sup>25</sup> Very soon I will unleash my fury,  
and my anger will destroy them.

<sup>26</sup> Then the LORD of Armies will raise his whip against them.  
As he struck down Midian at the Rock of Oreb **Judges 7:25**  
and raised his staff over the water,  
so he will lift it as he did in Egypt. **Exodus 7:19**

<sup>27</sup> At that time their burden will be removed from your shoulders.  
Their yoke will be removed from your neck.  
The yoke will be torn away because you have grown fat.

## **A Picture of the Assyrians Coming South to Jerusalem**

<sup>10:28</sup> They come to Aiath.

They pass through Migron.

They store their equipment at Michmash.

<sup>29</sup> They go through the mountain pass  
and lodge at Geba for the night.

The people in Ramah tremble;  
the people in Saul's Gibeah flee.

<sup>30</sup> Cry aloud, you people in Gallim!

Pay attention, you people in Laishah and miserable Anathoth.

<sup>31</sup> The people in Madmenah flee;  
those who live in Gebim take shelter.

<sup>32</sup> This day they stopped at Nob.

They shake their fist at the mountain of my people Zion,  
at the mountain of Jerusalem.

<sup>33</sup> Now look.

The Almighty LORD of Armies  
will trim the branches with terrifying power.

The highest trees will be cut down.

The tallest ones will be brought down.

<sup>34</sup> He will cut down the underbrush of the forest with an ax.

Lebanon will fall in front of the Mighty One.

## **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?**

Isaiah now goes back to the reasons why he allowed the Assyrians to decimate the Northern Kingdom. Not only were the Israelites idolatrous, they were arrogant and thought at first they could defeat the Assyrians. But they soon found out they were no match for them and the Assyrians rolled over the entire country killing, torturing, and deporting many of the people.



Despite the danger of the Assyrians, the people of Israel fight among themselves. Even Ephraim and Manasseh, whose ancestor was Joseph, fight among themselves.

God is punishing Israel with Assyria because of its unrighteous behavior. The rich have oppressed the poor.

God also says he will not only punish Israel. He will also punish Judah for its idols just as he is punishing Israel for their idols. Yet God will always have his righteous remnant. **Isaiah 10:20-21**

God comforts the people in Judah. He says he will soon punish the Assyrians as he helped Gideon defeat the Midianites.

Isaiah closes by picturing the Assyrians coming south through Israel to Jerusalem. The Assyrians stop at Nob, the city of priests, and shake their fist at Jerusalem. God will cut down the Assyrians, who consider themselves the tallest trees of the forest.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Isaiah says Israel's Holy One will become a fire. This parallels a saying of Moses. What is it? **HINT Deuteronomy 4:24.**
2. Isaiah says that God will always have a righteous remnant. This is one of the main themes of the Vision of Isaiah. **Isaiah 10:20-22.** Isaiah will reflect God's change from dealing only with corporate Israel to having a relationship with individual believers. This concept will be carried in Jeremiah and **Ezekiel 28:2.** Explain the proverb Ezekiel uses to explain this concept.
3. In **Isaiah 10:15**, the prophet repeats the lesson of the potter and his clay. Explain the lesson.
4. God says the tall cedars of Lebanon will fall before the Mighty One. **Isaiah 10:34.** What does God mean?

## PERICOPE 12

### Judah Will Be Ruled by a Shoot from Jesse's Stump

11:1 When a shoot **choter**-rod will come out from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch **netser** from its roots will bear fruit.

<sup>2</sup>The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—  
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the Spirit of advice and power,  
the Spirit of knowledge and fear **yir'ah** of the LORD.

<sup>3</sup>He will gladly bear the fear **yir'ah** of the LORD.  
He will not judge by what his eyes see  
or decide by what his ears hear.

<sup>4</sup>He will judge **shaphat** the poor justly **tsedeq**-righteousness.  
He will make fair decisions for the humble people on earth.  
He will strike the earth with a rod from his mouth.  
He will kill the wicked with the breath from his lips.

<sup>5</sup>Justice **tsedeq** will be the belt around his waist.  
Faithfulness **'emuwnah** will be the belt around his hips.

<sup>6</sup>Wolves will live with lambs.  
Leopards will lie down with goats.  
Calves, young lions, and year-old lambs will be together,  
and little children will lead them.

<sup>7</sup>Cows and bears will eat together.  
Their young will lie down together.  
Lions will eat straw like oxen.

<sup>8</sup>Infants will play near cobras' holes.  
Toddlers will put their hands into vipers' nests.

<sup>9</sup>They will not hurt or destroy anyone anywhere  
on my holy mountain.

The world will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD  
like water covering the sea.

<sup>10</sup>At that time the root **sheresh** of Jesse will stand as a banner  
for the people to gather around .

The nations will come to him.

His resting place will be glorious.

### **The Messiah Will Restore the Remnant of His People**

<sup>11</sup>At that time the Lord will use his power again  
to recover what remains of his people  
in Assyria, Upper and Lower Egypt,  
Sudan, Elam, Babylonia, Hamath,  
and the islands of the sea.

<sup>12</sup>He will raise a banner for the nations to gather around.  
He will gather the outcasts of Israel  
and bring together the scattered people of Judah  
from the four corners of the earth.

<sup>13</sup>Ephraim's jealousy will vanish,  
and Judah's opponents will come to an end.  
Ephraim won't be jealous of Judah,  
and Judah won't oppose Ephraim.

<sup>14</sup>They will swoop down on the slopes of Philistia in the west.  
Together they will loot the people of the east.  
They will conquer Edom and Moab.  
The people of Ammon will be subject to them.

<sup>15</sup>The LORD will dry up the gulf of the Egyptian Sea.  
He will wave his hand over the Euphrates River  
with his scorching wind and divide it into seven streams  
so that people can walk over it in their sandals.

<sup>16</sup>There will be a highway **mecillah**  
for the remaining few **shear**-remnant of his people left in Assyria  
like there was for Israel when it came out of Egypt.

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

This is a pericope about the Davidic Messiah who will come. He will possess the seven spirits of God (v. 2). He will judge justly. He will kill the wicked with only a word. He will be characterized by justice and faithfulness. Through him, the world will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord like water covers the sea. He will bring peace to the earth. Even the animals will have peace with one another.

The Messiah will raise his banner and the gentiles will follow him. He will gather his Chosen People from all the places they were scattered. The tribal jealousies of the people of Israel will vanish. The nations around Israel that challenged them will be conquered. He will make a highway for the people the Assyrians deported to return to Israel.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. The world will be radically changed when the Messiah comes. Is Isaiah foretelling of the new heaven and the new earth in **Isaiah 65:17**?
2. Compare this picture of the Messiah to the First Song of the Servant of **YHWH** in **Isaiah 42:1-4**.
3. The highway **mecillah** created by God appears in **Isaiah 11:16; 19:23; 35:8; 40:3; 62:10**. Where does this highway go from and to?
4. Why does Isaiah say the Messiah will attack the wicked with a rod from his mouth and with the breath of his lips? What weapon does he use?
5. Isaiah says the Messiah will gather the gentiles. Why will he do this?
6. Why will the Messiah dry up the Euphrates River?

7. Isaiah says the world will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord like the water covers the sea. What does this anticipate? HINT: **Isaiah 56:5-7**

## PERICOPE 13

### Israel Praises Their God

12:1 At that time you will say,

I will praise you, O LORD.

Although you had been angry with me,  
you turned your anger away from me,  
and you comforted **nacham** me.

<sup>2</sup>Look. God is my Savior **yeshuw'ah**-salvation.

I am confident and unafraid,  
because the LORD is my strength and my song.  
He is my Savior **yeshuw'ah**.

<sup>3</sup>With joy you will draw water  
from the springs of salvation **yeshuw'ah**.

<sup>4</sup>At that time you will say:

Praise the LORD.

Call on his name.

Make his deeds known among the nations.

Make them remember that his name is highly honored.

<sup>5</sup>Make music to praise the LORD.

He has done wonderful things.

Let this be known throughout the earth.

<sup>6</sup>Shout loudly, and sing with joy, people of Zion!

The Holy One of Israel is great.

He is among you **Immanuel**.

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

People praise God because although he was once angry with them, he now comforts them. This word appears 17x in the Vision of Isaiah. This is salvation for the people, a word that appears 3x in this pericope and 19x in the Vision of Isaiah.

The people say that God's goodness should be known throughout the earth. They are his witnesses, his servants he has chosen. **Isaiah 43:10**. Again, Isaiah's main title for God appears: The Holy One of Israel. He is Immanuel.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why had God been angry with Israel? What has now changed?
2. Define salvation.
3. Why is water so important to Israel. What does water symbolize?
4. How good a witness for God is Israel?

## PART 2

### ORACLES AGAINST THE NATIONS

Isaiah teaches that God's people must not trust the nations for their protection. They must trust God. Israel and Judah were always looking to Egypt as their savior. Egypt always failed them.

All three prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, report God will punish the nations, especially those surrounding Israel, for fighting against God's people.

Isaiah will give prophecies against Babylon, Assyria, Moab, Damascus and Israel [The Northern Kingdom], Sudan, Egypt, Dumah, Arabia, and Tyre.

Jeremiah will give prophecies against Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Damascus [Syria, Aram]. Kedar, Hazor, Elam, and Babylon.

Ezekiel will give prophecies against Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, Egypt, and Assyria.



## PERICOPE 14

### Babylon Will Be Punished

13:1 This is the divine revelation which Isaiah, son of Amoz, saw about Babylon.

<sup>2</sup>Raise a banner on the bare mountaintop.  
Call loudly to them.  
Signal them with your hand to enter the nobles' gates.

<sup>3</sup>I've commanded my holy ones.  
I've called my mighty men to carry out my anger.  
They find joy in my triumphs.

<sup>4</sup>Listen to the noise on the mountains.  
It is like the sound of a large army.  
It is the sound of kingdoms and nations gathering together.  
The LORD of Armies is assembling his army for battle.

<sup>5</sup>His army is coming from a distant land,  
from the ends of heaven.  
The LORD is coming with the weapons of his fury  
to destroy the whole world.

<sup>6</sup>Cry loudly, for the day of the LORD is near.  
It will come like destruction from the Almighty.

<sup>7</sup>That is why every hand will hang limp,  
and everyone's courage will fail.

<sup>8</sup>They'll be terrified.  
Pain and anguish will seize them.  
They'll writhe like a woman giving birth to a child.  
They'll look at one another in astonishment.  
Their faces will be burning red.

<sup>9</sup>The day of the LORD is going to come.  
It will be a cruel day with fury and fierce anger.  
He will make the earth desolate.  
He will destroy its sinners.

<sup>10</sup>The stars in the sky and their constellations  
won't show their light anymore.  
The sun will be dark when it rises.  
The moon won't shine.

<sup>11</sup>I will punish the world for its evil  
and the wicked for their wrongdoing.  
I will put an end to arrogant people  
and humble the pride of tyrants.

<sup>12</sup>I will make people harder to find than pure gold  
and human beings more rare than gold from Ophir.

<sup>13</sup>I will make heaven tremble,  
and the earth will be shaken from its place  
when the LORD of Armies is angry.  
At that time he will be very angry.

<sup>14</sup>They'll be like hunted gazelle  
and like sheep with no one to gather them.  
Everyone will return to his own people  
and flee to his own land.

<sup>15</sup>Whoever is found will be stabbed to death.  
Whoever is captured will be executed.

<sup>16</sup>Their little children will be smashed to death  
right before their eyes.  
Their houses will be looted and their wives raped.

<sup>17</sup>I'm going to stir up the Medes against them.  
They don't care for silver and aren't happy with gold.

<sup>18</sup> But their bows will smash the youth.  
They'll have no compassion for babies,  
nor will they look with pity on children.

<sup>19</sup> Babylon, the jewel of the kingdoms,  
the proud beauty of the Chaldeans,  
will be like Sodom and Gomorrah when God destroyed them.

<sup>20</sup> It will never be inhabited again,  
and no one will live in it for generations.  
Arabs won't pitch their tents there.  
Shepherds won't let their flocks rest there.

<sup>21</sup> Desert animals will lie down there.  
Their homes will be full of owls.  
Ostriches will live there,  
and wild goats will skip about.

<sup>22</sup> Hyenas will howl in Babylon's strongholds,  
and jackals will howl in its luxurious palaces.

Its time has almost come.  
Its days will not be extended.

### **Israel Will Be Rescued from Babylon**

**14:1** The LORD will have compassion for Jacob  
and again choose Israel.  
He will resettle them in their own country.  
Foreigners will join them  
and unite with the descendants of Jacob.

<sup>2</sup> People will take them  
and bring them to their own place.  
The nation of Israel will possess nations  
as male and female slaves in the LORD's land.

They will take their captors captive  
and rule their oppressors.

<sup>3</sup>When that day comes, the LORD will give you relief  
from your pain and suffering,  
from the hard slavery you were forced to do.

<sup>4</sup>Then you will mock the King of Babylon with this saying:  
How the tyrant has come to an end.  
How his attacks have come to an end.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD has broken the staff of the wicked,  
the scepter of rulers.

<sup>6</sup>They struck the people with fury,  
with blows that didn't stop.  
They ruled nations in anger,  
persecuting them without restraint.

### **The King of Babylon Has Fallen**

<sup>7</sup>The whole earth rests and is peaceful.  
It breaks out into shouts of joy.

<sup>8</sup>Even the cypresses rejoice over you.  
The cedars of Lebanon say:  
Since you have fallen,  
no lumberjack has come to attack us.

<sup>9</sup>Sheol below wakes up to meet you when you come.  
It wakes up the ghosts of the dead,  
all who were leaders on earth.  
It raises all who were kings of the nations  
from their thrones.

<sup>10</sup> All of them will greet you:  
You also have become weak like us.  
You have become like one of us.

<sup>11</sup> Your pride has been brought down to Sheol  
along with the music of your harps.  
Maggots are spread out like a bed under you,  
and worms cover you.

### **The King of Babylon Has Acted Like Satan**

<sup>12</sup> How you have fallen from heaven,  
you morning star, son of the dawn.  
How you have been cut down to the ground,  
you conqueror of nations.

<sup>13</sup> You thought:

**I'll** go up to heaven  
and set up my throne above God's stars.  
**I'll** sit on the mountain far away in the north  
where the gods assemble.

<sup>14</sup> **I'll** go above the top of the clouds.  
**I'll** be like the Most High.

<sup>15</sup> But you've been brought down to Sheol,  
to the deepest part of the pit.

<sup>16</sup> Those who see you stare at you.  
They look at you closely and say:

Is this the man who made the earth tremble,  
who shook the kingdoms,

<sup>17</sup> who made the world like a desert and tore down its cities,  
who didn't let his prisoners go home?

<sup>18</sup> All the kings of the nations, all of them,  
have been buried with honor, each in his own tomb.

<sup>19</sup> But you are thrown out of your tomb like a rejected branch.  
You are covered with those who were killed in battle.  
You go down to the stones of the pit like a trampled corpse.

<sup>20</sup> You won't be joined by the kings in the tomb,  
because you have destroyed your land and killed your people.

The descendants of the wicked will never be mentioned again.

<sup>21</sup> Prepare a place to slaughter their sons  
because of their ancestors' guilt.  
They won't be able to rise, possess the earth,  
and rebuild cities all over it.

<sup>22</sup> I'll rise up against them, declares the LORD of Armies.  
I'll cut off the name of the survivors from Babylon,  
its offspring and descendants, declares the LORD.

<sup>23</sup> It will become the possession of herons.  
It will become pools of water.  
I'll sweep it with the broom of destruction,  
declares the LORD of Armies.

## **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR??**

Babylon is mentioned here for the first time in Isaiah's Vision. Isaiah will mention the word Babylon 13x, Jeremiah 14IX, and Ezekiel 15x. At this time in history, Babylon is only a small country. The superpower in the world is Assyria.

Yet Isaiah says that God will punish Babylon with his large army. He says the day of the Lord is near. This is when God will punish the world for its evil. He will destroy arrogant people and humble the pride of tyrants.

God foretells that the Medes will attack Babylon and conquer it. Cyrus of Persia is the king of the Medo-Persian empire. He will conquer Babylon in 539 BC.

Isaiah then describes the King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar like Satan. He is arrogant and uses the words I will 4x. He will go up to heaven and set his throne above the angels. He will be like God, the Most High. Yet God will bring him down to Sheol, the place of departed spirits. Nebuchadnezzar will be thrown out of his tomb, a severe desecration. God says Babylon will be destroyed and become the home of unclean animals.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Jeremiah will report God saying about King Nebuchadnezzar: *He is my servant.* Jeremiah 25:9; 27:6; 43:10. Why then does Isaiah compare Nebuchadnezzar to Satan?
2. The day of the Lord is mentioned in Isaiah 2:12; 13:6, 9; Jeremiah 46:10; Ezekiel 13:5; 30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14; Amos 5:18, 20; Obadiah 1:15; Zephaniah 1:7, 14; Zechariah 14:1; Malachi 4:5. What characterizes the day of the Lord. What happens on that day?
3. Babylon wasn't abandoned until 1000 AD. Cyrus of Persia captured it in 539 BC and he and his ancestors ruled it for nine centuries. Why does Isaiah intimate that Cyrus will destroy the city?
4. What is the King of Babylon's primary sin according to Isaiah?
5. God says he will sweep Babylon with the broom of destruction. What does this mean?
6. Isaiah is prophesying from 742-698 BC. Yet he prophesies Israel will be released from captivity in Babylon. This happens in 539 BC. How can he prophecy this event over 160 years in advance?

## PERICOPE 15

### Assyria Will Be Punished

<sup>14:24</sup> The LORD of Armies has taken an oath:  
It will happen exactly as I've intended.  
It will turn out exactly as I've planned.

<sup>25</sup> I'll crush Assyria on my land.  
I'll trample it underfoot on my mountains.  
Then its yoke will be removed from my people,  
and its burden will be removed from their shoulders.

<sup>26</sup> This is the plan determined for the whole earth.  
This is how he will use his power against all the nations.

<sup>27</sup> The LORD of Armies has planned it.  
Who can stop it?  
He is ready to use his power.  
Who can turn it back?

### The Philistines Will Be Punished

<sup>14:28</sup> This was the divine revelation in the year King Ahaz died 714 BC.

<sup>29</sup> All you Philistines, don't rejoice  
that the rod of the one who struck you is broken,  
because a viper will come from that snake's root,  
and his descendant will be a flying, fiery serpent.

<sup>30</sup> The poorest of the poor will eat,  
and the needy will lie down in safety.  
But I will put your root to death with famine  
and kill off your survivors.

<sup>31</sup> Cry loudly in the gate,  
Cry out in the city.



Be frightened, all you Philistines.  
Smoke comes from the north  
and there are no stragglers in its ranks.

<sup>32</sup> How should we answer the messengers from the nations?  
Tell them that the LORD has laid Zion's foundation,  
and his humble people will find refuge in it.

## **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?**

God prophesies he will destroy Assyria in Judah. This is when God's angel killed 185,000 soldiers blockading Jerusalem. **Isaiah 37:36**. Then the Assyrian army left Judah and went back to Assyria.

## **THINGS TO THINK ABOUT**

1. God destroyed 185,000 Assyria soldiers. But this was not until after the Assyrians had captured and destroyed all of Judah's 46 fortified cities. The Assyrians were the cruelest of warriors. They enjoy torturing people. Why did God allow this horrific action against his Chosen People?

## PERICOPE 16

### Moab Will Be Punished

15:1 This is the divine revelation about Moab.

In a single night Ar in Moab is laid waste and destroyed.

In a single night Kir in Moab is laid waste and destroyed.

<sup>2</sup>The people of Dibon go to the temple,  
to the worship sites, to cry.

Moab wails over Nebo and Medeba.

Every head is shaved bald, and every beard is cut off.

<sup>3</sup>In their streets they wear sackcloth.

On their roofs and in their city squares  
everyone wails and cries.

<sup>4</sup>Heshbon and Elealeh also cry out.

Their voices are heard as far away as Jahaz.

Moab's armed men cry out.

Their courage is gone.

<sup>5</sup>My heart cries out for Moab.

Its people flee as far as Zoar at Eglath Shelishiyah.

They go up the mountain road to Luhith.

They cry loudly over the destruction on the way to Horonaim.

<sup>6</sup>The Nimrim Brook has run dry!

The grass dries up,  
the vegetation withers,  
and nothing green is left.

<sup>7</sup>That is why they carry the wealth  
that they have earned and stored up  
over Willow Ravine.

<sup>8</sup>Cries for help echo throughout the land of Moab.  
Their wailing echoes as far as Eglaim.  
Their wailing echoes as far as Beer Elim.

<sup>9</sup>The water in Dimon is red with blood,  
yet I will bring even more on Dimon.  
A lion will attack the fugitives from Moab  
and the survivors from Adamah.

**16:1** Send lambs to the ruler of the land.<sup>1</sup>  
Send lambs from Sela through the desert  
to my people at Mount Zion.

<sup>2</sup>Moab's daughters are like fluttering birds,  
like scattered nestlings,  
at the shallow crossings of the Arnon River.

<sup>3</sup>Give us advice.  
Make a decision.  
At high noon make your shadow as dark as night.  
Hide the fugitives.  
Don't betray the refugees.

<sup>4</sup>Let the fugitives from Moab stay with you a while.  
Be their refuge from the destroyer.  
Ruthless people will come to an end.

The destruction will end.  
The one who tramples others will be gone.

### **A Promise of the Coming Messiah**

<sup>16:5</sup>Then the LORD will set up a trusted king.  
He will rule faithfully.  
He is from the tent of David.

He judges and searches for justice.  
He is quick to do what is right.

### **The Moabites Are Very Arrogant**

<sup>16:6</sup> We've heard of the arrogance of Moab's people.

They are very arrogant.

We've heard of their boasting, arrogance, and conceit,  
but their boasts aren't true.

<sup>7</sup>That is why Moab will wail.

Everyone will wail for Moab.

Mourn and grieve over the raisin cakes of Kir Hareseth.

<sup>8</sup>The fields of Heshbon and the vineyards of Sibmah wither.

Rulers of the nations have cut off their grapes.

The grapevines once reached as far as Jazer  
and strayed out into the desert.

Their shoots had spread out over the sea.

<sup>9</sup>I will cry for the grapevines of Sibmah

as Jazer cries for them.

I will drench you with my tears, Heshbon and Elealeh.

The shouts of joy for your ripened fruits

and your harvest will be silenced.

<sup>10</sup>Joy and delight have vanished from the orchards.

No songs are sung.

No shouts are raised.

No one stomps on grapes in the winepresses,

because I have put an end to the shouts of joy.

<sup>11</sup>That is why my heart mourns for Moab like a harp.

My soul mourns for Kir Hareseth.

<sup>12</sup>When the people of Moab appear at the worship site,  
they will only wear themselves out.  
They will come into the holy place to pray,  
but they won't be able to.

<sup>13</sup>This is the message that the LORD spoke about Moab in the past.

<sup>14</sup>But now the LORD says: Moab's honor will be despised within three years. I will count them like workers count the years left of their contracts. In spite of their great number, the survivors will be very few and powerless.

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

The country of Moab lay just east across the Jordan River from Bethlehem. A Moabitess named Ruth was in the genealogy of King David. King David took his parents to Moab for protection while King Saul was chasing him.

Yet God is angry at Moab because of the worship of false gods.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. God seems very sympathetic for Moab. *My heart cries out for Moab.* **Isaiah 15:5; 16:11.** Why does God sympathize for Moab?
2. Moab's false gods are Nebo and Medeba. In Babylon, Nebo was second only to Marduk and associated with the moon god Sin. Nebo visited his father Marduk in Babylon at the New Year's celebration. He was associated with the planet Mercury. Why did Moab celebrate Babylon's god?
3. God says that Moab's people should flee to Mount Zion for safety. **Isaiah 16:1.** Why would Israel accept Moabites as refugees.
4. Why does Isaiah insert a prophecy of the Messiah in the middle of an oracle against Moab? **Isaiah 16:5**

## PERICOPE 17

### Damascus and Israel Will Be Punished

17:1 This is the divine revelation about Damascus.

Damascus will no longer be a city.  
It will become a pile of rubble.

<sup>2</sup>The cities of Aroer will be deserted.  
These cities will be used for sheep,  
which will lie down in them.  
There will be no one to disturb those sheep.

<sup>3</sup>Fortified cities will disappear from Ephraim,  
and the kingdom will disappear from Damascus.  
The remaining few from Aram will share Israel's honor,  
declares the LORD of Armies.

<sup>4</sup> When that day comes,  
the honor of Jacob's people will fade away  
and they will become skin and bones.

<sup>5</sup>That time will be like harvesting bundles of grain by the armful.  
It will be like gathering grain in the Rephaim Valley.

<sup>6</sup>Only a few people will survive.  
They will be like an olive tree that has been beaten.

Only two or three olives are left  
at the top of the highest branch,  
four or five olives on the rest of the branches,  
declares the LORD God of Israel.

<sup>7</sup>When that day comes, they will look to their Maker,  
and their eyes will look to the Holy One of Israel.

<sup>8</sup>They won't look to the altars made by their hands  
or to the Asherah poles or incense altars  
which their fingers molded.

<sup>9</sup>When that day comes, the fortified cities  
that other people abandoned because of the Israelites  
will be like abandoned woods and undergrowth.

So it will become a wasteland.

<sup>10</sup>You have forgotten the God of your salvation.  
You haven't remembered the rock, your stronghold.  
Instead, you have planted the best plants  
and have set out the imported grapevines.

<sup>11</sup>On the day you plant, you will make it grow.  
On the morning you set out the seedling, you will make it sprout.  
But the harvest will become a rotting pile<sup>l</sup>  
on a day of grief and incurable pain.

<sup>12</sup>How horrible it will be for many people!  
They will roar like the roaring sea.  
The noise that the people make  
will be like the noise from rushing water.

<sup>13</sup>The people will make noise like raging water.  
But the LORD will yell at them  
and they will run far away.  
They will be chased away  
like husks on the mountains being blown by the wind,  
like whirling dust being blown by a storm.

<sup>14</sup>In the evening there will be sudden terror.  
Before morning they will be gone.  
This will be the fate of those who looted us,  
the destiny of those who robbed us.

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Damascus was the capital of Aram or Syria. The king of Aram and the king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel signed an alliance to replace young King Ahaz, the king of Judah with their own candidate. As a result, God will punish both nations.

God criticizes both nations. He will send the Assyrians against them and only a small remnant will survive. Apparently, both nations worship the goddess Asherah who is symbolized by a carved pole or an evergreen tree.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. We don't know much about Aram, except they always seem to be an enemy of the nation of Israel. **I Kings 20**. An alliance between the two seems very unlikely. But the Assyrian King Tiglath-Pileser III deported many from both nations as King Ahaz had become his vassal. Why did the two nations make an alliance against Judah?
2. Why does Isaiah refer to the Northern Kingdom of Israel as Jacob's people? **Isaiah 17:4**
3. How can Isaiah say that *these two nations were those who looted us and robbed us*? **Isaiah 17:14**. We have no record of this.



## PERICOPE 18

### Sudan Will Be Punished

18:1 How horrible it will be for the land of whirring wings  
which lies beyond the rivers of Sudan.

<sup>2</sup>It sends messengers by sea  
in boats made of reeds  
skimming over the surface of the water.

Go, swift messengers, to a tall and smooth-skinned people,  
a people who are feared far and near,  
a strong and aggressive nation,  
whose land is divided by rivers.

<sup>3</sup>Look when someone raises a flag on the mountains.  
Listen when someone blows a ram's horn,  
all you inhabitants of the world who live on the earth.

<sup>4</sup>This is what the LORD says to me:

I will keep quiet and watch from my dwelling place.  
My presence will be like scorching heat in the sunshine,  
like heavy dew in the heat of the harvest.

<sup>5</sup>Before the harvest, when blossoms are gone  
and grapes are ripening from blossoms,  
he will cut off the shoots with pruning shears  
and chop off the spreading branches.

<sup>6</sup>They will be left for the birds of prey on the mountains  
and the wild animals.  
The birds of prey will feed on them in the summer,  
and all the wild animals on earth  
will feed on them in the winter.

<sup>7</sup>At that time gifts will be brought to the LORD of Armies  
from a tall and smooth-skinned people,  
a people who are feared far and near,  
a strong and aggressive nation,  
whose land is divided by rivers.

They will be brought to Mount Zion,  
the place where the name of the LORD of Armies is.

## **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?**

Sudan lies south of Egypt. Many Pharaohs of Egypt came from Sudan.

## **THINGS TO THINK ABOUT**

1. Why will God punish Sudan?
2. Why is Sudan called *the land of whirring wings*?
3. Isaiah says gifts will be brought to Jerusalem by messengers from Sudan.  
Why?

## PERICOPE 19

### **Egypt Will Be Punished**

19:1 This is the divine revelation about Egypt.

The LORD is riding on a fast-moving cloud and is coming to Egypt.  
Egypt's idols will tremble in his presence.  
Egypt's courage will fail.

<sup>2</sup> I will turn one Egyptian against another.  
They will fight—  
brother against brother,  
neighbor against neighbor,  
city against city,  
kingdom against kingdom.

<sup>3</sup> The Egyptians will lose courage.  
I will unravel their plans.  
They will turn to idols, ghosts,  
mediums, and fortunetellers.

<sup>4</sup> I will hand over the Egyptians to a harsh master.  
A strong king will rule them,  
declares the Almighty LORD of Armies.

<sup>5</sup> The water in the Nile River will be dried up,  
and the river will be dry and empty.

<sup>6</sup> The canals will stink.  
Egypt's streams will be emptied and dried up.  
The reeds and cattails will wither.

<sup>7</sup> The rushes by the Nile, by the edge of the Nile,  
and all the fields planted beside the Nile  
will dry up, be blown away, and disappear.

<sup>8</sup> Fishermen will cry.

All who cast their lines into the Nile will mourn.

Those who spread their nets on the water will sigh.

<sup>9</sup> Linen workers and weavers will be ashamed.

<sup>10</sup> Egypt's weavers will be crushed.

Those who work for money will be distressed.

<sup>11</sup> The leaders of Zoan are nothing but fools.

The wisest of Pharaoh's counselors gives stupid advice.

How can you tell Pharaoh:

I'm a descendant of wise men,  
a descendant of ancient kings?

<sup>12</sup> Where are your wise men now?

Let them tell you.

Let them explain what the LORD of Armies  
is planning against Egypt.

<sup>13</sup> The leaders of Zoan are acting foolishly.

The leaders of Memphis are led astray.

The leaders who are the cornerstones of its tribes  
mislead the Egyptians.

<sup>14</sup> The LORD mixes up their minds.

So they lead the Egyptians astray  
like a drunk who staggers in his vomit.

<sup>15</sup> No one—leaders or followers, important or unimportant—  
can do anything for Egypt.

<sup>16</sup> At that time Egyptians will act like women. They will tremble and be  
terrified because the LORD of Armies will shake his fist at them.

<sup>17</sup>The land of Judah will terrify the Egyptians. Whenever they are reminded of Judah, they will be terrified of it because of what the LORD of Armies is planning against it.

<sup>18</sup>When that day comes, five cities in Egypt will have people that speak the language of Canaan and swear allegiance to the LORD of Armies. One of the cities will be called Heliopolis.

<sup>19</sup>When that day comes, an altar for the LORD will be in the middle of Egypt and a stone marker for the LORD will be near its border.

<sup>20</sup>These objects will be a sign and a witness that the LORD of Armies is in Egypt. When the people cry to the LORD because of those who oppress them, he will send a savior and redeemer to rescue them.

<sup>21</sup>So the LORD will make himself known to the Egyptians. The Egyptians will know the LORD when that day comes. They will worship with sacrifices and food offerings. They will make vows to the LORD and carry them out.

<sup>22</sup>The LORD will strike Egypt with a plague. When he strikes them, he will also heal them. Then they will come back to the LORD. And he will respond to their prayers and heal them.

<sup>23</sup>When that day comes, a highway *mecillah* will run from Egypt to Assyria. The Assyrians will come to Egypt and the Egyptians to Assyria and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians.

<sup>24</sup>When that day comes, Israel will be one-third of God's people along with Egypt and Assyria. They will be a blessing on the earth.

<sup>25</sup>The LORD of Armies will bless them saying: My people Egypt, the work of my hands Assyria, and my possession Israel are blessed.

### **Those Who Were Allied with Egypt Will Be Ashamed**

**20:1** In the year when King Sargon II of Assyria sent his commander-in-chief to fight against Ashdod a city in Philistia 715 BC., he captured it.

<sup>2</sup>At that time the LORD told Isaiah, son of Amoz: Take off the sackcloth that you are wearing and take off your sandals. Isaiah did this and walked around barefoot and naked.

<sup>3</sup>Then the LORD said: My servant Isaiah has gone barefoot and naked for three years as a sign and as an omen to Egypt and Sudan.

<sup>4</sup>The King of Assyria will lead away both the young and the old—captives from Egypt and exiles from Sudan. They will be barefoot and naked. Their buttocks will be exposed in order to disgrace Egypt.

<sup>5</sup>Then the people will be shattered and ashamed because Sudan was their hope and Egypt was their beauty.

<sup>6</sup>When that day comes, those who live on this coastland will say: Look at what has happened to our hope. We ran to Egypt for help to be rescued from the King of Assyria. How can we escape?

## **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?**

Assyria and Babylon were superpowers of the north while Egypt was the superpower of the south. Both were always rivaling against one another. Israel and Judah were in between them. When Israel was attacked by Assyria or Babylon, Egypt was always approached as an ally to help.

Isaiah says the king of Assyria, Sargon II, would attack the Philistines and capture its city Ashdod. Then God commanded Isaiah to go barefoot and naked to show that one day Assyria would capture Egypt and Sudan and make its captives march naked to Assyria.

Egypt, because of its many gods, was seen as punished by God. Yet here is a strange prophecy. God will punish Egypt by devastating its land, including drying up the Nile River, the only source of fresh water for Egypt.

Isaiah says the land of Israel will terrify the Egyptians. Five cities in Egypt will speak the language of Canaan. One day an altar for God will be in the middle of Egypt and a stone marker near its border.

When the Egyptians cry to the Lord, he will send them a savior. The Lord will make himself known to the Egyptians. The Egyptians will then worship the Lord. The Lord will strike Egypt with a plague but then he will heal them.

In a future day a highway will run between Egypt and Assyria. The Assyrians will come to Egypt and the Egyptians to Assyria. Both will worship the Lord. In that day, Israel will only be one-third of God's people, Egypt will be one-third, and Assyria will be one-third of God's people. God will say Egypt are my people and Assyria is the work of my hands.

## **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?**

1. Why will one day people of five cities in Egypt speak the language of Canaan?
2. Why will God dry up the Nile River?
3. Jeremiah predicted a stone marker for the Lord will be located on the border of Egypt. Look up this reference.
4. When Egypt is oppressed, they will cry out to the Lord and he will send them a savior. Did this ever happen?
5. When will the Egyptians and Assyrians become friends?
6. How can God say Israelites and Judeans will only be 1/3 of God's people with Egypt and Assyrian making up the remainder of Gods people?
7. Assyria marched its captives completely naked to humiliate them joined together with hooks in their noses and a rope joining them. God commanded Isaiah to walk naked and barefoot. How long did Isaiah do this and where?

## PERICOPE 20

### An Oracle about the Desert by the Sea

21:1 This is the divine revelation about the desert by the sea.

Like a storm sweeping through the Negev,  
an invader will come from the desert,  
from a terrifying land.

<sup>2</sup>I was shown a harsh vision.  
The traitor betrays.  
The destroyer destroys.

Go to war, Elam.  
Surround them, Media.  
I will put an end to all the groaning.

<sup>3</sup>That is why my body is full of trembling.  
Pain grips me like the pain of childbirth.  
I'm disturbed by what I hear.  
I'm terrified by what I see.

<sup>4</sup>I'm confused.  
I'm shaking with terror.  
The twilight hours I longed for make me tremble.

<sup>5</sup>Set the table.  
Spread the rugs by the table.  
Eat. Drink. Get up, you leaders.  
Prepare your shields for battle!

<sup>6</sup>This is what the Lord says to me:  
Post a watchman.  
Have him report whatever he sees.



<sup>7</sup>He will see chariots, pairs of horsemen,  
riders on donkeys, and riders on camels.  
Let him watch carefully, very carefully.

<sup>8</sup>The watchman called:  
Sir, I stand on the watchtower every day.  
Every night, I stand guard at my post.

<sup>9</sup>Look! Here come chariots and horsemen in pairs.  
Then he said: Babylon has fallen. It has fallen.  
All the idols they worship lie shattered on the ground.

<sup>10</sup>You, my people, have been threshed and winnowed.  
I make known to you what I heard  
from the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel.

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

God now makes another oracle against Babylon. He calls it the desert by the sea. He says Elam and Media will attack it and say: *Babylon has fallen. Babylon has fallen. All its idols are destroyed.* Then God says: You, my people, have been punished by Babylon. But one day, Babylon will fall. I, YHWH, say this.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Isaiah predicts what will happen 150 years in the future. How is this an encouragement to the Jewish exiles in Babylon?
2. In **Isaiah 21:4**, Isaiah may be speaking of the ambassadors of Merodach-Baladan who came to see King Hezekiah. **Isaiah 39:1-8**. They entertained the ambassadors and showed them all the treasures of Judah. Isaiah may also be seeing the banquet where God wrote large on the wall foretelling of the capture of Babylon. **Daniel 5**. Do you see any other interpretation of this passage?

## PERICOPE 21

### Oracles about Edom and Arabia

21:11 This is the divine revelation about Dumah.

Someone is calling to me from Mount Seir:  
Watchman, how much of the night is left?  
Watchman, how much of the night is left?

<sup>12</sup>The watchman answers:  
Morning is coming and night will come again.  
If you need to ask, come back and ask.

### Arabia Will Be Punished

<sup>13</sup>This is the divine revelation about Arabia.

Your caravan of travelers from the people of Dedan  
will spend the night in the forest of Arabia.

<sup>14</sup>Bring water for the thirsty,  
you inhabitants of the land of Tema.  
Bring food to the fugitives.

<sup>15</sup>They flee from swords,  
from swords ready to kill,  
from bows ready to shoot,  
and from the thick of battle.

<sup>16</sup>This is what the Lord says to me: All of Kedar's honor will be gone in  
another year. I will count it like workers count the years left on their  
contracts.

<sup>17</sup>The remaining number of archers, Kedar's mighty archers, will be few.  
The LORD God of Israel has spoken.

## **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?**

Dumah is Edom and means silence. The Edomite asked the watchman how long the oppression against Edom would last. The watchman said there was hope but also more bad things were coming from Assyria.

While oppression from Assyria would come to the Arabs now, that of Edom would happen later. Dedan and Tema were Arabian towns. The Assyrians would kill many of the Arab warriors of Kedar.

## **THINGS TO THINK ABOUT**

1. Remember that Edom has always been Israel's most hated enemy. The night is a simile for the darkness of oppression by Assyria. Jews would delight that Edom would be attacked. What did the Edomites do to Israel?

## PERICOPE 22

### An Oracle about the Valley of Vision

22:1 This is the divine revelation about the valley of Vision.

What's the matter with you?

Why do all of you go up on the roofs?

<sup>2</sup>You are a city filled with shouting,  
a town filled with noise and excitement.  
Your people weren't killed with swords.  
Your dead didn't die in battle.

<sup>3</sup>All your leaders fled together  
and were captured without their bows and arrows.  
All those who were found were taken prisoner  
before any of them could get far away.

<sup>4</sup>That is why I say:  
Turn away from me  
so that I can cry bitterly.

Don't try to comfort me  
because of the destruction brought on my people.

<sup>5</sup>The Almighty LORD of Armies has chosen a special day.  
It will be a day of confusion and trampling  
in the valley of Vision,  
A day of tearing down walls and crying for help  
in the mountains.

<sup>6</sup>Elam takes its quiver of arrows,  
manned chariots, and horsemen.  
Kir uncovers its shields.

<sup>7</sup>Then your fertile valleys will be filled with chariots,  
and horsemen will stand ready in front of the gate.

<sup>8</sup>On that day the LORD will remove the defenses of Judah.  
You will look for weapons in the House of the Forest.

<sup>9</sup>You will see how many places in David's wall are broken.  
You will store water in the Lower Pool.

<sup>10</sup>You will count the houses in Jerusalem.  
You will tear down those houses in order to fortify the walls.

<sup>11</sup>You will build a reservoir between the two walls  
to hold the water of the Old Pool.  
You didn't look to Jerusalem's maker.  
You didn't see the one who formed it long ago.

<sup>12</sup>On that day the Almighty LORD of Armies  
will call for crying and for mourning,  
for shaving your heads and for wearing sackcloth.

<sup>13</sup>Instead, you will rejoice, celebrate,  
slaughter cattle, and butcher sheep.  
You will eat meat, drink wine, and say:  
Let's eat and drink because tomorrow we're going to die.

<sup>14</sup>The LORD of Armies revealed this to me:  
Certainly, this wrong will not be forgiven even when you die,  
says the Almighty LORD of Armies.

### **Shebna's Position Will Be Given to Eliakim**

<sup>22:15</sup> This is what the Almighty LORD of Armies says:

Go to Shebna, the man in charge of the palace,  
and say to him:

<sup>16</sup> What are you doing here?

What right do you have to dig a tomb for yourself?

What right do you have to cut it out in a prominent place?

What right do you have to carve out  
a resting place for yourself in the rock?

<sup>17</sup> Look, mighty man.

The LORD will throw you out.

He will grab you.

<sup>18</sup> He will wrap you up tightly like a turban.

He will throw you far away into another land.

There you will die.

There your splendid chariots will remain.

There you will become a disgrace to your master's household.

<sup>19</sup> I will remove you from your office  
and do away with your position.

<sup>20</sup> When that day comes,

I will call my servant Eliakim, son of Hilkiah.

<sup>21</sup> I will dress him in your linen robe  
and fasten it with your belt.

I will give him your authority,

and he will be like a father

to those who live in Jerusalem

and to the nation of Judah.

<sup>22</sup> I will place the key of the house of David around his neck.

What he opens no one will shut.

What he shuts no one will open.

<sup>23</sup> I will fasten him firmly in place like a peg,

and he will be a source of honor for his father's household.

<sup>24</sup>They will hang on him the whole weight of his father's household, descendants and offspring and all the little utensils, from bowls to jars of every kind.

<sup>25</sup>The LORD of Armies declares:

On that day the peg that I firmly fastened in place will be removed.

It will be cut off and will fall, and everything hanging on it will be destroyed.

The LORD has spoken.

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

The valley of Vision is Jerusalem. Isaiah is shown a vision of Jerusalem where its people are self-sufficient rather than depending on God. They cannibalize facilities to prepare for the siege coming from the enemy, Assyria or Babylon. **Isaiah 22:8-11.** But there are instances of celebration when the city feels it is safe from enemies.

However, Isaiah can't rejoice for he sees disaster coming when the city is destroyed by Babylon in 586 BC. In the blockades, people weren't killed by swords but by starvation. **Isaiah 22:2.** Zedekiah, the king at that time would flee from the city **Isaiah 22:3** only to be caught by the Babylonians and taken to King Nebuchadnezzar who slew his sons first, then blinded him and took him captive to Babylon.

Two officials in Jerusalem are next mentioned. Shebna, in charge of the palace is only interested in building an ornate tomb for himself. He will be replaced by Eliakim. He will be put in a place of honor. People would depend on him instead of depending on the Lord. The city will fall.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Most of the people in Jerusalem didn't realize why God was punishing them with Assyria or Babylon. Why not?

2. Why didn't the people cry to God for protection instead of attempting to manage the defense of the city?
3. Why did the people of Jerusalem place their protection in everything and everyone but God?



## PERICOPE 23

### Tyre Will Be Punished

**23:1** This is the divine revelation about Tyre.

Cry loudly, you ships of Tarshish in Spain !

Your port at Tyre is destroyed.

Word has come to the ships from the island of Cyprus.

<sup>2</sup> Be silent, you inhabitants of the coastland,  
you merchants from Sidon.

Your messengers have crossed the sea.

<sup>3</sup> The grain of Shihor is on the Mediterranean.

The harvest of the Nile River is brought to Tyre.

Tyre became the marketplace for the nations.

<sup>4</sup> Be ashamed, Sidon,

because the stronghold by the sea has spoken:

I've never been in labor or given birth.

I've raised no sons.

I've brought up no daughters.

<sup>5</sup> When the news reaches Egypt,

the Egyptians will shudder over the news about Tyre.

<sup>6</sup> Travel to Tarshish.

Cry loudly, you inhabitants of the seacoast.

<sup>7</sup> Is this your bustling city founded in the distant past?

Is this the city that sent its people to settle in distant lands?

<sup>8</sup>Who planned such a thing against Tyre,  
the city that produced kings?  
Its merchants are princes.  
Its traders are among the honored people of the world.

<sup>9</sup>The LORD of Armies planned this  
in order to dishonor all arrogant people  
and to humiliate all the honored people of the world.

<sup>10</sup>Travel through your country like the Nile, people of Tarshish.  
You no longer have a harbor.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD has stretched his hand over the sea to shake kingdoms.  
He has commanded that Canaan's fortifications be destroyed.

<sup>12</sup>He says: You will no longer be joyful,  
my dear abused people Sidon.  
Get up, and travel to Cyprus.  
Even there you will find no rest.

<sup>13</sup>Look at the land of the Babylonians.  
These people will be gone.  
Assyria gave this land to the desert animals.

Assyria set up battle towers,  
stripped palaces bare,  
and turned these places into ruins.

<sup>14</sup>Cry loudly, you ships of Tarshish, because your fortress will be destroyed.

<sup>15</sup>When that day comes, Tyre will be forgotten for 70 years,  
the lifetime of one king.  
At the end of the 70 years,  
Tyre will be like the prostitute in this song:

<sup>16</sup>Take your lyre.  
Go around in the city, you forgotten prostitute.

Make sweet music.

Sing many songs so that you'll be remembered.

<sup>17</sup>At the end of 70 years the LORD will come to help Tyre. Then she will go back to earning money as a prostitute. She will become a prostitute for all the world's kingdoms.

<sup>18</sup>Her profits and her earnings will be turned over to the LORD for his holy purpose. It won't be stored or hoarded. Her merchandise will belong to those who live in the presence of the LORD so that they will have plenty of food and expensive clothing.

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

In the land of Phoenicia that lay north of Israel along the Mediterranean sea were the cities of Tyre and Sidon. Opposite Tyre was an island that was made into a port. The Phoenician ships ranged throughout the Mediterranean Sea carrying goods from Tarshish in Spain to the far west, to the island of Cyprus in the east, to Egypt in the south, and to Rome in the north.

When Tyre was destroyed, the sea, who was its mother and its ships and colonies, who were its children mourned. Egypt and Rome cried because grain from Egypt was carried to Rome who depended on it for their food. Many expensive luxuries including slaves were carried on its ships. **Revelation 18:11.** As a result, the merchants of Tyre were arrogant and wealthy.

Although Tyre will be destroyed, Isaiah prophesied it would be rebuilt in 70 years and much of its profits and merchandise would be carried to Jerusalem to honor the Lord.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. When people become arrogant and fail to honor God, God punishes them. How does he do this?

2. Tyre was arrogant because the cities on the Mediterranean Sea depended on their ships to bring them the goods they needed. Many of these goods were luxuries. List some of them.
  
3. Because its port was built on an island, Tyre felt invulnerable to enemies. They depended on this to protect them instead of God. When and how was Tyre destroyed?

## PART THREE

### ISAIAH'S APOCALYPSE

These chapters picture two cities: The City of Chaos or the City of Man – the whole world, and the City of God – Mount Zion or Jerusalem. The City of Man falls under judgment while the City of God rises to hear the Songs of the Redeemed. God says: This is My Holy Mountain, **Isaiah 11:9; 56:7; 57:13; 65:11, 25; 66:20.**

The main theme is the triumph of God over his enemies. Chapters 24-27 stretch far into the future and are very symbolic. We see reflections of God's dream in Pericope 2. We see God's judgment on his vineyard in Pericope 5.

Similar to John's vision in the Revelation of Jesus Christ, we begin with the Great Tribulation **Isaiah 24:1-25:5**, Jesus' Second Coming **Isaiah 25:6-12**; and to the New Heaven and New Earth **Isaiah 26:1-27:13**.

## PERICOPE 24

### The LORD's Great Triumph

24:1 The LORD is going to turn the earth  
into a desolate wasteland.

He will mar the face of the earth  
and scatter the people living on it.

<sup>2</sup>The same will happen to people and priests,  
male slaves and masters,  
female slaves and masters,  
buyers and sellers,  
lenders and borrowers,  
debtors and creditors.

<sup>3</sup>The earth will be completely laid waste and stripped  
because the LORD has spoken.

<sup>4</sup>The earth dries up and withers.  
The world wastes away and withers.  
The great leaders of the earth waste away.

<sup>5</sup>The earth is polluted by those who live on it  
because they've disobeyed the LORD's teachings,  
violated his laws,  
and rejected the everlasting covenant.

<sup>6</sup>That is why a curse devours the earth,  
and its people are punished for their guilt.  
That is why those who live on the earth are burned up,  
and only a few people are left.

<sup>7</sup>New wine dries up, and grapevines waste away.  
All happy people groan.

<sup>8</sup>Joyful tambourine music stops.  
Noisy celebrations cease.  
Joyful harp music stops.

<sup>9</sup>People no longer drink wine when they sing.  
Liquor tastes bad to its drinkers.

<sup>10</sup>The ruined city lies desolate.  
The entrance to every house is barred shut.

<sup>11</sup>People in the streets call for wine.  
All joy passes away,  
and the earth's happiness is banished.

<sup>12</sup>The City of Man is left in ruins.  
Its gate is battered to pieces.

<sup>13</sup>That is the way it will be on earth among the nations.  
They will be like an olive tree which has been shaken  
or like what's left after the grape harvest.

<sup>14</sup>They raise their voices.  
They shout for joy.  
From the sea they sing joyfully about the LORD's majesty.

<sup>15</sup>Honor the LORD in the east.  
Honor the name of the LORD God of Israel along the coastlands.

<sup>16</sup>From the ends of the earth we hear songs of praise  
that honor the Righteous One.

But I kept saying,  
I'm wasting away!  
I'm wasting away!

How horrible it is for me!  
Traitors continue to betray,  
and their treachery grows worse and worse.

<sup>17</sup>Disasters, pits, and traps  
are in store for those who live on earth.

<sup>18</sup>Whoever flees from news of a disaster will fall into a pit.  
Whoever climbs out of that pit will be caught in a trap.  
The floodgates in the sky will be opened,  
and the foundations of the earth will shake.

<sup>19</sup>The earth will be completely broken.  
The earth will shake back and forth violently.  
The earth will stagger.

<sup>20</sup>The earth will stumble like a drunk  
and sway like a shack in the wind.  
Its disobedience weighs heavy on it.  
It will fall and not get up again.

<sup>21</sup>On that day the LORD will punish  
heaven's armies in heaven  
and earth's kings on earth.

<sup>22</sup>They'll be gathered like prisoners in a jail  
and locked in prison.  
After a long time they'll be punished.

<sup>23</sup>The moon will be embarrassed.  
The sun will be ashamed,  
because the LORD of Armies will rule  
on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem.

He will be glorious  
in the presence of his respected leaders.



## **The Song of the Ruined City**

**25:1** O LORD, you are my God.

I will highly honor you; I will praise your name.

You have done miraculous things.

You have been completely reliable  
in carrying out your plans from long ago.

<sup>2</sup>You have turned cities into ruins,  
fortified cities into piles of rubble,  
and foreigners' palaces into cities that will never be rebuilt.

<sup>3</sup>That is why strong people will honor you,  
and cities ruled by the world's tyrants will fear you.

<sup>4</sup>You have been a refuge for the poor,  
a refuge for the needy in their distress,  
a shelter from the rain, and shade from the heat.

A tyrant's breath is like a rainstorm against a wall,  
<sup>5</sup>like heat in a dry land.

You calm the uproar of foreigners.

The song of tyrants is silenced

like heat that is reduced by the shadow of a cloud.

## **A Messianic Banquet in Heavenly Mount Zion**

**25:6** On this holy mountain the LORD of Armies

will prepare for all people

a feast with the best foods,

a banquet with aged wines,

with the best foods and the finest wines.

<sup>7</sup>On this mountain he will remove  
the veil of grief covering all people  
and the mask covering all nations.

<sup>8</sup> He will swallow up death forever.  
The Almighty LORD will wipe away tears  
from every face,  
and he will remove the disgrace of his people  
from the whole earth.  
The LORD has spoken.

<sup>9</sup> On that day his people will say: This is our God.  
We have waited for him, and now he will save us.  
This is the LORD. We have waited for him.  
Let us rejoice and be glad because he will save us.

### **God Will Punish Moab**

<sup>25:10</sup> The LORD's power will be on this mountain.  
Moab will be trampled beneath him  
like straw that is trampled in a pile of manure.

<sup>11</sup> The Moabites will stretch out their hands in the manure  
like swimmers who stretch out their hands to swim.  
The LORD will humble those arrogant people  
despite the movements of their hands.

<sup>12</sup> He will bring down Moab's high fortified walls,  
level them, and throw them into the dust on the ground.

### **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?**

Like he did in Noah's time, God will destroy the earth. **Genesis 7:17-24**. People are punished for their sin. The City of Man is destroyed as are the people living in it. God will especially punish the kings of the earth for their idolatry. This is similar to the Great Tribulation in **Revelation 6:1-16; 8:7-20; 16:1-18**.

In **Isaiah 25:1-9**, we begin with a Song of Believers. In the heavenly Mount Zion, God will prepare the Lamb's Banquet and swallow up death forever.

But there is a sad element. Unbelievers symbolized by Moab lying immediately to the east of the Promised Land will be trampled and destroyed. **Isaiah 25:10-12**

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. People on earth are punished because they've disobey God's Torah and rejected the everlasting covenant. **Isaiah 24:5**. How have people done this?
2. God destroys the City of Man. Anything built by humans is destroyed. People on earth are burned up and only a few are left. **Isaiah 24:6**. Half of the world's population die during the seal and trumpet judgments in **Revelation 6:8; 9:15**. Why are some people left?
3. The prophet speaks in **Isaiah 24:16**. Why does he say he's wasting away?
4. Isaiah says God will punish heaven's armies in heaven. **Isaiah 24:21**. When does this occur. HINT: **Revelation 12:4**
5. Why will the sun and moon be ashamed? HINT: **Deuteronomy 4:19**
6. When will the heavenly banquet occur? HINT: **Revelation 19:7**
7. What is the symbolism of God swallowing up death forever? HINT: **Daniel 12:2; Revelation 7:14-17; 21:4**

## EXTRA CREDIT

Why does Isaiah choose Moab to symbolize unbelievers? Why doesn't he choose Edom, Israel's most hated enemy.

## PERICOPE 25

### A Song of Trust in God's Salvation

26:1 On that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah:

We have a strong city.

Its walls and fortifications provide safety.

<sup>2</sup>Open the gates and let the righteous **tsaddiyq** nation come in,  
the nation that remains faithful **shamar**-keeps **emuwn**-truth.

<sup>3</sup>With perfect **shalowm** peace **shalowm**  
you will protect those whose minds cannot be changed,  
because they trust you.

<sup>4</sup>Trust the LORD always,  
because the LORD, the LORD alone, is an everlasting rock.

<sup>5</sup>He has brought down those who live high in the towering city.  
He levels it.  
He levels it to the ground and throws it into the dust.

<sup>6</sup>Feet trample it,  
the feet of the oppressed,  
the footsteps of the poor.

<sup>7</sup>The path of the righteous is level.  
O Upright One, you make the road of the righteous smooth.

<sup>8</sup>Certainly, we wait with hope for you, O LORD,  
as we follow the path of your guiding principles.  
We want to remember you and your name.

<sup>9</sup>With my soul I long for you at night.  
Yes, with my spirit I eagerly look for you.  
When your guiding principles are on earth,  
those who live in the world learn to do what is right.

<sup>10</sup> Although the wicked are shown pity,  
they do not learn to do what is right.  
They do what is wrong in the upright land  
and do not see the majesty of the LORD.

<sup>11</sup> O LORD, your power is visible  
but they do not see it.  
They will see how devoted your people are,  
and they will be put to shame.

Your burning anger will destroy your enemies.

<sup>12</sup> O LORD, you will establish peace ~~shalowm~~ for us,  
since you have done everything for us.

<sup>13</sup> O LORD, our God, you are not the only master to rule us,  
but we acknowledge only you.

<sup>14</sup> The wicked are dead.  
They are no longer alive.  
The spirits of the dead won't rise.

You have punished them, destroyed them,  
and wiped out all memory of them.

<sup>15</sup> You have expanded the nation, O LORD.  
You have expanded the nation.  
You are honored.

You have extended all the land's boundaries.

<sup>16</sup> O LORD, the people have come to you in trouble.  
They were humbled by oppression,  
by your discipline upon them.

<sup>17</sup> O LORD, when we are with you,  
we are like pregnant women ready to give birth.  
They writhe and cry out in their labor pains.

<sup>18</sup>We were pregnant.  
We writhed with labor pains  
only to give birth to the wind.

We weren't able to bring salvation *yeshuw'ah* to the land,  
and no new people were born on earth.

### **Lord, You Will Raise the Dead to Life**

<sup>19</sup>However, Your dead will live.  
Their corpses will rise.  
Those who lie dead in the dust  
will wake up and shout for joy,  
because your dew is a refreshing dew,  
and the earth will revive the spirits of the dead.

<sup>20</sup>My people, go to your rooms,  
and shut the doors behind you.  
Hide for a little while until his fury has ended.

<sup>21</sup>The LORD is going to come out from his dwelling place  
to punish those who live on earth for their sins.  
The earth will uncover the blood shed on it  
and will no longer cover up its dead bodies.

### **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?**

Believers now sing the Song of the Strong City, the City of Zion from **Isaiah 26:1-21**. God has destroyed the towering city. It is a song of faith, confidence, and trust in the Lord.

It is a song of resurrection that only the Lord can do. He will revive the spirits of the dead. Was Isaiah referring to national survival or to individual resurrection here? Probably both. He had been talking about the near-death experiences of Israel in the preceding verses (vv. 16-18), and in the same passage Isaiah also looked forward to the abolition of death itself (25:7-8). So probably we have both a figurative and a literal resurrection in view: a

figurative resurrection of Israel in the future, and a literal resurrection of Israelites in the future. **Daniel 12:2; Job 19:26.** There are few references to the resurrection of the body in the Old Testament, but this seems to be one of them.

The Lord gives his people peace.

## **THINGS TO THINK ABOUT**

1. God gives his people perfect peace. **Isaiah 26:3.** What does this mean?
2. The Lord is an everlasting rock. **Isaiah 26:4.** What does this mean?  
**HINT: Deuteronomy 32:6, 15, 18, 31; Psalm 18:2**
3. What is the refreshing dew the Lord has? **Isaiah 26:10**
4. What is the significance of the earth no longer covering the blood of the dead? **HINT: Deuteronomy 21:1-9; Ezekiel 24:6-9**
5. In verse 19, do you believe Isaiah was referring to a figurative or a literal resurrection or both?

## PERICOPE 26

### God Watches Over His Delightful Vineyard

<sup>27:1</sup> On that day the LORD will use his fierce and powerful sword  
to punish Leviathan, that slippery snake,  
Leviathan, that twisting snake.  
He will kill that monster which lives in the sea.

<sup>2</sup>On that day sing about my delightful vineyard.

<sup>3</sup>I, the LORD, watch over it.  
I water it continually.  
I watch over it day and night  
so that no one will harm it.

I am no longer angry.  
If only thorns and briars would confront me!  
I would fight them in battle and set all of them on fire.

<sup>5</sup>Or else let them come to me for protection.  
Let them make peace with me.  
Yes, let them make peace with me.

<sup>6</sup>In times to come Jacob will take root.  
Israel will blossom, bud,  
and fill the whole world with fruit.

<sup>7</sup>Will the LORD hurt Israel as he hurt others who hurt them?  
Will he kill them as he killed others?

<sup>8</sup>He punished Israel by sending it away.  
He removed it with a fierce blast from the east winds.

<sup>9</sup>In this way the wrongdoings  
of the descendants of Jacob are covered up.



This is the way they will turn from their sins—  
when they turn all the altar stones into powdered chalk  
and no poles dedicated to the goddess Asherah  
or incense altars are left standing.

<sup>10</sup>The fortified city is isolated.  
The homestead is left deserted,  
abandoned like the desert.

Calves will graze there.  
They will lie down.  
They will feed on the branches.

<sup>11</sup>When the branches are dried up,  
they will be broken off.  
Women will come and build a fire with them.

These people don't understand these things.  
That is why their Maker won't have compassion on them,  
and their Creator won't have pity on them.

<sup>12</sup>On that day the LORD will begin his threshing  
from the flowing stream of the Euphrates River  
to the brook of Egypt.  
People of Israel, you will be gathered one by one.

<sup>13</sup>On that day a ram's horn will be blown loudly.  
Those who are dying in Assyria  
and those who are banished to Egypt  
will come and worship the LORD  
on the holy mountain in Jerusalem.

## **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?**

We begin with Leviathan, a powerful animal in **Job 41:1-4**, but here it refers to the Pharaoh of Egypt whom God defeated at the Red Sea. **Exodus 10:14-31**. It could also refer to Satan, the enemy of God. **Revelation 12:9**

God now sings about a delightful vineyard in comparison to the vineyard that only produced stink berries instead of good grapes. **Isaiah 5:1-7**. God says *in times to come Jacob will take root, Israel will blossom, bud and fill the whole world with fruit. Isaiah 27:6*

God now admits he sent Israel away into exile. In this way their sins are dealt with. The exile will cause them to turn away from their sins. The fortified city is Jerusalem that in 586 BC is now destroyed and deserted.

But God will begin gathering his scattered people from the countries to which they have escaped from the Assyrians or from the Babylonians. One day they will return to worship the Lord on his holy mountain in Jerusalem,

## **THINGS TO THINK ABOUT**

1. How will God punish Satan? HINT: **Revelation 20:1-3**
2. When will God's vineyard become delightful?
3. When will God blow his shophar and signal the scattered Chosen People to come home from the various countries they are in?
4. When the Israelites come home, what will they do?

## PART 4

### TRUST GOD OR TRUST THE NATIONS

While the historical context of Part 2 was generally the time of King Ahaz's reign 732-716 BC, the context of Part 4 is that of the time of King Hezekiah 715-698 BC.

As Assyria declined, Judah began looking more and more to Egypt as an ally. Between the fall of Samaria and the Northern Kingdom in 722 BC and the end of Hezekiah's reign, Egypt was seen as the primary savior nation.

There are six woes in this section. **Isaiah 28:1; 29:1, 29:15; 30:1; 31:1; 33:1**

## PERICOPE 27

### God Will Punish the Northern Kingdom of Israel But Then Restore It

#### God's Message to the Northern Kingdom of Israel

**28:1** How horrible it will be for ~~woe~~ the arrogant drunks of Ephraim.  
Their glorious beauty is like a withered flower.  
They are at the entrance to a fertile valley  
where they lie drunk from wine.

<sup>2</sup>The Lord has one who is strong and powerful.  
He is like a hailstorm, a destructive wind.  
He is like a thunderstorm, an overwhelming flood.  
He will throw them to the ground forcefully.

<sup>3</sup>The arrogant drunks of Ephraim  
will be trampled underfoot.

<sup>4</sup>Their glorious beauty is like a withered flower.  
They are at the entrance to a fertile valley.  
They will be like figs that ripened early.  
As soon as someone sees them,  
they will be taken and eaten.

<sup>5</sup>When that day comes, the LORD of Armies will be  
like a glorious crown for his few remaining people ~~she'ar~~-remnant.

<sup>6</sup>He will give a spirit of justice to those who judge.  
He will give strength to those who defend the city gates in battle.

<sup>7</sup>Priests and prophets stagger from wine  
and wobble from too much liquor.  
They stagger from too much liquor  
and become confused from too much wine.  
They wobble because of their liquor.

They stagger when they see visions.  
They swerve as they judge.

<sup>8</sup>All the tables are covered with vomit and excrement.  
There isn't a clean place left.

<sup>9</sup>To whom will they make the message understood?  
To whom will they explain this message?  
To children just weaned from milk?  
To those just taken from their mother's breasts?

<sup>10</sup>They speak utter nonsense.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD will speak to these people.  
He will mock them by speaking in a foreign language.

<sup>12</sup>He will say to them:  
This is a place for comfort.  
This is a place of rest for those who are tired.  
This is a place for them to rest.

But they weren't willing to listen.

<sup>13</sup>The LORD speaks utter nonsense to them.  
That is why they will fall backwards.  
That is why they will be hurt, trapped, and captured.

### **God's Message to Jerusalem**

<sup>14</sup>So hear the word of the LORD, you foolish talkers ~~latsown~~-scoffers  
who rule the people in Jerusalem.

<sup>15</sup>You say: We made a treaty with death  
and an agreement with the grave.  
When the overwhelming disaster passes by,  
it won't matter to us,  
because we have taken refuge in our lies,  
and falsehood is our hiding place.

<sup>16</sup>This is what the Almighty LORD says:

I am going to lay a rock in Zion,  
a rock that has been tested,  
a precious cornerstone,  
a solid foundation.

Whoever believes in him will not worry.

<sup>17</sup>I will make justice a measuring line  
and righteousness a plumb line.  
Hail will sweep away your refuge of lies,  
and floodwaters will wash away your hiding place.

<sup>18</sup>Your treaty with death will be wiped away.  
Your agreement with the grave will not stand.  
When the overwhelming disaster passes by,  
you will be trampled by it.

<sup>19</sup>Each time it passes by it will take you.  
It will pass by morning after morning,  
during the day and during the night.  
Understanding this message brings only terror.

<sup>20</sup>The bed is too short to stretch out on.  
The blanket is too narrow to serve as a cover.

<sup>21</sup>The LORD will rise as he did on Mount Perazim.  
He will wake up as he did in Gibeon Valley.  
He will do his work, his unexpected work,  
and perform his deeds, his mysterious deeds.

<sup>22</sup>Now stop laughing, or your chains will be tightened,  
because I have heard that the Almighty LORD of Armies  
has finally determined to destroy the whole land.

<sup>23</sup>Open your ears, and listen to me!  
Pay attention, and hear me.

<sup>24</sup>Does a farmer go on plowing every day so he can plant?  
Does he continue to break up the soil  
and make furrows in the ground?

<sup>25</sup>When he has smoothed its surface,  
doesn't he scatter black cumin seed and plant cumin?  
Doesn't he plant wild wheat in rows?  
Doesn't he put barley in its own area  
and winter wheat at its borders?

<sup>26</sup>God will guide him in judgment,  
and his God will teach him.

<sup>27</sup>Black cumin isn't threshed with a sledge,  
and wagon wheels aren't rolled over cumin.  
Black cumin is beaten with a rod  
and cumin with a stick.

<sup>28</sup>Grain is ground into flour  
but the grinding eventually stops.  
It will be threshed.  
The wheels of his cart will roll over it,  
but his horses won't crush it.

<sup>29</sup>All of this has come from the LORD of Armies.  
His counsel is wonderful, and his wisdom is great.

## **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?**

God calls out the leaders of the Northern Kingdom for lacking wisdom. Their capital of Samaria lies at the entrance to the Shechem Valley. Israel, once known and respected as Omri's land for its prosperity is now suffering since the Assyrian invasion of 732 BC that will last until the king and his court are deported to Assyria in 722 BC.

Israel's leaders are foolish characterized by their drinking too much wine. God was using Assyria as *the rod of his anger* **Isaiah 10:6**, punishing the country for its paganism and these leaders didn't even realize it. But on that day, God would preserve a righteous remnant of the Israelites who would escape to Jerusalem.

Now God turns to Jerusalem's leaders. They had looked to Egypt for protection and made a treaty with it. Isaiah calls it an agreement with the grave since Egypt's primary concern was with death. Judah's leaders mocked Isaiah for the simplicity of his message to trust God.

Isaiah says that *when the overwhelming disaster passes by, [that is Assyria,] you will be trampled by it.* **Isaiah 28:18**

However, if you trust God, *he will wake up as he did on Mount Perazim*, that is, Baal Perazim where David defeated the Philistines **2 Samuel 5:18-23** and in the Gibeon Valley where he defeated the Canaanites with hailstones. **Joshua 10:11**

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Judah's leaders scoffed at Isaiah saying he was speaking to them like little children saying: Trust the Lord. What would they rather have heard from Isaiah?
2. Isaiah reminded these leaders that they were breaking their covenant with God made at Mount Sinai **Exodus 19:5; 23:32; 24:8** when they made a treaty with Egypt. Why didn't Judah's leaders understand this?
3. Isaiah said: God said: I will lay a rock in Zion. **Isaiah 28:16**. What or who is that rock?
4. Why is God's work usually unexpected? **Isaiah 28:21**



## PERICOPE 28

### The LORD's Word Will Be Hidden from Some but Revealed to Others

#### Jerusalem Will Become Like Ariel, an Altar Hearth

**29:1** How horrible it will be ~~woe~~ for you Ariel, Ariel.  
the city where David camped.  
Let year after year go by.  
Let your annual festivals go on.

<sup>2</sup>I will torment Ariel,  
and the city will be filled with people grieving and mourning.  
The city will become like Ariel.

<sup>3</sup>I will set up war camps all around you.  
I will blockade you with towers.  
I will put up mounds of dirt around you.

<sup>4</sup>When you have fallen, you will speak as you lie on the ground.  
Your words will be muffled by the dust.  
Your voice will come out of the ground like that of a ghost.  
Your words will be whispered from the dust.

<sup>5</sup>Your many enemies will be like fine dust.  
Your many foes will be like husks blown by the wind.  
All of this will happen suddenly, unexpectedly.

<sup>6</sup>The LORD of Armies will punish you  
with thunder, earthquakes, and loud noises,  
with windstorms, rainstorms, and fire storms.

<sup>7</sup>The armies from all the nations will go to war against Ariel.  
They will go to war against it, blockade it, and torment it.  
All of this will be like a dream, like a vision in the night.

<sup>8</sup>They will be like hungry people  
who dream that they're eating  
and wake up to find they're hungry.

They will be like thirsty people  
who dream that they're drinking  
and wake up to find they're lightheaded and parched with thirst.

This is what will happen to the armies from all the nations  
that fight against Mount Zion.

<sup>9</sup>If you confuse yourselves, you will be confused.  
If you blind yourselves, you will be blinded.  
You are drunk, but not from wine.  
You stagger, but not from liquor.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD has poured out on you a spirit of deep sleep.  
He will shut your eyes. Your eyes are the prophets.  
He will cover your heads. Your heads are the seers.

<sup>11</sup>To you all these visions will be like words in a book that is closed and  
sealed. You give this book to someone who can read saying: Please read this.

He answers: I can't read it. It's sealed.

<sup>12</sup>Then you give the book to someone who can't read saying:  
Please read this.

He answers: I can't read.

<sup>13</sup>The Lord says:

These people worship me with their mouths  
and honor me with their lips.  
But their hearts are far from me,  
and their worship of me is based on rules made by humans.

<sup>14</sup>That is why I am going to do something completely amazing  
for these people once again.

The wisdom of their wise people will disappear.

The intelligence of their intelligent people will be hidden.

<sup>15</sup>How horrible it will be woe for those  
who try to hide their plans from the LORD.

Their deeds are done in the dark.

They say: No one can see us  
and No one can recognize us.

<sup>16</sup>You turn things upside down.  
Is the potter no better than his clay?

Can something that has been made  
say about its maker: He didn't make me?

Can a piece of pottery  
say about the potter: He doesn't understand?

<sup>17</sup>In a very short time Lebanon will be turned into a fertile field  
and the fertile field will be considered a forest.

<sup>18</sup>When that day comes,  
the deaf will hear the words written in the book.

The blind will see out of their gloom and darkness.

<sup>19</sup>Humble people again will find joy in the LORD.  
The poorest of people will find joy in the Holy One of Israel.

<sup>20</sup>Tyrants will be gone.  
Mockers will be finished.  
All who look for ways to do wrong will come to an end:

<sup>21</sup>Those who make people sin with words,  
those who lay traps for judges,

those who, without any reason, deny justice  
to people who are in the right.

<sup>22</sup>This is what the LORD, who saved Abraham,  
says about the descendants of Jacob:

Jacob will no longer be ashamed.  
Jacob's face will no longer turn pale.

<sup>23</sup>When they see all their children,  
the children I made with my hands,  
they will acknowledge my name as holy.

They will treat the Holy One of Jacob as holy.  
They will stand in terror of the God of Israel.

<sup>24</sup>Then those who are wayward in spirit will gain understanding,  
and those who complain will accept instruction.

## **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?**

Jerusalem was God's holy mountain and had the temple built by King David—the largest worship space in Judah. Although the city was established by King David, the people of Jerusalem did not have the heart of King David toward God. Accordingly, Isaiah calls the city Ariel that means Altar Hearth or Lion of God.

God said he would humiliate Jerusalem for its inauthentic worship. He would attack Jerusalem with thunderstorms and earthquakes and cause the armies of nations to blockade the city and attack it.

Yet God would suddenly blow away Jerusalem's enemies like fine dust. **Isaiah 29:5**. It would be like a dream that seemed to be too good to be true. **Isaiah 29:7**,  
II

God succinctly describes the reason for his disfavor with the city in words later quoted by Jesus:

These people worship me with their mouths and honor me with their lips. But their hearts are far from me, and their worship of me is based on rules made by humans. **Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 15:8-9**

The people of Jerusalem are spiritually blind. Jesus says that people must worship the Father in spirit and in truth. **John 4:23-24**. So Isaiah pronounces the next woe:

Woe to those who try to hide their plans from God. Is the clay better than the potter? Are people greater than their Creator? In the future, the deaf will hear and the blind will see. Humble people will again find joy in the Lord. This will be the Lord's doing, not man's doing. So you will stand in terror of the Lord and treat the Holy One of Jacob as holy.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Since Jerusalem is God's holy mountain, the Lord wants his people to be holy especially in their worship. They are to worship as he taught them in his Torah, not making up their own rules. Why do the people of Jerusalem take God's protection of this city for granted?
2. Jesus said: *A lot will be expected from everyone who has been given a lot. More will be demanded from everyone who has been entrusted with a lot.* **Luke 12:49**. Why don't the people of Jerusalem realize what a privilege it is to live in God's holy city?
3. List the first three woes **Isaiah 28:1; 29:1, 15** and state what God expects.

## PERICOPE 29

### Judah Should Trust the LORD, Not Egypt

30:1 The LORD declares:

How horrible it will be ~~woe~~ for those rebellious children.  
They carry out plans, but not mine.  
They make alliances against my will.  
They pile sin on top of sin.

<sup>2</sup>They go to Egypt without asking me.  
They look for shelter under Pharaoh's protection  
and look for refuge in Egypt's shadow.

<sup>3</sup>But Pharaoh's protection will be their shame,  
and the refuge in Egypt's shadow will be their disgrace.

<sup>4</sup>Although Pharaoh's officials are in Zoan  
and his messengers have reached Hanes,

<sup>5</sup>The people of Judah will be put to shame  
because that nation can't help them.  
That nation can't give aid or help to them.  
It can only offer shame and disgrace.

<sup>6</sup>This is the divine revelation about the animals in the Negev.

My people travel through lands  
where they experience distress and hardship.  
Lions and lionesses live there.  
Vipers and poisonous snakes live there.

They carry their riches on the backs of young donkeys  
and their treasures on the humps of camels  
to a nation that can't help them.

<sup>7</sup>Egypt's help is completely useless.  
That is why I call it, Rahab Who Sits Still.

<sup>8</sup>Now, write this on a tablet for them, and inscribe it in a book so that it will be there in the future as a permanent witness.

<sup>9</sup>These people are rebellious and deceitful children,  
children who refuse to listen to the LORD's teachings.

<sup>10</sup>They say to the seers: Don't see the future.  
They say to those who have visions:  
Don't have visions that tell us what is right.  
Tell us what we want to hear. See illusions.

<sup>11</sup>Get out of our way. Stop blocking our path.  
Get the Holy One of Israel out of our sight.

<sup>12</sup>This is what the Holy One of Israel says:

You have rejected this warning,  
trusted oppression and deceit,  
and leaned on them.

<sup>13</sup>That is why your sin will be  
like a high wall with a bulging crack, ready to fall.  
All of a sudden it will fall.

<sup>14</sup>It will break like pottery.  
It will be smashed, and nothing will be left of it.  
No piece will be big enough to carry live coals from a fireplace  
or to dip water from a reservoir.

### **The Theme of the Book of Isaiah**

<sup>30:15</sup> This is what the Almighty LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says:

You can be saved by returning to me.  
You can have rest.

You can be strong by being quiet and by trusting me.  
But you don't want that.

<sup>16</sup>You've said: No, we'll flee on horses.  
So you flee.  
You've added: We'll ride on fast horses.  
So those who chase you will also be fast.

<sup>17</sup>One thousand people will flee  
when one person threatens them,  
and you will flee when five threaten you.

Then you will be left alone  
like a flagpole on top of a mountain,  
like a signpost on a hill.

<sup>18</sup>The LORD is waiting to be kind to you.  
He rises to have compassion on you.  
The LORD is a God of justice.  
Blessed are all those who wait for him.

### **The LORD Will Heal His People's Wounds**

<sup>30:19</sup> You will live in Zion, in Jerusalem. You won't cry anymore. The LORD will certainly have pity on you when you cry for help. As soon as he hears you, he will answer you.

<sup>20</sup>The Lord may give you troubles and hardships. But your teacher will no longer be hidden from you. You will see your teacher with your own eyes.

<sup>21</sup>You will hear a voice behind you saying: This is the way. Follow it, whether it turns to the right or to the left.

<sup>22</sup>Then you will dishonor your silver-plated idols and your gold-covered statues. You will throw them away like clothing ruined by stains. You will say to them: Get out.



<sup>23</sup>The Lord will give you rain for the seed that you plant in the ground, and the food that the ground provides will be rich and nourishing. When that day comes, your cattle will graze in large pastures.

<sup>24</sup>The oxen and the donkeys which work the soil will eat a mixture of food that has been winnowed with forks and shovels.

<sup>25</sup>There will be brooks and streams on every lofty mountain and every high hill. When the day of the great slaughter comes, towers will fall.

<sup>26</sup>Then the light of the moon will be like the light of the sun. The light of the sun will be seven times as strong, like the light of seven days. When that day comes, the LORD will bandage his people's injuries and heal the wounds he inflicted.

<sup>27</sup>The name of the LORD is going to come from far away.

His anger is burning.

His burden is heavy.

His lips are filled with fury.

His tongue is like a devouring flame.

<sup>28</sup>His breath is like an overflowing stream.

It rises neck high,

sifting the nations with a sieve of destruction,

placing a bit in the mouths of the people

to lead them astray.

<sup>29</sup>You will sing a song

like the song you sing on a festival night.

Your hearts will be happy like someone going out with a flute

on the way to the LORD's mountain, to the rock of Israel.

<sup>30</sup>The LORD will make his majestic voice heard.

He will come down with all his might,

with furious anger,

with fire storms, windstorms, rainstorms, and hailstones.

<sup>31</sup>At the sound of the LORD,  
the people of Assyria will be shattered.  
He will strike them with his rod.

<sup>32</sup>To the sound of tambourines and lyres,  
the LORD will pound on them.  
He will fight them in battle, swinging his fists.

<sup>33</sup>Topheth the Valley of Bin Hinnom was prepared long ago.  
It was made ready for the king.

It was made deep and wide  
and piled high with plenty of burning logs.  
The LORD's breath will be like a flood of burning sulfur,  
setting it on fire.

### **The LORD, Not the Egyptians, Will Protect His People from Assyria**

**31:1** How horrible it will be ~~woe~~ for those  
who go to Egypt for help,  
who rely on horses,  
who depend on many chariots,  
who depend on very strong war horses.

They don't look to the Holy One of Israel.  
They don't seek the LORD.

<sup>2</sup>He is wise and can bring about disaster.  
He doesn't take back his words.  
He rises against wicked people  
and against those who help troublemakers.

<sup>3</sup>The Egyptians are humans, not gods.  
Their horses are flesh and blood, not spirit.

When the LORD uses his powerful hand,  
the one who gives help will stumble,

and the one who receives help will fall.  
Both will die together.

<sup>4</sup>This is what the LORD said to me:

A lion, even a young lion, growls over its prey  
when a crowd of shepherds is called to fight it.  
It isn't frightened by their voices  
or disturbed by the noise they make.

So the LORD of Armies will come to fight for  
Mount Zion and its hill.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD of Armies will defend Jerusalem like a hovering bird.  
He will defend it and rescue it.  
He will pass over it and protect it.

<sup>6</sup>You people of Israel, return to the one  
whom you have so violently rebelled against.

<sup>7</sup>When that day comes, all of you will reject  
the silver and gold idols  
that your sinful hands have made.

<sup>8</sup>Then Assyrians will be killed with swords  
not made by human hands.  
Swords not made by human hands will destroy them.  
They will flee from battle,  
and their young men will be made to do forced labor.

<sup>9</sup>In terror they will run to their stronghold,  
and their officers will be frightened at the sight of the battle flag.

The LORD declares this.  
His fire is in Zion and his furnace is in Jerusalem.

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

God pronounces a woe on Judah for looking to Egypt for protection against the Assyrians. When Judah's ambassadors traveled to Egypt, instead of going through Philistine territory along the Mediterranean Sea, they traveled through the Negev, a desert with many wild animals.

God characterizes Egypt as Rahab, who sits still. Rahab in ancient literature is a sea monster. But God says this Rahab does nothing. He sees the officials of Judah as rebellious children who refuse to listen to God's words through his prophets. Instead, they tell the prophets or seers, 'Tell us what we want to hear. Isaiah says that when you trust deceit, your sin will be like a high wall that has a bulging crack. All of a sudden, the wall will fall.

Now comes the main theme of Isaiah's Vision. Trust God by being quiet and listening to his word. But the Judeans don't want that. They will trust their own opinions.

God says: You will soon find out when 1,000 warriors of yours will flee chased by one Assyrian. **Deuteronomy 32:28-30**. But have good sense. God is waiting to show his kindness to you. But first you must listen to him.

While God may allow you to suffer hardships, he will allow you to hear his voice telling you the way to follow. God gives you the rain you need to grow your crops. He will heal your wounds.

God's fury will be among the nations. At the voice of the Lord, Assyria will be shattered. The Lord's breath will be like a flood of burning sulfur. So trust the Lord and repent of your sin.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. When Israel is attacked by Assyria, the superpower of the north, isn't it logical they should turn for help to the superpower of the south, Egypt? Who else would they turn to for help?

2. How can Judah be sure that by returning to God, he will protect them from Assyria?
3. What can God do to protect Judah from the violence and terror of the Assyrians?
4. What does it mean that God will strike Assyria with his rod?
5. Two more woes appear in **Isaiah 30:1** and **31:1**. State these woes and tell what God expects.

## PERICOPE 30

### The LORD Will Pour Out His Spirit and Bring Peace

**32:1** A king will rule with fairness,  
and officials will rule with justice.

<sup>2</sup>Then each ruler will be like a shelter from the wind  
and a hiding place from the rain.

They will be like streams on parched ground  
and the shade of a large rock in a weary land.

<sup>3</sup>Then the vision of those who can see won't be blurred,  
and the ears of those who can hear will pay attention.

<sup>4</sup>Then those who are reckless will begin to understand,  
and those who stutter will speak quickly and clearly.

<sup>5</sup>Godless fools will no longer be called nobles,  
nor will scoundrels be considered gentlemen.

<sup>6</sup>Godless fools speak foolishness,  
and their minds plan evil  
in order to do ungodly things.  
They speak falsely about the LORD.

They let people go hungry  
and withhold water from thirsty people.

<sup>7</sup>The tricks of scoundrels are evil.  
They devise wicked plans in order to ruin poor people with lies,  
even when needy people plead for justice.

<sup>8</sup>But honorable people act honorably  
and stand firm for what is honorable.

<sup>9</sup>Get up, and listen to me, you pampered women.  
Hear what I say, you overconfident daughters.

<sup>10</sup> In a little less than a year  
you overconfident women will tremble,  
because the grape harvest will fail  
and no fruit will be brought in from the fields.

<sup>11</sup> Shudder, you pampered women.  
Tremble, you overconfident women.  
Take off your clothes, walk around naked,  
and wear sackcloth around your waists.

<sup>12</sup> Beat your breasts as you mourn for the fields,  
for the vines bearing grapes.

<sup>13</sup> Mourn for my people's land  
where thorns and briars will grow.  
Mourn for all the happy homes in a joyful city.

### **The Promised Land Will Be Deserted Until God Pours Out His Spirit on His People**

<sup>32:14</sup> Palaces will be deserted.  
Noisy cities will be abandoned.  
Fortresses and watchtowers will become permanent caves.

They will be a delight for wild donkeys and pastures for flocks  
<sup>15</sup> until the Spirit is poured on us from on high.

Then the wilderness will be turned into a fertile field,  
and the fertile field will be considered a forest.

<sup>16</sup> Then justice will live in the wilderness,  
and righteousness will be at home in the fertile field.

<sup>17</sup> Then an act of righteousness will bring about peace,  
calm, and safety forever.

<sup>18</sup> My people will live in a peaceful place,  
in safe homes and quiet places of rest.

<sup>19</sup>The forest will be flattened because of hail,  
and the city will be completely leveled.

<sup>20</sup>Blessed are those who plant beside every stream  
and those who let oxen and donkeys roam freely.

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

God's destruction of the Assyrians will be followed in the future by the arrival of the Messianic King. **Isaiah 32:1**. Judean society will then be radically changed characterized by fairness, righteousness, and justice.

They will be protected from danger in the same way that the shade of a large rock protects people from the burning heat of the sun or fierce torrents of rain. Those who can see will see clearly and those who can hear will hear clearly.

God then addresses the women of Judah. He had previously addressed the men counseling faithfulness to the Lord. Now he addresses women counseling repentance.

Women needed to be realistic and prepare for a threatened captivity and exile. Judah will be deserted and wasted until the Lord's Spirit is poured out from on high. Then the land's wilderness will be turned into fertile fields. Justice and righteousness will be everywhere.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Isaiah first talks about the Lord's Spirit in **Isaiah 30:1** and then again in **32:15**. He will speak again of the Holy Spirit in **Isaiah 40:13; 42:1; 44:3; 48:16; 59:19; 59:21; 61:1; 63:10-11**. Jeremiah does not speak of the Holy Spirit while Ezekiel will mention the Holy Spirit 13x. Yet Isaiah speaks of *the Holy Spirit being poured out on people*. Where does he say this?
2. What is Isaiah's reason for introducing the coming of a Messianic King to Judah at this point? **Isaiah 32:1**



3. Isaiah speaks of *an act of righteousness bringing peace, calm, and safety forever. My people will live in a peaceful place, in safe homes, and in quiet places of rest.* **Isaiah 32:17-18.** When will this act of righteousness appear?

## PERICOPE 31

### The LORD Will Rescue Jerusalem from Assyria

33:1 How horrible it will be for you, you destroyer,  
although you haven't been destroyed.

How horrible it will be for you, you traitor,  
although you haven't been betrayed.

When you've finished destroying, you will be destroyed.

When you've finished being a traitor, you will be betrayed.

<sup>2</sup>O LORD, have pity on us.

We wait with hope for you.

Be our strength in the morning.

Yes, be our savior in times of trouble.

<sup>3</sup>People flee from the noise of your army.

Nations scatter when you attack.

<sup>4</sup>You nations, your loot is gathered

as grasshoppers harvest a crop.

Like swarming locusts, people rush for your loot.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD is honored because he lives on high.

He will fill Zion with justice and righteousness.

<sup>6</sup>He will be the foundation of your future.

The riches of salvation are wisdom and knowledge.

The fear of the LORD is your treasure.

<sup>7</sup>Heroes cry in the streets.

Messengers of peace cry bitterly.

<sup>8</sup>Highways are deserted.

Travelers stop traveling.

Agreements are broken.

Witnesses are rejected.  
People are no longer respected.

<sup>9</sup>The country grieves and wastes away.  
Lebanon is ashamed and is decaying.  
Sharon has become like a wilderness.  
Bashan and Carmel are shaken.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD says: Now I will arise.  
Now I will get up.  
Now I will be lifted up.

<sup>11</sup>You will be pregnant with hay.  
You will give birth to straw.  
Your breath will be a fire which will burn you up.

<sup>12</sup>People will be cremated.  
They will be set on fire like dry thornbushes.

<sup>13</sup>Hear what I have done, you people who are far away.  
Acknowledge my might, you people who are near.

<sup>14</sup>The sinners in Zion are terrified.  
Trembling seizes the ungodly.  
Can any of us live through a fire that destroys?  
Can any of us live through a fire that burns forever?

The Lord your God is a raging fire,  
a God who does not tolerate rivals. **Deuteronomy 4:24**

<sup>15</sup>The person who does what is right and speaks the truth will live.  
He rejects getting rich by extortion and refuses to take bribes.  
He refuses to listen to those who are plotting murders.  
He doesn't look for evil things to do.

<sup>16</sup>This person will live on high.  
His stronghold will be a fortress made of rock.

He will have plenty of food  
and a dependable supply of water.

<sup>17</sup>Your eyes will see how handsome the king is.  
You will see a land that stretches into the distance.

<sup>18</sup>Your mind will be thinking of the terrors in the past.  
Where are the Assyrian scribes?  
Where are the Assyrian tax collectors?  
Where are those Assyrian officials who counted the towers?

<sup>19</sup>You will no longer see those savage people,  
those people with an unrecognizable language,  
with a foreign language that you can't understand.

<sup>20</sup>Look at Zion, the city of our festivals.  
Your eyes will see Jerusalem as a peaceful place.

It is a tent that can't be moved.  
Its tent pegs will never be pulled out,  
and none of its ropes will be broken.

<sup>21</sup>The LORD will be our mighty redeemer  
in a place surrounded by wide rivers and streams.  
Ships with oars won't travel on them.  
Stately ships won't sail on them.

<sup>22</sup>The LORD is our judge.  
The LORD is our lawgiver.  
The LORD is our king.  
The LORD is our savior.

<sup>23</sup>Your ropes hang loose,  
your mast isn't secure,  
and your sail isn't spread out.

A large amount of loot will be distributed.  
Lame people will carry off your loot.

<sup>24</sup>No one who lives in Zion will say: I'm sick.  
The sins of its inhabitants will be forgiven.

## **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?**

The salvation of Judah is now anticipated. The destroyer is Assyria. The one who deals treacherously is Assyria. He has not yet been destroyed or betrayed. But when the destroyer destroys, he will be destroyed. When the one who deals treacherously is finished, he will be dealt with treacherously.

The Judeans pray to God saying: Have mercy on us. We wait with hope on you. Be our strength and send your army to protect us.

The siege of Jerusalem is pictured in verses 7-9. It is a terrible time. Ambassadors had been sent to Lachish with a bribe but the siege has not been lifted. The Assyrians kept the bribe but did not lift the siege. They are most treacherous. At this time all the 46 fortified cities of Judah had been captured except for Lachish.

Yet some in Jerusalem still trusted in God, especially King Hezekiah and Isaiah who was also in the blockaded city. Hezekiah finally realized there was nothing he could do on his own. God was his only hope.

With Isaiah's prayer, God decided to act. He will reward the person who does what is right and speaks the truth. He says that Jerusalem will no longer see the savage Assyrians.

Given this trust, the inhabitants of Jerusalem imagine a glorious future. The present disasters caused by the Assyrians are no more. God will make the future Jerusalem a peaceful place that God protects. Why will people trust God?

God is holy and is their judge, their lawgiver, their king of Zion, and their savior. Jerusalem is God's holy mountain. The sins of its inhabitants will be forgiven. We trust God.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. There are two more woes in this pericope but they are now directed toward Assyria. Who will see that these woes are accomplished?
2. Define the meaning of the expression: *the fear of the Lord* in both the Hebrew Bible and in the New Testament. **Acts 9:31**
3. The expression: *the fear of the Lord* appears 6x in **Isaiah 2:10, 19, 21; 11:2, 13; 33:6**. The expression does not appear in Jeremiah or Ezekiel. Why is *the fear of the Lord one's treasure*? **Isaiah 33:6**
4. How will God fill Zion with justice and righteousness? **Isaiah 33:3**
5. What makes a person righteous before God?

## PERICOPE 32

### The LORD'S Judgement and the LORD's Blessing

#### The Fall of Edom Is a Glimpse of the LORD's Judgment

**34:1** Come close, you nations, and listen.

Pay attention, you people.

The earth, everyone in it,  
the world, and everything on it will listen.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD is angry with all the nations.

He is furious with all their armies.

He has claimed them for destruction.

He has handed them over to be slaughtered.

<sup>3</sup>Their dead bodies will be thrown out.

A stench will rise from their corpses.

Mountains will be red with their blood.

<sup>4</sup>All the stars in the sky will rot.

The heavens will be rolled up like a scroll.

The stars will fall

like leaves from a grapevine,

like green figs from a fig tree.

<sup>5</sup>When my sword is covered with blood in the heavens,

it will fall on Edom

and on the people I've claimed for destruction.

<sup>6</sup>The LORD's sword is covered with blood.

It is covered with fat,

with the blood of lambs and goats,

with the fat of rams' kidneys.

The LORD will receive a sacrifice in Bozrah,

a huge slaughter in the land of Edom.

<sup>7</sup>Wild oxen will be killed with them,  
young bulls along with rams.  
Their land will be drenched with blood.  
Their dust will be covered with fat.

<sup>8</sup>The LORD will have a day of vengeance,  
a year of revenge in defense of Zion.

<sup>9</sup>Edom's streams will be turned to tar.  
Its soil will be turned to burning sulfur.  
Its land will become blazing tar.

<sup>10</sup>They will not be extinguished day or night,  
and smoke will always go up from them.  
Edom will lie in ruins for generations.  
No one will ever travel through it.

### **Unclean Animals Will Rule Edom**

<sup>32:11</sup> Pelicans and herons will take possession of the land.  
Owls and crows will live there.  
He will stretch the measuring line of chaos  
and the plumb line of destruction over it.

<sup>12</sup>There are no nobles to rule a kingdom.  
All of its princes have disappeared.

<sup>13</sup>Its palaces are covered with thorns.  
Its fortresses have nettles and thistles.  
It will become a home for jackals  
and a place for ostriches.

<sup>14</sup>Hyenas will meet with jackals.  
Male goats will call to their mates.  
Screech owls will rest there  
and find a resting place for themselves.



<sup>15</sup>Owls will make their nests there, lay eggs, and hatch them.  
They will gather their young  
in the shadow of their wings.

Vultures also will gather there,  
each one with its mate.

<sup>16</sup>Search the LORD's book, and read it.  
Not one of these animals will be missing.

Not one will lack a mate,  
because the LORD has commanded it,  
and his Spirit will gather them together.

<sup>17</sup>He is the one who throws dice for them,  
and his hand divides up the land for them  
with a measuring line.

They will possess it permanently  
and live there for generations.

### **The LORD Will Bless His Land and His People Will Have Joy**

**35:1** The desert and the dry land will be glad,  
and the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.

<sup>2</sup>Like a lily the land will blossom.  
It will rejoice and sing with joy.  
It will have the glory of Lebanon,  
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

Everyone will see the glory of the LORD,  
the majesty of our God.

<sup>3</sup>Strengthen limp hands.  
Steady weak knees.

<sup>4</sup>Tell those who are terrified,  
“Be brave; don’t be afraid.  
Your God will come with vengeance, with divine revenge.  
He will come and rescue you.

<sup>5</sup>Then the eyes of the blind will be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf will be unplugged.

<sup>6</sup>Then those who are lame will leap like deer,  
and those who cannot speak will shout for joy.  
Water will gush out into the desert,  
and streams will gush out into the wilderness.

<sup>7</sup>Then the hot sand will become a pool,  
and dry ground will have springs.  
Grass will become cattails and rushes  
in the home of jackals.

<sup>8</sup>A highway *mecillah* will be there, a roadway *derek*-way.

It will be called the Holy Road.

Sinners won’t travel on it.

It will be for those who walk on it.

Godless fools won’t wander onto it .

<sup>9</sup>Lions won’t be there.

Wild animals won’t go on it.

They won’t be found there.

But the people redeemed by the LORD will walk on it.

<sup>10</sup>The people ransomed by the LORD will return from Exile.

They will come to Zion singing with joy.

Everlasting happiness will be on their heads as a crown.

They will be glad and joyful.

They will have no sorrow or grief.

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

These verses summarize God's judgment on the nations and his blessings on his people.

We begin with God's judgment on the nations, particularly the way they treated the Chosen People in Isaiah Chapters 13-23. Edom is Israel's most hated enemy. We see this particularly in Psalms 137:7-9. Some people say this is because Esau never forgave Jacob for stealing his blessing. Genesis 27:41

Chapter 34 summarizes God's judgment, *a day of vengeance in defense of Zion*. Isaiah 34:8. Edom will be totally destroyed in both land and people and only unclean animals will live there in the future. Many passages in Jeremiah parallel this chapter Jeremiah 25:31, 33-34; 46:10, 27, 39; 51:40 as does the entire Book of Obadiah. Also paralleled are many *day of the Lord* passages by various prophets.

In Chapter 34, the garden is turned into a desert but in Chapter 35, the desert is turned into a garden. There is rejoicing and joyful singing. All sickness and physical infirmities will be gone.

*Water will gush out into the desert and streams will gush out into the wilderness.* The beauty of Lebanon, Carmel, and the Plain of Sharon will be seen everywhere.

Best of all, God will prepare a highway for the Israeli exiles to return from Assyria and Judean exiles to return from Babylon to Jerusalem. We will hear about God's highway in Isaiah 11:16; 35:8; 40:3; 62:10. It will be called *the Way of Holiness*. Isaiah 35:8

The exiles will *come singing with joy* as they walk the 900 miles from Babylon to Jerusalem in four months. Ezra 7:8-9

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Bozrah, the capital city of Edom will be destroyed as a sacrifice to the Lord. Isaiah 34:6. What does this mean?

2. What does the fact that only unclean animals will live in Edom mean?
3. In what way is Edom's destruction like God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah? **Genesis 19:24-28**
4. God says he will bring his people home from Assyria on a highway. **Isaiah 11:16**. Does this mean the ten tribes of Israel were not lost?
5. In talking of the journey home from Babylon, Isaiah says *water will gush in the desert and streams will gush out in the wilderness*. Is he saying that there will be plenty of water available for the exiles during their four-month 1,700 mile journey from Babylon to Jerusalem? Is he also saying that drinking water was one of the problems the captives had as they were taken to Babylon.

## PART 5

### GOD RESCUES JERUSALEM FROM CERTAIN DESTRUCTION 701 BC

In 705 BC, the Assyrian King Sargon II died in the field during a conquest. His son Sennacherib succeeded him. Then all the little vassal countries rebelled by refusing to pay tribute. Among these was King Hezekiah of Judah. Hezekiah was looking to Egypt in the south to support his revolt.

In 701 BC, King Sennacherib started moving his army through Syria or Aram. He first conquered Phoenicia. The cities of Tyre and Sidon fell without a fight. Sennacherib then took the Philistine city of Ashdod and then Ekron. Then he attacked Judah capturing all of Judah's 46 fortified cities. The prophet Micah records some of the towns captured. **Micah 1:8-16**. Over 200,000 Judeans were deported.

Hezekiah's second largest city was Lachish. But it was taken. The Egyptians attacked the Assyrians on the Plain of Eltekeh. They were defeated easily. Now Sennacherib blockaded Jerusalem in 701 BC. Hezekiah attempted to bribe Sennacherib. The king took the bribe and continued the blockade. Isaiah calls the Assyrians treacherous.

Meanwhile, Judah's neighbors of Ammon, Moab, and Edom surrendered to Assyria. Sennacherib did not want to destroy Jerusalem so he sent high level officials in an attempt to get King Hezekiah to surrender. But he failed.

Then God intervened and Sennacherib and his army left Judah.

<https://www.historynet.com/assyrian-march-against-judah/>

## PERICOPE 33

### The LORD Rescues Judah from the Assyrians

**36:1** In Hezekiah's fourteenth year as king <sup>701</sup>BC, King Sennacherib of Assyria attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them.

<sup>2</sup>Then the king of Assyria sent his field commander with a large army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. He stood at the channel for the Upper Pool on the road to Laundryman's Field.

<sup>3</sup>Eliakim, who was in charge of the palace and was the son of Hilkiah, Shebna the scribe, and Joah, who was the royal historian and the son of Asaph, went out to the field commander.

<sup>4</sup>The field commander said to them: Tell Hezekiah: This is what the great king, the king of Assyria says: What makes you so confident?

<sup>5</sup>You give useless advice about getting ready for war. Whom, then, do you trust for support in your rebellion against me?

<sup>6</sup>Look. When you trust Egypt, you're trusting a broken stick for a staff. If you lean on it, it stabs your hand and goes through it. This is what Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, is like for everyone who trusts him.

<sup>7</sup>Suppose you tell me: We're trusting the LORD our God. He's the god whose places of worship and altars Hezekiah got rid of. Hezekiah told Judah and Jerusalem: Worship at this altar.

<sup>8</sup>Now, make a deal with my master, the king of Assyria. I'll give you 2,000 horses if you can put riders on them.

<sup>9</sup>How can you defeat my master's lowest-ranking officers when you trust Egypt for chariots and horses?

<sup>10</sup> Have I come to destroy this country without the LORD on my side? The LORD said to me: Attack this country and destroy it.

<sup>11</sup>Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to the field commander: Speak to us in Aramaic since we understand it. Don't speak to us in the Judean language as long as there are people on the wall listening.

<sup>12</sup>But the field commander asked: Did my master send me to tell these things only to you and your master? Didn't he send me to the men sitting on the wall who will have to eat their own excrement and drink their own urine with you?

<sup>13</sup>Then the field commander stood and shouted loudly in the Judean language: Listen to the great king, the king of Assyria.

<sup>14</sup>This is what the king says: Don't let Hezekiah deceive you. He can't rescue you.

<sup>15</sup>Don't let Hezekiah get you to trust the LORD by saying: The LORD will certainly rescue us and this city will not be put under the control of the king of Assyria.

<sup>16</sup>Don't listen to Hezekiah, because this is what the king of Assyria says: Make peace with me. Come out and give yourselves up to me. Everyone will eat from his own grapevine and fig tree and drink from his own cistern.

<sup>17</sup>Then I will come and take you away to a country like your own. It's a country with grain and new wine, a country with bread and vineyards.

<sup>18</sup>Don't let Hezekiah mislead you by saying to you: The LORD will rescue us. Did any of the gods of the nations rescue their countries from the king of Assyria?

<sup>19</sup>Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Did they rescue Samaria from my control?

<sup>20</sup>Did the gods of these countries rescue them from my control? Could the LORD then rescue Jerusalem from my control?

<sup>21</sup>They were silent and didn't say anything to him because the king commanded them not to answer him.

<sup>22</sup>Then Eliakim, who was in charge of the palace and was son of Hilkiah, Shebna the scribe, and Joah, who was the royal historian and the son of Asaph, went to Hezekiah with their clothes torn in grief. They told him the message from the field commander.

### **King Hezekiah Prays to the Lord**

**37:1** When King Hezekiah heard the message, he tore his clothes in grief, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the LORD's Temple.

<sup>2</sup>Then he sent Eliakim, who was in charge of the palace, Shebna the scribe, and the leaders of the priests, clothed in sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah, son of Amoz.

<sup>3</sup>They said to him: This is what Hezekiah says: Today is a day filled with misery, punishment, and disgrace. We are like a woman who is about to give birth but doesn't have the strength to do it.

<sup>4</sup>The LORD your God may have heard the words of the field commander. His master, the king of Assyria, sent him to defy the living God. The LORD your God may punish him because of the message that the LORD your God heard. Pray for the few people who are left.

<sup>5</sup>So King Hezekiah's men went to Isaiah.

<sup>6</sup>Isaiah answered them: Say this to your master: This is what the LORD says: Don't be afraid of the message that you heard when the Assyrian king's assistants slandered me.

<sup>7</sup>I'm going to put a spirit in him so that he will hear a rumor and return to his own country. I'll have him assassinated in his own country.

<sup>8</sup>The field commander returned and found the king of Assyria fighting against Libnah. He had heard that the king left Lachish

<sup>9</sup>Now, Sennacherib heard that King Tirhakah of Sudan was coming to fight him.



When he heard this, he again sent messengers to Hezekiah saying:

<sup>10</sup>“Tell King Hezekiah of Judah: Don’t let the god whom you trust deceive you by saying that Jerusalem will not be put under the control of the king of Assyria.

<sup>11</sup>You heard what the kings of Assyria did to all countries, how they totally destroyed them. Will you be rescued?

<sup>12</sup>Did the gods of the nations which my ancestors destroyed rescue Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the people of Eden who were in Telassar?

<sup>13</sup>Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, and the king of the cities of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah?

### **King Hezekiah Again Prays to the Lord**

<sup>37:14</sup> Hezekiah took the letter from the messengers, read it, and went to the LORD’s temple. He spread it out in front of the LORD <sup>15</sup>and prayed to the LORD:

<sup>16</sup> LORD of Armies, God of Israel, you are enthroned over the angels. You alone are God of the kingdoms of the world. You made heaven and earth.

<sup>17</sup>Turn your ear toward me, LORD, and listen. Open your eyes, LORD, and see. Listen to the entire message that Sennacherib sent to defy the living God.

<sup>18</sup>It is true, LORD, that the kings of Assyria have leveled every country.

<sup>19</sup>They have thrown the gods from these countries into fires because these gods aren’t real gods. They’re only wooden and stone statues made by human hands. So the Assyrians have destroyed them.

<sup>20</sup>Now, LORD our God, rescue us from Assyria’s control so that all the kingdoms on earth will know that you alone are the LORD.

## Isaiah's Prophecy against King Sennacherib of Assyria

<sup>21</sup>Then Isaiah, son of Amoz, sent a message to Hezekiah: This is what the LORD God of Israel says: You prayed to me about King Sennacherib of Assyria.

<sup>22</sup>This is the message that the LORD speaks to him:

My dear people in Zion despise you and laugh at you.  
My people in Jerusalem shake their heads behind your back.

<sup>23</sup>Whom are you defying and slandering?  
Against whom are you shouting?  
Who are you looking at so arrogantly?  
It is the Holy One of Israel.

<sup>24</sup>Through your servants you defy the Lord and say:  
With my many chariots I'll ride up the high mountains,  
up the slopes of Lebanon.

**I'll** cut down its tallest cedars and its finest cypresses.  
**I'll** come to its most distant heights  
and its most fertile forests.

<sup>25</sup>**I'll** dig wells and drink water.  
**I'll** dry up all the streams of Egypt  
with the trampling of my feet.

<sup>26</sup> Haven't you heard?  
I did this long ago.  
I planned it in the distant past.

Now I make it happen so that you will turn fortified cities  
into piles of rubble.

<sup>27</sup>Those who live in these cities are weak, discouraged, and ashamed.  
They will be like plants in the field,

like fresh, green grass on the roofs,  
dried up by the east wind.

<sup>28</sup> I know when you get up and sit down,  
when you go out and come in,  
and how you rage against me.

<sup>29</sup> Since you rage against me  
and your boasting has reached my ears,  
I will put my hook in your nose  
and my bridle in your mouth.

I will make you go back the way you came.

<sup>30</sup> This will be a sign for you, Hezekiah: You will eat what grows by itself this year, and the next year you will eat what comes up by itself. But in the third year you will plant and harvest, plant vineyards, and eat what is produced.

<sup>1</sup> Those few people from the nation of Judah who escape will again take root and produce crops.

<sup>32</sup> Those few people will go out from Jerusalem, and those who escape will go out from Mount Zion. The LORD of Armies is determined to do this.

<sup>33</sup> This is what the LORD says about the king of Assyria:

He will never come into this city,  
shoot an arrow here,  
hold a shield in front of it,  
or put up dirt ramps to attack it.

<sup>34</sup> He will go back the way he came,  
and he won't come into this city,  
declares the LORD of Armies.

<sup>35</sup> I will shield this city to rescue it for my sake  
and for the sake of my servant David.

<sup>36</sup>The LORD's angel went out and killed 185,000 soldiers in the Assyrian camp. When the Judeans got up early in the morning, they saw all the corpses.

<sup>37</sup>Then King Sennacherib of Assyria left. He went home to Nineveh and stayed there. <sup>38</sup>While he was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisroch, Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons, assassinated him and escaped to the land of Ararat. His son Esarhaddon succeeded him as king. 586 BC

## **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?**

King Sennacherib of Assyria entered Judah and began capturing all of Judah's 46 fortified cities and little towns in between. While he was attacking Lachish, the second largest city in Judah, he sent some of his high officials to attempt to get King Hezekiah of Jerusalem to surrender the city.

Hezekiah's officials returned and told the king. Hezekiah tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and went into the temple. Then he sent his officials to Isaiah.

Isaiah replied: God says: I'm going to put a spirit in Sennacherib so he will hear a rumor and return to his own country.

Sennacherib, who was at Lachish, heard that the Egyptian Pharaoh Tirhakah of Sudan was coming to attack him. So he again sent messengers to Hezekiah and gave him a written message. Hezekiah went into the temple and spread the message out before the Lord and prayed.

Then Isaiah sent a message to King Hezekiah. The Lord has told me: I will put a hook in King Sennacherib's nose and make him go back the way he came. The Lord of Armies declares: He won't come into this city. I will rescue this city for my sake and for the sake of my servant David.

That night, the Lord's angels went out and killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. Then King Sennacherib left.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. What would King Sennacherib do if King Hezekiah had surrendered to him? Would he have destroyed Jerusalem?
2. King Hezekiah first attempted to bribe King Sennacherib by giving him a lot of gold and silver contained in the temple. How treacherous the Assyrians were to accept the bribe and then keep on fighting. How did God look upon Hezekiah giving away the treasures of the Jerusalem temple?
3. When did King Hezekiah begin praying to God, before he gave the baksheesh or after?
4. Did an angel kill the 185,000 Assyrian soldiers overnight or did something else?
5. What did King Hezekiah learn from this incident?

## PERICOPE 34

### Further Events in the Reign of King Hezekiah

#### Hezekiah's Illness

**38:1** In those days Hezekiah became sick and was about to die. The prophet Isaiah, son of Amoz, came to him and said: This is what the LORD says: Give final instructions to your household because you're about to die. You won't get well.

<sup>2</sup>Hezekiah turned to the wall and prayed to the LORD: <sup>3</sup>Please, LORD, remember how I've lived faithfully and sincerely in your presence. I've done what you consider right. And he cried bitterly.

<sup>4</sup>Then the LORD spoke his word to Isaiah: Go and say to Hezekiah: This is what the LORD God of your ancestor David says: I've heard your prayer. I've seen your tears. I'm going to give you 15 more years to live. <sup>6</sup>I'll rescue you and defend this city from the control of the king of Assyria.

<sup>7</sup> Isaiah said: This is your sign from the LORD that he will do what he promises.

<sup>8</sup>The sun made a shadow that went down the stairway of Ahaz's upper palace. I'm going to make the shadow go back ten steps. So the sun on the stairway went back up the ten steps it had gone down.

<sup>9</sup>King Hezekiah of Judah wrote this after he was sick and became well again:

<sup>10</sup> I thought that in the prime of my life  
I would go down to the gates of Sheol  
and be robbed of the rest of my life.

<sup>11</sup> I thought that I wouldn't see the LORD in this world.  
Even with all the people in the world,  
I thought I would never see another person.

<sup>12</sup> My life was over.  
You rolled it up like a shepherd's tent.

You rolled up my life like a weaver.  
You cut me off from the loom.  
You ended my life in one day.

<sup>13</sup>I cried out until morning  
as if a lion had crushed all my bones.  
You ended my life in one day.

<sup>14</sup>I chirped like swallows and cranes.  
I cooed like doves.  
My eyes were tired from looking up to heaven.  
I've suffered miserably, O Lord.  
Please help me.

<sup>15</sup>What can I say now that he has spoken to me?  
He has done this.  
I will be careful the rest of my life because of my bitter experience.

<sup>16</sup>Lord, people live in spite of such things,  
and I have the will to live in spite of them.  
You give me health and keep me alive.

<sup>17</sup>Now my bitter experience turns into peace.  
You have saved me and kept me from the rotting pit.  
You have thrown all my sins behind you.

<sup>18</sup>Sheol doesn't thank you!  
Death doesn't praise you!  
Those who go down to the pit cannot expect you to be faithful.

<sup>19</sup>Those who are living praise you as I do today.  
Fathers make your faithfulness known to their children.

<sup>20</sup>The LORD is going to rescue me,  
so let us play stringed instruments.  
We live our lives in the LORD's temple.

<sup>21</sup>Isaiah had said: Prepare a poultice of figs and apply it to the boil, and he will recover.

<sup>22</sup>Hezekiah had asked: What will be the sign that I will go up to the temple of the Lord?

### **Hezekiah Shows the Babylonians His Treasures**

**39:1** At that time Baladan's son, King Merodach Baladan of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah. He had heard that Hezekiah had been sick and had recovered.

<sup>2</sup>Hezekiah was so happy with them that he showed the messengers his warehouse: the silver, gold, balsam, fine olive oil, his entire armory, and everything in his treasury. Hezekiah showed them everything in his palace and every corner of his kingdom.

<sup>3</sup>Then the prophet Isaiah came to King Hezekiah and asked: What did these men say? And where did they come from? Hezekiah answered: They came to me from the distant country of Babylon.

<sup>4</sup>Isaiah asked: What did they see in your palace? Hezekiah answered: They saw everything in my palace, and I showed them everything in my treasury.

<sup>5</sup>Isaiah said to Hezekiah: Hear the word of the LORD of Armies.

<sup>6</sup>The LORD says: The days are going to come when everything in your palace, everything your ancestors have stored up to this day, will be taken away to Babylon. Nothing will be left.

<sup>7</sup>Some of your own descendants will be taken away. They will become officials in the palace of the king of Babylon.

<sup>8</sup>Hezekiah said to Isaiah: The LORD's word that you have spoken is good. He added: Just let there be peace and security as long as I live.



## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

It is difficult to put this event in sequence. My conclusion is that God told Hezekiah he would die in 702 BC, thirteen years after his reign began. Then God gave him 15 more years to live. Hezekiah's son Manasseh co-reigned with his father from 697-687 BC at the age of 12 and reigned solely from 687-643 BC, a reign of 55 years.

Later, representatives from King Merodach-Baladan of Babylon came to King Hezekiah to congratulate him from recovering from his illness. Hezekiah showed them everything in his palace and all his treasures. The prophet Isaiah asked the king who the messengers were. Hezekiah told him. What did you show them, Isaiah asked. Everything, said Hezekiah.

Isaiah prophesied: The days are going to come when everything in your palace will be taken to Babylon. Some of your own descendants will be taken and become officials in Babylon. Hezekiah replied: Just let there be peace and security in my time.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why did God give Hezekiah 15 more years to live? If God hadn't given him those extra years, his son Manasseh, the wickedest king Judah ever had, wouldn't have been born.
2. From the story of King Hezekiah in Chapters 36-37, we would conclude he was a righteous king. But what do you think of him after reading Isaiah 39:8
3. Why did Isaiah include Chapter 39 in his Vision?

# THE MISSING CHAPTER

## THE 70 YEARS OF EXILE IN BABYLON

In 605 BC, in his first year as king of Babylon, King Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem, took several young Judean men including Daniel and also took many of the temple treasures as tribute. He forced King Jehoiakim to become his vassal.

In 597 BC, King Nebuchadnezzar returned because King Jehoiakim had broken his vassal pledge to Babylon and had made a treaty with Egypt. King Jehoiakim died during King Nebuchadnezzar's two-year blockade and his young son King Jehoiachin or Jehoiakin began reigning at 21 years old. Nebuchadnezzar deported the entire court, all the wise men, all the tradesmen, all the wealthy landowners and many young men including Ezekiel. He appointed Zedekiah, another son of King Josiah, as a puppet king and stripped Jerusalem of more of its treasure.

Zedekiah also intrigued with Egypt, so Nebuchadnezzar again came to Jerusalem in 588 BC and blockaded the city for two years. When the Babylonians were entering the city in 586 BC, King Zedekiah, his sons, and his army officers fled the city. The Babylonians captured them and took them to King Nebuchadnezzar.

The king killed King Zedekiah's sons and many of the officials, including the High Priest. Then he blinded Zedekiah and took him in shackles to Babylon. Then the Babylonians burned down the city, the temple and tore down the city walls again deporting many people.

During all this time, the prophet Jeremiah was prophesying in Jerusalem. When the Babylonians came in 586 BC, Jeremiah was freed to live with the new Governor of Judah, Gedaliah, appointed by King Nebuchadnezzar. But Judean refugees forced Jeremiah and his scribe Baruch to go to Egypt after Gedaliah was murdered. There they both died.

The Jews were in exile in Babylon for 70 years 605-535 BC, a time prophesied by Jeremiah. Daniel was taken to Babylon in 605 BC, the first year of the exile. He prophesied in Babylon for the entire exile dying about 538 BC. Ezekiel was called to be a prophet by God in Babylon in 592 BC. He prophesied until 571 BC, fifteen years after Jerusalem was destroyed in 586 BC.

Isaiah's prophecies were read by the exiles as the exiled priests carried copies of the scrolls from the temple in Jerusalem into exile. Daniel refers to Jeremiah's prophecy that the exile would last 70 years. **Daniel 9:2**. During the exile, Jeremiah wrote letters to Judeans in Babylon. **Jeremiah 29:1-9**

## PART 6

### AFTER THE EXILE IS OVER, SOME JUDEANS RETURN TO JERUSALEM

In 539 BC, Cyrus the Great, the king of Medo-Persia conquered Babylon. He issued an edict permitting the Judeans to return to Jerusalem. In 535 BC, Governor Zerubbabel, a descendant of King David and High Priest Joshua led 42,360 men and their families back to Jerusalem.

Although they began constructing the foundation of what would become the second temple, work stopped, and Zerubbabel did not finish building the temple until 515 BC. The books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, and Zechariah tell of events of this period.

## PERICOPE 35

### God Pronounces the Exile is Over. Come Home to Jerusalem.

40:I 535 BC Comfort **nacham** my people! Comfort **nacham** them! says your God.

<sup>2</sup> Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and announce to it  
that its time of hard labor is over  
and its wrongs have been paid for.  
It has received from the LORD double for all its sins.

<sup>3</sup> A voice cries out in the desert:

Clear a way for the LORD.  
Make a straight highway in the wilderness for our God.

<sup>4</sup> Every valley will be raised.  
Every mountain and hill will be lowered.  
Steep places will be made level.  
Rough places will be made smooth.

<sup>5</sup> Then the LORD's glory will be revealed  
and all people will see it together.  
The LORD has spoken.

<sup>6</sup> A voice called: Call out.

I asked: What should I call out?

Call out: All people are like grass,  
and all their beauty ~~checced~~-loving kindness is like a flower in the field.

<sup>7</sup> Grass dries up,  
and flowers wither when the LORD's breath blows on them.  
Yes, people are like grass.

<sup>8</sup>Grass dries up,  
and flowers wither,  
but the word of our God will last forever.

<sup>9</sup>Go up a high mountain, Zion.  
Tell the good news.  
Call out with a loud voice, Jerusalem.  
Tell the good news.

Raise your voice without fear.  
Tell the cities of Judah:  
Here is your God,

<sup>10</sup>The Almighty LORD is coming with power  
to rule with authority.  
His reward is with him,  
and the people he has won arrive ahead of him.

<sup>11</sup> Like a shepherd he takes care of his flock.  
He gathers the lambs in his arms.  
He carries them in his arms.  
He gently helps the sheep and their lambs.

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

God calls to his people in exile in Babylon: Come home to Jerusalem. The exile is over. Isaiah begins with the word comfort *nacham*. Jeremiah used this word in the Book of Lamentations saying: *no one offers comfort*. **Lamentations 1:2, 17, 21; 2:13** was written right after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC. This word will appear in **Isaiah 22:4; 40:1 (2X), 51:3 (2X), 19; 57:6; 61:2; 66:13**. This chapter answers the questions: Can God rescue the exiles and will God rescue the exiles?

The historical time is one century and a half after the time of King Hezekiah. 697-535 BC – 150 years. Isaiah again refers to the highway *mecillah* the Lord will make between the city of Babylon and the city of Jerusalem for his people to

travel on. It is the Lord who will bring his people home. He is a shepherd who never forgets his sheep.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. How has the Lord punished God's people double for all their idolatry? Is it the invasions of both Assyria and Babylon? **Isaiah 61:7**
2. How is the Lord's glory shown in bringing his Chosen People back to the land he had promised them?
3. This is the only time in the Bible God says the people have ~~cheered~~. It is God's loving kindness that is usually mentioned. This word appears 248x in the Bible, the most in Psalms 129x, but 8x in **Isaiah 16:5; 40:6; 54:8, 10; 55:3; 57:1; 63:7**, 6x in **Jeremiah** and 3x in **Lamentations**. Why is peoples' loving kindness like a flower in the field?
4. Isaiah says God is leading his people home. The people would be thrilled because a descendant of King David is leading them. What is his name? **Ezra 2:2; I Chronicles 3:17-19**
5. How is God's blessing of bringing his Chosen People home to Jerusalem a blessing for the whole world, or is it?
6. How will the glory of the Lord be revealed when he brings his people home?

## PERICOPE 36

### Who Is Like Our God?

<sup>40:12</sup> Who has measured the water of the sea  
with the palm of his hand  
or measured the sky with the length of his hand?

Who has held the dust of the earth in a bushel basket  
or weighed the mountains on a scale and the hills on a balance?

<sup>13</sup>Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD  
or instructed him as his adviser?

<sup>14</sup>Whom did he consult?  
Who gave him understanding?  
Who taught him the right way?  
Who taught him knowledge?  
Who informed him about the way to understanding?

<sup>15</sup>The nations are like a drop in a bucket  
and are considered to be like dust on a scale.  
The weight of the islands is like fine dust.

<sup>16</sup>All the trees in Lebanon are not enough to burn an offering.  
Its wild animals are not enough for a single burnt offering.

<sup>17</sup>All the nations amount to nothing in his presence.  
He considers them less than nothing and worthless.

### Idols Are But a Poor Imitation of the Holy One of Israel

<sup>18</sup>To whom, then, can you compare God?  
To what statue can you compare him?

<sup>19</sup>Craftsmen make idols *pecel*.  
Goldsmiths cover them with gold.  
Silversmiths make silver chains for them.



<sup>20</sup>The poorest people choose wood that will not rot  
and search out skillful craftsmen  
to set up idols that will not fall over.

### **Human Kings Cannot Compare to God**

<sup>21</sup>Don't you know?  
Haven't you heard?  
Haven't you been told from the beginning?  
Don't you understand the foundations of the earth?

<sup>22</sup>God is enthroned above the earth,  
and those who live on it are like grasshoppers.  
He stretches out the sky like a canopy  
and spreads it out like a tent to live in.

<sup>23</sup>He makes rulers unimportant  
and makes earthly judges worth nothing.

<sup>24</sup>They have hardly been planted.  
They have hardly been sown.  
They have hardly taken root in the ground.

Then he blows on them and they wither,  
and a windstorm sweeps them away like straw.

<sup>25</sup>To whom, then, can you compare me?  
Who is my equal? asks the Holy One.

### **The Stars in the Sky Cannot Compare to God**

<sup>26</sup>Look at the sky and see.  
Who created these things?  
Who brings out the stars one by one?  
He calls them all by name.

Because of the greatness of his might  
and the strength of his power,  
not one of them is missing.

<sup>27</sup> Jacob, why do you complain?  
Israel, why do you say:  
My way is hidden from the LORD,  
and my rights are ignored by my God ?

<sup>28</sup> Don't you know?  
Haven't you heard?

The eternal God, the LORD,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth,  
doesn't grow tired or become weary.  
His understanding is beyond reach.

### **God Gives Strength to His People**

<sup>29</sup> He gives strength to those who grow tired  
and increases the strength of those who are weak.

<sup>30</sup> Even young people grow tired and become weary,  
and young men will stumble and fall.

<sup>31</sup> Yet, the strength of those  
who wait with hope in the LORD will be renewed.

They will soar on wings like eagles.  
They will run and won't become weary.  
They will walk and won't grow tired.

### **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?**

To those who question the strength of God to act, Isaiah answers with this pericope. God is unique, there is no one like him. He is powerful. Kings can't compete with him. And likewise, no idol can compare with him.

God rules his creation as the king over the earth. Human rulers and earthly judges are nothing compared to God. He has placed stars in his creation and has named them.

Yet God's people, Jacob, now called Israel, asks: Why God did you allow the Babylonians to place us in exile? Is my way hidden from you?

Isaiah answers that God gives strength to those who are weak. If you hope in the Lord, you will be renewed.

## **THINGS TO THINK ABOUT?**

1. Isaiah encourages watchmen in Zion to call out from their high mountain: Look. God is coming. And he is bringing our people home. How is this good news?
2. God is transcendent. What does this mean?
3. Throughout Isaiah, he will ridicule idols. Why does he do this so much?  
**Isaiah 40:19-21; 44:9-20**
4. God named the stars but he didn't tell us their names. Why did human beings get themselves in trouble when they began to name the stars?
5. Isaiah says: Jacob, why do you complain? Israel, why do you say: My way is hidden from the Lord and my rights are ignored by my God? **Isaiah 41:27**. What is Israel complaining about?
6. How does God answer this question?

## PERICOPE 37

### God Raises Up His Anointed One

**41:1** Be silent and listen to me, you coastlands.  
Let the people gain new strength.  
Let them come near and speak.  
Let us come together for judgment.

<sup>2</sup> Who has raised up from the east  
someone to whom the LORD gives victory  
with every step he takes?

Nations are handed over to him.  
He defeats kings.  
With his sword he turns them into dust.  
With his bow he turns them into straw blown by the wind.

<sup>3</sup> He chases them, marching by safely  
on a path his feet have never traveled before.

<sup>4</sup> Who has accomplished this?  
Who has determined the course of history from the beginning?  
I, the LORD, was there first  
and I will be there to the end.  
I am the one.

<sup>5</sup> The coastlands have seen him and are afraid.  
The ends of the earth tremble.  
They have come near and gathered together.

### People Look to Their Idols for Protection

<sup>6</sup> People help their neighbors  
and say to their relatives: Be brave.

<sup>7</sup>Craftsmen encourage goldsmiths.  
Metalsmiths encourage blacksmiths who work at their anvils.  
They say that their soldering is good.  
And they fasten things with nails so they won't move.

### **Israel is God's Servant**

<sup>8</sup> But you are my servant <sup>ebed</sup> Israel,  
Jacob, whom I have chosen,  
the descendant of Abraham, my dear friend.

<sup>9</sup>I have taken you from the ends of the earth  
and called you from its most distant places.  
I said to you: You are my servant <sup>ebed</sup>.  
I've chosen you.  
I haven't rejected you.

<sup>10</sup> Don't be afraid because I am with you **Immanuel**.  
Don't be intimidated.

I am your God.  
I will strengthen you.  
I will help you.  
I will support you with my victorious right hand.

<sup>11</sup> Everyone who is angry with you  
will be ashamed and disgraced.  
Those who oppose you  
will be reduced to nothing and disappear.

<sup>12</sup>You will search for your enemies,  
but you will not find them.  
Those who are at war with you  
will be reduced to nothing and no longer exist.

<sup>13</sup>I, the LORD your God,  
hold your right hand and say to you:

Don't be afraid.  
I will help you.

<sup>14</sup> Don't be afraid, Jacob, you worm.  
You people of Israel, I will help you,"  
declares the LORD, your Redeemer *ga'al*, the Holy One of Israel.

<sup>15</sup> I am going to make you into a new threshing sledge  
with sharp, double-edged teeth.  
You will thresh the mountains and crush them to dust.  
You will turn the hills into straw.

<sup>16</sup> You will winnow them.  
The wind will carry them away.  
The windstorm will scatter them.  
But you will find joy in the LORD  
and praise the Holy One of Israel.

<sup>17</sup> The poor and needy are looking for water,  
but there is none.  
Their tongues are parched with thirst.  
I, the LORD, will answer them.  
I, the God of Israel, will not abandon them.

### **God Will Do the Impossible for His People**

<sup>18</sup> I will make rivers flow on bare hilltops.  
I will make springs flow through valleys.  
I will turn deserts into lakes.  
I will turn dry land into springs.

<sup>19</sup> I will plant cedar, acacia, myrtle,  
and wild olive trees in the desert.  
I will place cedar, fir,  
and cypress trees together in the wilderness.

<sup>20</sup> People will see and know.  
Together they will consider and understand  
that the LORD's power has done this,  
that the Holy One of Israel has created it.

### **Idols Cannot Predict the Future**

<sup>21</sup> Present your case, says the LORD.  
Bring forward your best arguments, says Jacob's king.

<sup>22</sup> Bring your idols so they can tell us what's going to happen.  
Explain past events that your idols told you about  
so that we may consider them  
and know what their outcome will be.  
Tell us about future events.

<sup>23</sup> Tell us what's going to happen  
so that we may know that you are gods.  
Yes, do something, good or evil,  
to intimidate us and make us afraid.

<sup>24</sup> You are nothing!  
You can't do anything!  
Whoever chooses you is disgusting.

### **God Has Raised Up an Anointed One**

<sup>25</sup> I have raised up someone from the north  
and he has come.  
He will call on my name from the east.  
He will attack rulers as if they were mud,  
as if he were treading on clay like a potter.

<sup>26</sup> Who revealed this from the beginning  
so that we could know it?  
Who revealed this from the past  
so that we could say that he was right?

No one revealed it.  
No one announced it.  
No one heard your words.

<sup>27</sup>I was the first to tell Zion:  
Look, here they are.  
I gave Jerusalem a messenger with the good news.

<sup>28</sup>When I look, there is no one.  
There is no one to advise them.  
When I ask them a question,  
will they give an answer?

<sup>29</sup>All of them are nothing.<sup>†</sup>  
They can't do anything.  
Their statues are nothing but air.

## **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?**

The coastlands are all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean Sea. God has raised up his Anointed One. **Isaiah 45:1**. We are going to constantly here about this individual for the next few pericopes. God determines the course of history. He is the first and the last.

The nations are afraid of God's Anointed One, so they look to their idols for protection against him.

God now says that Israel, formerly named Jacob, is his servant. God has chosen them and called them. He will strengthen them to perform the mission he has chosen for them. Although they are now in exile in Babylon, God will not abandon them.

He will prepare his Holy Land for them and renew it tremendously for he is their Redeemer and the Holy One of Israel. God's people will see this and realize that God has done this. Again God ridicules those people who turn to idols for they are nothing and can't do anything.



Again God speaks of his Anointed One who will be powerful and attack nations as though they were nothing. This is a message of good news for Israel. But idols can't say anything.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Who is the Lord's Anointed One? What will he do?
2. Isaiah's title for God, the Holy One of Israel, has appeared in **Isaiah 1:4; 5:19, 24; 10:20; 12:6; 17:7; 29:19; 30:11-12, 15; 31:1; 37:23** -12 times. What does this title for God mean?
3. We are going to see several servants of God in the Vision of Isaiah. Isaiah himself is certainly God's servant. Although Israel is called God's servant, they don't do what he asks them to do. The genuine Servant of YHWH is God's faithful servant who accomplishes God's mission for him. Where does Isaiah mention him? HINT: This servant sings four songs. These are in Chapters 42, 49, 50, and 53.
4. When God says: I am the first and I am the last, what does he mean? **Isaiah 41:4**
5. At the end of this pericope, God again disparages idols. Why does he mention them so much in this Vision?

## PERICOPE 38

### The Mission of God's Servant

#### The First Servant of YHWH Song

**42:1** Here is my servant 'ebed, whom I support.  
Here is my Chosen One bachiyr, with whom I am pleased.  
I have put my Spirit ruwach on him.  
He will bring justice mishpat to the nations.

<sup>2</sup>He will not cry out or raise his voice.  
He will not make his voice heard in the streets.

<sup>3</sup>He will not break off a damaged cattail.  
He will not even put out a smoking wick.  
He will faithfully bring about justice mishpat.

<sup>4</sup>He will not be discouraged or crushed  
until he has set up justice mishpat on the earth.  
The coastlands will wait for his teachings.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD God created the heavens and stretched them out.  
He shaped the earth and all that comes from it.  
He gave life to the people who are on it  
and breath to those who walk on it.

#### God Appoints His Anointed One

This is what the LORD God says:

**42:6** I, the LORD, have called you to do what is right tsedeq-righteousness.  
I will take hold of your hand.  
I will protect you.  
I will appoint you as my covenant beriyth to the people,  
as my light to the nations.

<sup>7</sup>You will give sight to the blind,  
bring prisoners out of prisons,  
and bring those who live in darkness out of dungeons.

<sup>8</sup>I am the LORD,  
That is my name.  
I will not give my glory to anyone else  
or the praise I deserve to idols.

<sup>9</sup>What I said in the past has come true.  
I will reveal new things *chadash* before they happen.

### **A Song about the LORD, the Divine Warrior**

<sup>42:10</sup> Sing a new song to the LORD.  
Sing his praise from the ends of the earth,  
you people who sail on the seas  
and all the creatures that live in them,  
you coastlands and all who live on them.

<sup>11</sup>Let those who live in the desert and its cities raise their voices.  
Let those who live in the settlements of Kedar praise him.  
Let those who live in Sela sing for joy.  
Let them shout from the tops of the mountains.

<sup>12</sup>Let them give glory to the LORD  
and announce his praise on the coastlands.

<sup>13</sup>The LORD marches out like a warrior.  
He prepares himself for battle like a soldier.  
He shouts, gives the battle cry, and overpowers his enemies.

### **The LORD Will Bring Israel Home from Exile in Babylon**

<sup>42:14</sup> I have been silent for a long time.  
I kept quiet and held myself back.

But like a woman in childbirth I will cry out.  
I will gasp and pant.

<sup>15</sup> I will lay waste to mountains and hills.  
I will dry up all their vegetation.  
I will turn rivers into islands.  
I will dry up ponds.

<sup>16</sup> I will lead the blind on unfamiliar roads.  
I will lead them on unfamiliar paths.  
I will turn darkness into light in front of them.  
I will make rough places smooth.

These are the things I will do for them,  
and I will never abandon them.

### **People of Israel: See What God Is Doing**

<sup>42:17</sup> Then those who trust idols  
and those who say to statues:  
You are our gods,  
will be turned away and put to shame.

<sup>18</sup> Listen, you deaf people.  
Look, you blind people, so that you can see.

<sup>19</sup> Who is blind except my servant  
or deaf like the messenger I send?  
Who is blind like the one who has my trust  
or blind like the servant of the LORD?

<sup>20</sup> You have seen much,  
but you do not observe anything.  
Your ears are open,  
but you hear nothing.

<sup>21</sup>The LORD is pleased because he does what is right.  
He praises the greatness of his teachings  
and makes them glorious.

### **God's People Are in Exile in a Pagan Land**

<sup>42:22</sup> But these people are robbed and looted.  
They are all trapped in pits and hidden in prisons.  
They have become prey with no one to rescue them.  
They have become loot with no one to say: Give it back.

<sup>23</sup> Who among you will listen to this?  
Is there anyone who will pay attention and listen in the future?

### **God Forced His People into Exile**

<sup>42:24</sup> Who gave Jacob away as loot  
and handed Israel over to robbers?  
Wasn't it the LORD,  
against whom we have sinned?

They didn't want to live his way.  
They didn't obey his teachings.

<sup>25</sup> So he poured out his burning anger  
and the horrors of war on them.  
It engulfed them in flames, but they did not understand.  
It burned them, but they did not take it to heart.

### **Now God Will Bring His People Home to Jerusalem**

**43:1** The LORD created Jacob and formed Israel.  
Now, this is what the LORD says:

Do not be afraid, because I have redeemed you.  
I have called you by name; you are mine.

<sup>2</sup>When you go through the sea, I am with you.  
When you go through rivers, they will not sweep you away.  
When you walk through fire, you will not be burned,  
and the flames will not harm you.

<sup>3</sup>I am the LORD your God,  
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.  
Egypt is the ransom I exchanged for you.  
Sudan and Seba are the price I paid for you.

<sup>4</sup>Since you are precious to me, you are honored and I love you.  
I will exchange others for you.  
Nations will be the price I pay for your life.

<sup>5</sup>Do not be afraid, because I am with you.  
I will bring your descendants from the east  
and gather you from the west.

<sup>6</sup>I will say to the north: Give them up,  
and to the south: Do not keep them.  
Bring my sons from far away  
and my daughters from the ends of the earth.

<sup>7</sup>Bring everyone who is called by my name,  
whom I created for my glory,  
whom I formed and made.

<sup>8</sup>Bring the people who are blind but still have eyes,  
the people who are deaf but still have ears.

<sup>9</sup>All nations have gathered together,  
and people have assembled.

Who among them could have revealed this?  
Who among them could have foretold this to us?  
They should bring their witnesses to prove that they were right.

Let the people hear them.  
Then they will say that it is true.

## **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?**

The first Song of the Servant of YHWH tells us that God has chosen him and put his Spirit in him. His primary mission is to bring God's justice or righteousness to the earth. He is to serve as God's covenant to the Chosen People and as a light to the gentiles.

God adds, I will reveal NEW THINGS before they happen.

Isaiah calls his hearers, all peoples and sea creatures, to sing a new song to the Lord praising him for his glory. God says he has been silent for a long time but now he will act. Primarily, he will lead the blind on paths they do not know. He will help them by turning darkness into light for them and making rough places smooth.

God says that his servant is blind and deaf. Although God's servant had seen much, they didn't understand anything. They heard much, but didn't hear anything. As a result, they are now hidden in prisons. Who placed them there? The Lord. God's servants didn't want to live God's way so he poured the horrors of war on them. Even though the fires of war burned them, they still did not take it to heart and repent of their sin.

Yet God says: I will redeem you. I will be with you. I love you. I will exchange other nations for you. I will bring back everyone who is called by my name. Who can reveal this to you this except your God?

## **THINGS TO THINK ABOUT**

1. How will God's servant bring God's justice to the world?
2. How will God's servant be a covenant to God's people?
3. How will God's servant be a light to the nations?
4. Why will God reveal new things before they happen?

5. How does the Lord act like a warrior?
6. Why does Israel act like they are blind and deaf?
7. God promises to gather his scattered people from all over the earth, not just from Assyria and Babylon. Why will he do this?



## PERICOPE 39

### God's Servants Are His Witnesses He Is the Only God

**43:10** You are my witnesses, declares the LORD.

I have chosen you as my servant  
so that you can know and believe in me  
and understand that I am the one who did this.

No god was formed before me,  
and there will be none after me.

<sup>11</sup>I alone am the LORD,  
and there is no savior except me.

<sup>12</sup>I have revealed it to you,  
I have saved you,  
and I have announced it to you.

There was no foreign god among you.  
You are my witnesses that I am God, declares the LORD.

<sup>13</sup>From the first day I was the one who did this.  
No one can rescue people from my power.  
When I do something, who can undo it?

<sup>14</sup>This is what the LORD, your Redeemer,  
the Holy One of Israel, says:

For your sake I will send an army to Babylon.  
I will bring back all the Babylonian refugees  
in the ships that they take pride in.

<sup>15</sup>I am the LORD, your Holy One,  
the Creator of Israel, your King.

## **Despite the People of Israel's Past Sin, the LORD Will Forgive Them**

<sup>43:16</sup> The LORD makes a path through the sea  
and a road through the strong currents.

<sup>17</sup> He leads chariots and horses, an army and reinforcements.  
They lie down together and do not get up again.  
They are extinguished and snuffed out like a wick.

This is what the LORD says:

<sup>18</sup> Forget what happened in the past,  
and do not dwell on events from long ago.

## **God Will Do a New Thing**

<sup>43:19</sup> I am going to do something new *chadash* .  
It is already happening.  
Don't you recognize it?

I will clear a way in the desert.  
I will make rivers on dry land.

<sup>20</sup> Wild animals, jackals, and ostriches will honor me.  
I will provide water in the desert.  
I will make rivers on the dry land  
for my Chosen People to drink.

<sup>21</sup> I have formed these people for myself.  
They will praise me.

## **The Chosen People Sinned Against God in the Past**

<sup>43:22</sup> Jacob, you have not prayed to me.  
Israel, you have grown tired of me.

<sup>23</sup> You did not bring me sheep for your burnt offerings  
or honor me with your sacrifices.

I did not burden you by requiring grain offerings  
or trouble you by requiring incense offerings.

<sup>24</sup> You did not buy me any sugar cane with your money  
or satisfy me with the best part of your sacrifices.  
Rather, you burdened me with your sins  
and troubled me with your wrongdoings.

### **God Will Forgive Israel's Past Sins**

<sup>43:25</sup> I alone am the one who is going to wipe away  
your rebellious actions for my own sake.  
I will not remember your sins anymore.

<sup>26</sup> Remind me of what happened.  
Let us argue our case together.  
State your case so that you can prove you are right.

<sup>27</sup> Your first ancestor sinned,  
and your priests rebelled against me.

<sup>28</sup> That is why I will corrupt the leaders of the Holy Place.  
I will claim Jacob for destruction.  
I will set up Israel for ridicule.

**44:1** But now listen, my servant Jacob, Israel,  
whom I have chosen.

<sup>2</sup> The LORD made you, formed you in the womb,  
and will help you.

This is what the LORD says:

Don't be afraid, my servant Jacob,  
Jeshurun [Israel] whom I have chosen.

<sup>3</sup> I will pour water on thirsty ground  
and rain on dry land.

I will pour my Spirit on your offspring  
and my blessing on your descendants.

<sup>4</sup>They will spring up with the grass  
as poplars spring up by streams.

<sup>5</sup>One person will say: I belong to the LORD.  
Another will call on the name of Jacob.  
Another will write on his hand: The LORD's,  
and he will adopt the name of Israel.

### **The Nations Form Idols, but the LORD Formed Israel**

<sup>44:6</sup> The LORD is Israel's king and redeemer.  
He is the LORD of Armies.

This is what the LORD says:

I am the first and the last,  
and there is no God except me.

<sup>7</sup>If there is anyone like me, let him say so.  
Let him tell me what happened  
when I established my people long ago.  
Then let him predict what will happen to them.

<sup>8</sup>Don't be terrified or afraid.  
Didn't I make this known to you long ago?  
You are my witnesses.  
Is there any God except me?  
There is no other rock.  
I know of none.

### **God's Diatribe Against Idols**

<sup>44:9</sup> All who make idols are nothing. Their precious treasures are worthless.  
Their own witnesses do not see or know anything, so they will be put to shame.

<sup>10</sup> Nothing comes from making gods or casting metal idols.

<sup>11</sup> Everyone associated with the gods will be put to shame. The craftsmen themselves are only human. Let them all get together and take their stand. They will be frightened and ashamed together.

<sup>12</sup> Blacksmiths shape iron into tools. They work them over the coals and shape them with hammers, working them with their strong arms. They get hungry and their strength fails. If they don't drink water, they will faint.

<sup>13</sup> Carpenters measure blocks of wood with chalk lines. They mark them with pens. They carve them with chisels and mark them with compasses. They carve them into forms of people, beautiful people, so the idols can live in shrines.

<sup>14</sup> They cut down cedars for themselves. Then they choose fir trees or oaks. They let them grow strong among the trees in the forest. Then they plant cedars and the rain makes them grow.

<sup>15</sup> These trees become fuel for people to burn. So they take some of them and warm themselves with them. They start fires and bake bread. They also make gods from these trees and worship them. They make them into carved statues and bow in front of them.

<sup>16</sup> Half of the wood they burn in the fire. Over this half they roast meat that they can eat until they are full. They also warm themselves and say: Ah. We are warm. We can see the fire!

<sup>17</sup> But the rest of the wood they make into gods, carved statues. They bow to them and worship them. They pray to them, saying; Rescue us, because you are our gods.

<sup>18</sup> They don't know or understand anything. Their eyes are plastered shut, so they can't see. And their minds are closed, so they can't understand.

<sup>19</sup> No one stops to think. No one has enough knowledge or understanding to say: I burned half of the wood in the fire. I also baked bread over its coals. I

roasted meat and ate it. Now I am making the rest of the wood into a disgusting thing and bowing to a block of wood.

<sup>20</sup>They eat ashes because they are deceived. Their own misguided minds lead them astray. They can't rescue themselves or ask themselves: Isn't what I hold in my right hand a false god?

### **God Commands His Chosen People to Remember These Things**

<sup>44:21</sup> Remember these things, Jacob:

You are my servant, Israel.

I formed you.

You are my servant.

Israel, I will not forget you.

### **God Is Israel's Redeemer**

<sup>44:22</sup> I made your rebellious acts disappear like a thick cloud and your sins like the morning mist.

Come back to me, because I have redeemed *ga'al* you.

<sup>23</sup> Sing with joy, you heavens,  
because the LORD has done this.  
Rejoice, you deep places of the earth.

Break into shouts of joy, you mountains,  
you forests and every tree in them.  
The LORD has redeemed *ga'al* Jacob.  
He will display his glory in Israel.

<sup>24</sup>The LORD redeemed *ga'al* you.  
He formed you in the womb.

This is what the LORD says:

I, the LORD, made everything.  
I stretched out the heavens by myself.  
I spread out the earth all alone.

<sup>25</sup> I cause the signs of false prophets to fail  
and make fools of fortunetellers.  
I make wise men retreat  
and turn their knowledge into foolishness.

<sup>26</sup> He confirms the word of his servant  
and fulfills the plan of his messengers.

He says about Jerusalem:  
It will be inhabited.  
He says about the cities of Judah:  
They will be rebuilt.  
He says about their ruins:  
I will restore them.

<sup>27</sup> He says to the deep water:  
Dry up.  
So I will dry up your rivers.

## **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?**

God chose Israel so that they could be his witnesses that only he is God and there are no other gods. So he brings his Chosen People back from Babylon. Metaphorically, he will again make a path through the sea as he did the Red Sea. He will do something new. He will clear a way for them to pass through the desert. God says he has formed these people for himself.

Yet his people abandoned their God by not praying to him or sacrificing to him. Instead, they burdened him with their sins. In the past the ancestors of the Chosen People rebelled against their God.

Yet God loves Israel and calls her by his pet name Jeshurun, meaning Upright One. God will pour his Spirit on Israel's children and bless their descendants.

God then goes into a long diatribe about the uselessness and foolishness of making idols. God says: Remember these things. I have formed you. You are my servant.

God promises he will fulfill the plan he has given to his messengers. Jerusalem will be inhabited. The cities of Judah will be rebuilt.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why did God choose Israel as his Chosen People? What was his purpose in choosing Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? What did he want them to do?
2. Isaiah will use the word *Savior* in his Vision. What does God save Israel from? Does the word *redeem* mean the same thing?
3. God says he is going to do something NEW. **Isaiah 43:19**. What is he going to do?
4. God says he is not going to remember Israel's sins anymore. **Isaiah 43:25**. Why not?
5. Why does God call Israel "Jeshurun" and then allow them to go into exile? **Isaiah 44:2**
6. Three times in **Isaiah 44:22, 23, 24** God says he has redeemed Israel. What has he redeemed Israel from?
7. God says that his plan is to enable Jerusalem to be inhabited, to rebuild the cities of Judah, to restore their ruins. Then God says he will dry up their rivers. **Isaiah 44:27**. Why?



## PERICOPE 40

### God Reveals His Anointed One—His Messiah

**44:28** He says about Cyrus: He is my shepherd *ro'iy*.  
He will do everything I want him to do.

He says about Jerusalem:  
It will be rebuilt.  
He says about the temple,  
Your foundation will be laid.

**45:1** This is what the LORD says about Cyrus,  
his Anointed One *mashiyach*-Messiah:

I have held him by his right hand  
so he could conquer the nations ahead of him,  
strip kings of their power,  
and open doors ahead of him  
so that the gates would not be shut.

<sup>2</sup> I will go ahead of you, Cyrus,  
and smooth out the rough places.  
I will break down the bronze doors  
and cut through the iron bars.

<sup>3</sup> I will give you treasures from dark places  
and hidden stockpiles.  
Then you will know that I, the LORD God of Israel,  
have called you by name.

<sup>4</sup> For the sake of my servant Jacob,  
Israel, my chosen one,  
I have called you by name.  
I have given you a title of honor,  
although you don't know me.

<sup>5</sup>I am the LORD, and there is no other.  
There is no other God besides me.

I will strengthen you,  
although you don't know me,  
<sup>6</sup>so that from the east to the west  
people will know  
that there is no God except me.

I am the LORD, and there is no other.

<sup>7</sup>I make light and create darkness.  
I make blessings and create disasters.  
I, the LORD, do all these things.

<sup>8</sup>Rain down from above, you heavens,  
and pour down righteousness, you skies.  
Let the earth open.

Let salvation and righteousness sprout.  
Let them spring up.  
I, the LORD, have created them.

<sup>9</sup>How horrible it will be for the one  
who quarrels with his maker.  
He is pottery among other earthenware pots.

Does the clay ask the one who shapes it:  
"What are you making?"  
Does your work say to you:  
"There are no handles?"

<sup>10</sup>How horrible it will be for the one  
who says to his father:  
"Why did you conceive me?"  
or to his mother,  
"Why did you go through labor pains for me?"

<sup>11</sup>The LORD is the Holy One and the maker of Israel.

This is what the LORD says:

Ask me about what is going to happen to my children!

Are you going to give me orders concerning my handiwork?

<sup>12</sup>I made the earth and created humans on it.

I stretched out the heavens with my own hands.

I commanded all the stars to shine.

<sup>13</sup>I prepared Cyrus for my righteous purpose.

I will make all his roads straight.

He will build my city and let my exiles go free

without any payment or any reward,

says the LORD of Armies.

<sup>14</sup>This is what the LORD says:

The products from Egypt, the merchandise from Sudan,  
and the important Sabaeans will come to you.

They will belong to you.

They will follow you.

They will come to you in chains.

They will bow to you and pray to you:

Certainly God is with you alone, and there is no other God.

<sup>15</sup>Certainly, you are a God who has hidden himself.

You are the God of Israel, the Savior!

<sup>16</sup>Those who make idols will be ashamed and disgraced.

They will go away completely disgraced.

<sup>17</sup>Israel has been saved by the LORD forever.

You will never again be ashamed or disgraced.

<sup>18</sup>The LORD created the heavens.

God formed the earth and made it.

He set it up.  
He did not create it to be empty  
but formed it to be inhabited.

This is what the LORD says:

I am the LORD, and there is no other.

<sup>19</sup> I haven't spoken privately  
or in some dark corner of the world.  
I didn't say to Jacob's descendants:  
Search for me in vain.

I, the LORD, speak what is fair  
and say what is right.

<sup>20</sup> Come here, you refugees from the nations.  
Ignorant people carry wooden idols  
and pray to gods that cannot save anyone.

<sup>21</sup> Speak and present your case.  
Yes, let them consult one another.

Who revealed this in the distant past  
and predicted it long ago?  
Wasn't it I, the LORD?

There is no other God except me.  
There is no other righteous God and Savior besides me.

<sup>22</sup> Turn to me and be saved,  
all who live at the ends of the earth,  
because I am God, and there is no other.

<sup>23</sup> I have bound myself with an oath.  
A word has gone out from my righteous mouth  
that will not be recalled:

Every knee will bow to me  
and every tongue will swear allegiance.

<sup>24</sup> It will be said of me:  
Certainly, righteousness and strength  
are found in the LORD alone.

All who are angry with him  
will come to him and be ashamed.

<sup>25</sup> All the descendants of Israel  
will be declared righteous,  
and they will praise the LORD.

## **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?**

Finally, we are told who is God's Anointed One – His Messiah. It is King Cyrus of Persia who conquered Babylon in 539 BC. It is Cyrus who told the exiles to build a temple in Jerusalem and pray for me. Isaiah says Cyrus is God's shepherd. He will do everything God wants him to do. Josephus, a later Jewish historian, said that the Jewish priests showed Cyrus the Hebrew scripture of Isaiah that had his name in it. This motivated Cyrus to release the Jews immediately and to rebuild their temple.

God says: I will go ahead of you, Cyrus, and make your way easier. I have given you a title of honor although you don't know me.

God now says he is responsible for everything that happens. He makes light and darkness. He creates blessings and disasters. He has created both salvation and righteousness.

Isaiah now uses a teaching that Jeremiah also uses. **Jeremiah 18:6**. He asks: How can a created person question their creator? How can clay question the potter?

God says: I am the creator of the heavens and the earth. I commanded all the stars to shine. I prepared Cyrus to succeed in fulfilling my righteous purpose.

He will help to build my city and let my exiles go free. I have bound myself with an oath. Every knee will bow to me and every tongue will swear allegiance to me.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Cyrus of Persia was born between 590 and 580 BC. Isaiah prophesied between 742 to 686 BC. How could Isaiah prophesy about Cyrus 150 years before he was born and named?
2. God does not deny that he is responsible for everything. He makes blessings and creates disasters. **Isaiah 45:7**. God is omnipotent. He is the God of history. **Isaiah 41:4**. What does that mean?
3. The people say to God: Certainly you are a God who has hidden himself. **Isaiah 45:15**. What does this mean? God answers this question in **Isaiah 45:19**.
4. God takes an oath that every knee will bow to me and every tongue will swear allegiance. **Isaiah 45:23**. Paul quotes this in **Romans 14:11**. It also appears in **Philippians 2:10**. When will this happen?
5. Why is Cyrus referred to as his Anointed One – a title reserved for Israel's prophets, priests, and kings? Do people have to believe in God for God to use them for his purposes?
6. In **Isaiah 45:11**, the Israelites seem to be questioning God's right to call Cyrus a messiah? Isn't this the creature questioning the creator?

## PERICOPE 41

### Babylon's Idols Will Go into Captivity

**46:1** The god Bel bows down; the god Nebo stoops low.  
Their statues are seated on animals and cattle.  
The gods that you carry are burdens,  
a load for weary people.

<sup>2</sup>These gods stoop low and bow down together.  
They aren't able to escape with heavy loads.  
They go away into captivity.

<sup>3</sup>Listen to me, descendants of Jacob,  
the few people left of the nation of Israel.  
I've carried you since your birth.  
I've taken care of you from the time you were born.

<sup>4</sup>Even when you're old, I'll take care of you.  
Even when your hair turns gray,  
I'll support you.

I made you and will continue to care for you.  
I'll support you and save you.

<sup>5</sup>To whom will you compare me and make me equal?  
To whom will you compare me so that we can be alike?

### Another Diatribe Against Idols

<sup>6</sup>People pour gold out of their bags  
and weigh silver on scales.  
They hire a goldsmith.  
He makes it into a god.  
They bow down and worship it.

<sup>7</sup>They lift it on their shoulders and carry it.  
They set the idol in its place, and it stands there.  
It doesn't move from its place.

If they cry to it for help, it can't answer.  
It can't rescue them from their distress.

<sup>8</sup>Remember this, and take courage.  
Recall your rebellious acts.

<sup>9</sup>Remember the first events,  
because I am God, and there is no other.  
I am God, and there's no one like me.

<sup>10</sup>From the beginning I revealed the end.  
From long ago I told you things  
that had not yet happened, saying:  
My plan will stand,  
and I'll do everything I intended to do.

### **God Will Call Cyrus from Persia to Conquer Babylon**

<sup>11</sup>I will call a bird of prey from the east.  
I will call someone for my plan from a faraway land.  
I have spoken, and I will bring it about.  
I have planned it, and I will do it.

<sup>12</sup>Listen to me, you stubborn people  
who are far from being righteous.

<sup>13</sup>I'll bring my righteousness near.  
It isn't far away.  
My salvation will not be delayed.

I'll provide salvation for Zion  
and bring my glory to Israel.



## Babylon Will Fall

**47:1** Go, sit in the dirt,  
virgin princess of Babylon!

Sit on the ground, not on a throne,  
princess of the Babylonians!  
You will no longer be called soft and delicate.

<sup>2</sup>Take millstones and grind flour.  
Remove your veil.  
Take off your skirt.  
Uncover your legs and cross the river.

<sup>3</sup>People will see you naked.  
People will see your shame.  
I will take revenge.  
I won't spare anyone.

<sup>4</sup>Our redeemer is the Holy One of Israel.  
His name is the LORD of Armies.

<sup>5</sup>Go into the dark and sit in silence,  
princess of the Babylonians!  
You will no longer be called the queen of kingdoms.

<sup>6</sup>I was angry with my people.  
I dishonored those who belong to me.

I put them under your control.  
You showed them no mercy.  
You placed a heavy burden on old people.

<sup>7</sup>You said: I will always be a queen.  
You didn't carefully consider these things  
or keep in mind how they would end.

<sup>8</sup> Now then, listen to this, you lover of pleasure.  
You live securely and say to yourself:  
I'm the only one, and there's no one else.

I won't live as a widow.  
I won't suffer the loss of children.

<sup>9</sup> In one day both of these will happen to you instantly:  
the loss of your children and your husband.  
All this will happen to you in spite of  
your evil magic and your many spells.

<sup>10</sup> You feel safe in your wickedness  
and say: No one can see me.

Your wisdom and knowledge have led you astray,  
so you say to yourself:  
I'm the only one and there's no one else.

<sup>11</sup> But evil will happen to you.  
You won't know how to keep it away.  
Disaster will strike you.  
You won't be able to stop it.

Destruction will overtake you suddenly.  
You won't expect it.

<sup>12</sup> Keep practicing your spells and your evil magic.  
You have practiced them ever since you were young.  
You may succeed.  
You may cause terror.

<sup>13</sup> You are worn out by your many plans.  
Let your astrologers and your stargazers,  
who foretell the future month by month,  
come to you, rise up, and save you.

<sup>14</sup>They are like straw.

Fire burns them.

They can't rescue themselves from the flames.

There are no glowing coals to keep them warm  
and no fire for them to sit by.

<sup>15</sup>This is how it will be for those  
who have worked with you,  
for those who have been with you  
ever since you were young.

They will go their own ways,  
and there will be no one to save you.

## **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR**

Babylon had a large New Year's Day celebration where their idols were carried in procession. This thought led Isaiah to again produce a diatribe against idols.

God says he can do what idols cannot do. He can reveal the future. He has a plan and it will occur. Again he reminds the exiles that he will call Cyrus of Persia to release them from captivity.

Now Isaiah predicts God's judgment against Babylon.

God says: I put my people under your control and you showed them no mercy. You placed a heavy burden on old people. While the Babylonians did not torture people endlessly as did the Assyrians, they still killed many Judeans.

God accuses the Babylonians of being very arrogant. Their wickedness consists of magic and spells. Your astrologers and stargazers are worthless like straw.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. The primary Babylonian god is Marduk. Even Cyrus said he was able to conquer Babylon because of Marduk's help. Why doesn't Isaiah mention him?
2. What are the first events God wants his people to remember? **Isaiah 46:9**
3. The city of Babylon was first founded by Nimrod. **Genesis 10:8-10**. It was the center of rebellion against God – the location of the Tower of Babel. **Genesis 11:4, 9**. God says Babylon's wickedness was magic and spells. Why then did God choose Babylon as the place where his Chosen People were exiled for 70 years?

## PERICOPE 42

### Because Israel Is Stubborn God Revealed the Future to Them

**48:1** Listen to this, descendants of Jacob!  
You are given the name of Israel.  
You are descended from Judah.  
You take oaths by the name of the LORD.

You acknowledge the God of Israel,  
but you are not honest or sincere.

<sup>2</sup>You call yourselves *citizens* of the holy city.  
You depend on the God of Israel.  
His name is the LORD of Armies.

<sup>3</sup>From the beginning I revealed to you what would happen.  
These words came out of my mouth,  
and I made them known.  
Suddenly, I acted, and they happened.

<sup>4</sup>I know that you are stubborn.  
Like iron, you are hardheaded.  
Like bronze, nothing gets through your thick skull.

<sup>5</sup>That is why I revealed to you  
what would happen long ago.  
I told you about them before they happened.

I did this so you couldn't say,  
My gods have done these things.  
My carved idols and my metal idols  
have commanded them to happen.

<sup>6</sup>You've heard these words.

Now look at all this.  
Won't you admit it?

From now on I will reveal to you new **chadash** things,  
hidden things that you do not know.

<sup>7</sup>They are created now, not in the past.  
You haven't heard about them before today,  
so you can't say that you already knew about them.

<sup>8</sup>You have never heard about them.  
You have never known about them.  
Your ears have never been open to hear them before.

I know that you've acted very treacherously  
and that you have been called a rebel  
since you were born.

<sup>9</sup>For my name's sake I'll be patient.  
For my glory's sake I'll hold my anger back from you,  
rather than destroy you.

<sup>10</sup>I have refined you,  
but not like silver.  
I have tested you in the furnace of suffering.

<sup>11</sup>I am doing this for myself, only for myself.  
Why should my name be dishonored?  
I will not give my glory to anyone else.

<sup>12</sup>Listen to me, Jacob,  
Israel, whom I have called.  
I am the one.  
I am the first and the last.

<sup>13</sup>My hand laid the foundation of the earth.  
My right hand stretched out the heavens.

When I call for them,  
they both stand.

### **God Has Called Cyrus to Use His Strength Against Babylon**

<sup>48:14</sup> Gather together, all of you, and listen.  
What idol has revealed such things?

The LORD loves Cyrus.  
He will carry out the LORD's plan against Babylon.  
He will use his strength against the Babylonians.

<sup>15</sup> I alone have spoken.  
I have called him.  
I will bring him here, and he will succeed.

### **Isaiah Reminds His Listeners He Only Speaks God's Word**

<sup>48:16</sup> Come here. Listen to this:  
From the beginning I have spoken nothing in private.  
From the time it took place, I was there.  
Now the Almighty LORD has sent me and his Spirit.

<sup>17</sup> This is what the LORD, your Redeemer,  
the Holy One of Israel, says:

I am the LORD your God.  
I teach you what is best for you.  
I lead you where you should go.

<sup>18</sup> If only you had listened to my commands!  
Your peace would be like a river that never runs dry.  
Your righteousness would be like waves on the sea.

<sup>19</sup> Your descendants would be like sand.  
Your children would be like its grains.  
Their names would not be cut off or wiped out in my presence.

<sup>20</sup> Leave Babylon.

Flee from the Babylonians.

Shout for joy as you tell it and announce it.

Shout it out to the ends of the earth.

Say that the LORD has redeemed his servant Jacob.

<sup>21</sup> They weren't thirsty

when he led them through the deserts.

He made water flow from a rock for them.

He split a rock, and water gushed out.

<sup>22</sup> There is no peace for the wicked, says the LORD.

## **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?**

God has graciously promised to redeem his people. In this pericope, God asks his people to trust him. But many do not. So God tells them that they are stubborn, hardheaded with a bronze skull that no word gets through. To combat this, God tells his people in advance what will happen. In that way, they can't attribute God's doings to their idols.

God says he will continue to reveal new things to his people. Yet his people will rebel against him. Still, God says he will be patient. Why? For his glory's sake. You may rebel against my choice to have a gentile named Cyrus be my Anointed One, but I love him. I have called him and he will successfully carry out my plan.

Isaiah now claims that the Almighty Lord has sent me and his Spirit enables me to accurately speak his words.

Listen to me, says God, and your peace will be like a river. Leave Babylon and return to Jerusalem. Remember that past days when I allowed Moses to bring water out of a rock. **Numbers 20:11**. You were rebellious then. But remember, there is no peace for the wicked.



## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. God now appeals to the exiles in Babylon, who still do not believe God, to repent. They are rebelling against God as they did at Meribah. Still God was gracious to them and allowed Moses to bring water out of a rock. Why don't they understand the ~~checced~~ of God?
2. What does a bronze forehead demonstrate? **Isaiah 48:4**
3. God says he will create new things? **Isaiah 48:6**. What are they?
4. God says he has refined his people in the furnace of suffering? **Isaiah 48:10**. What has he done?
5. In **Isaiah 48:16**, who is speaking? Is this the Messiah speaking? Why is it hard to tell who is speaking?
6. How does God show his love to his people? **Isaiah 48:14**; **Deuteronomy 4:37**; **Malachi 1:1-2**
7. Why does failure to listen to God limit the peace the Israelites could have?
8. God's title, the Holy One of Israel, appears in **Isaiah 41:14, 16, 20, 43:3, 14, 45:11; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7; 55:5; 60:9, 14**. 12x. The phrase has also appeared 12x in the first half of Isaiah's Vision. What does this tell us about the structure of the book?

## PERICOPE 43

### The Second Song of the Servant of YHWH

49:1 Listen to me, you islands.  
Pay attention, you people far away.

Before I was born, the LORD chose me.  
While I was in my mother's womb,  
he recorded my name.

<sup>2</sup>He made my tongue like a sharp sword  
and hid me in the palm of his hand.  
He made me like a sharpened arrow  
and hid me in his quiver.

<sup>3</sup>He said to me:  
You are my servant Israel.  
I will display my glory through you.

<sup>4</sup>But I said:  
I have worked hard for nothing.  
I have used my strength  
but I didn't accomplish anything.

Yet, certainly my case is in the LORD's hands,  
and my reward is with my God.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD formed me in the womb to be his servant  
in order to bring Jacob back to him  
and gather Israel to him.

The LORD honors me,  
and my God has become my strength.

## The Servant of YHWH Will Not Only Redeem Israel But Will Save Gentiles as Well

<sup>49:6</sup> Now, the Lord says:

You are not just my servant  
who restores the tribes of Jacob  
and brings back those in Israel  
whom I have preserved.

I have also made you a light for the nations  
so that you would save people all over the world.

<sup>7</sup>The LORD is the redeemer of Israel, its Holy One.

This is what the LORD says to the despised one,  
to the one scorned by the nation,  
to the slave of rulers:

Kings will see you and stand.  
Princes will see you and bow.  
The LORD is faithful.  
The Holy One of Israel has chosen you.

<sup>8</sup>This is what the LORD says:

In the time of favor I will answer you.  
In the day of salvation I will help you.

I will protect you.  
I will appoint you as my covenant to the people.  
You will restore the land.  
You will make them inherit the desolate inheritance.

<sup>9</sup>You will say to the prisoners: Come out,  
and to those who are in darkness: Show yourselves.

They will graze along every path,  
and they will find pastures on every bare hill.

<sup>10</sup>They will never be hungry or thirsty,  
nor will the sun or the burning, hot wind strike them.

The one who has compassion on them will lead them  
and guide them to springs.

<sup>11</sup>I will turn all my mountains into roads,  
and my highways *mecillah* will be restored.

<sup>12</sup>They will come from far away.  
They will come from the north and from the west,  
and they will come from the land of Sinim *Babylon*.

### **A Song of Praise to God**

<sup>49:13</sup> Sing with joy, you heavens.  
Rejoice, you earth.  
Break into shouts of joy, you mountains.

The LORD has comforted *nacham* his people  
and will have compassion *racham* on his humble people.

### **The LORD Has Not Forgotten Israel**

<sup>14</sup>But Zion *in Exile* said:  
The LORD has abandoned me.  
My Lord has forgotten me.

<sup>15</sup>Can a woman forget her nursing child?  
Will she have no compassion on the child  
from her womb?

Although mothers may forget,  
I will not forget you.

<sup>16</sup> I have engraved you on the palms of my hands.  
Your walls are always in my presence.

<sup>17</sup> Your children will hurry back.  
Those who destroyed you  
and laid waste to you will leave you.

<sup>18</sup> Look up, look around, and watch!  
All of your children are gathering together  
and returning to you.

I solemnly swear as I live, declares the LORD:  
you will wear all of them like jewels  
and display them on yourself as a bride would.

### **The Gentiles Will Bring Your Children Home to Jerusalem from Where They Were Scattered**

<sup>49:19</sup> Though you are destroyed and demolished  
and your land is in ruins,  
you will soon be too crowded for your people now.

Those who devoured you will be long gone.  
The children taken from you will say to you:  
This place is too crowded for me.  
Make room for me to live here.

<sup>21</sup> Then you will ask yourself:  
Who has fathered these children for me?

I was childless and unable to have children.  
I was exiled and rejected.  
Who raised these children for me?

I was left alone.  
Where have they come from?

<sup>22</sup> This is what the Almighty LORD says:

I will lift my hand to signal the nations.  
I will raise my flag for the people.  
They will bring your sons in their arms  
and carry your daughters on their shoulders.

<sup>23</sup>Then kings will be your foster fathers,  
and their queens will nurse you.

They will bow in front of you  
with their faces touching the ground.  
They will lick the dust at your feet.  
Then you will know that I am the LORD.  
Those who wait with hope for me will not be put to shame.

### **Israel Asks God: Are You Strong Enough to Release Us from Babylon?**

<sup>49:24</sup> Can loot be taken away from mighty men  
or prisoners be freed from conquerors?

<sup>25</sup>This is what the LORD says:

Prisoners will be freed from mighty men.  
Loot will be taken away from tyrants.  
I will fight your enemies,  
and I will save your children.

<sup>26</sup>I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh,  
and they will become drunk on their own blood  
as though it were new wine.

Then all humanity will know  
that I am the LORD, who saves you,  
the Mighty One of Jacob, who redeems you.

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

This pericope begins a new section of Isaiah. We are about to see how the Messiah will provide an atonement for Israel so that the peoples' sins can be forgiven.

In his second song, God calls the Servant of **YHWH** in the same way that the prophet Jeremiah said he was called. **Jeremiah 1:5**. His word will be powerful, like a sharp sword. He is like a sharpened arrow.

God says he will display his glory through his servant. But his servant is discouraged. He feels he has not accomplished his mission for God. Yet, he is confident that God's plan will be fulfilled.

God says that the servant will bring back the nation of Israel, rebellious Jacob, to God, their Redeemer and Holy One. The servant will be God's covenant to God's people. But he will also be a light to the nations bringing the gentiles to know the one true God.

The servant will bring release to God's people now in prison. He will have compassion of them turning the mountains into roads – a highway. They will not only come home from Babylon, but also from the north and the west. God has comforted *nacham* his people.

Despite these promises of God, Israel in exile complains that God has abandon them. He has forgotten all about them. But God replies that he has not forgotten his child. So many of your children will return, Israel, that your children will complain there is not enough room in the land of Israel for them to live comfortably.

God says: The nations will return your children and these gentiles will be submissive to you. But then dubious Israel asks: Are you strong enough to free us from mighty Babylon. God says: Yes, I am your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Compare the first song of the **Servant of YHWH** Isaiah 42:1-9 with this second song. How are they alike? What new things have we learned about the **Servant of YHWH**?
2. What are the two missions of the **Servant of YHWH**?
3. Why is the **Servant of YHWH** the Despised One, the One Scorned by the Nation, the Slave of Rulers? Isaiah 49:7
4. Why does the **Servant of YHWH** think he has not accomplished anything? Isaiah 49:4
5. What enables the **Servant of YHWH** to continue even though he has abject feelings of failure?
6. Despite these promises of God, Israel thinks God has abandoned them. What gives these exiles hope that the promises of God are true?
7. Why does God say the gentiles will be subservient to Jews? Isaiah 49:13

## EXTRA CREDIT

There are two problems Israel has that God will solve with the work of the **Servant of YHWH**. They are not living in the Promised Land. They are still rebellious against God. How does the **Servant of YHWH** solve both these problems?



## Pericope 44

### The LORD's People Were Exiled Because of Their Sin

50:1 This is what the LORD says:

Where are your mother's divorce papers?

Did I give her any to get rid of her?

To which of my creditors did I sell you?

You were sold because of your sins.

I got rid of your mother because of your rebellion.

<sup>2</sup>Why was no one here when I came?

Why was no one here to answer when I called?

Am I too weak to redeem you?

Don't I have the power to rescue you?

I dry up the sea with my command,

and I turn rivers into deserts.

Their fish stink because there is no water,

and people die of thirst.

<sup>3</sup>I clothe the heavens in darkness

and cover them with sackcloth.

### The Third Song of the Servant of YHWH

<sup>50:4</sup> The Almighty LORD will teach me what to say,

so I will know how to encourage weary people.

Morning after morning he will wake me

to listen like a student.

<sup>5</sup>The Almighty LORD will open my ears.

I will not rebel, nor will I turn away from him.

<sup>6</sup>I will offer my back to those who whip me

and my cheeks to those who pluck hairs out of my beard.

I will not turn my face away from those  
who humiliate me and spit on me.

<sup>7</sup>The Almighty LORD helps me.  
That is why I will not be ashamed.  
I have set my face like a flint.  
I know that I will not be put to shame.

<sup>8</sup>The one who pronounces me innocent is near.  
Who will bring a case against me?

Let us confront each other!  
Who accuses me?  
Let him confront me.

<sup>9</sup>The Almighty LORD helps me.  
Who will find me guilty?  
They will all wear out like a garment.  
Moths will eat them.

<sup>10</sup>Who among you fears the LORD  
and obeys his servant?  
Let those who walk in darkness and have no light  
trust the name of the LORD  
and depend upon their God.

<sup>11</sup>But all of you light fires  
and arm yourselves with flaming torches.

So walk in your own light  
and among the torches you have lit.

This is what you will receive from me:  
You will be tormented.

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

God continues to answer Israel's charge that God has abandoned them. I have not abandoned you, he answers. I am disciplining you. I am attempting to teach you that you should trust me and not rebel against me. Why don't you understand I am calling you to repentance? So I am *clothing the heavens in darkness and covering them with sackcloth* for a little while. **Isaiah 50:3**

The third song of the **Servant of YHWH** focuses on the servant's faith in God and in his desire to be obedient to God. He will listen for God's voice and always do what he says. He will accept the suffering that is forced upon him. He will set his face like a flint to endure.

Morning after morning the servant receives strength to endure. So the servant says: *Let my enemy accuse me and confront me.* **Isaiah 50:8.** *The one who pronounces me innocent is near.* **Isaiah 50:8**

The servant counsels us: If you walk in your own light, you will be tormented. **Isaiah 50:11**

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. The title Almighty Lord or Lord God appears 4x in this song. What confidence is the servant expressing in his God?
2. Morning after morning the servant receives strength from the Lord. How does God do this?
3. Obeying God's commands often results in physical or mental abuse from others. Why is this?
4. Even if the servant is walking in darkness without light, he is confident that God is with him. How can he be so sure?
5. The servant ends by saying: *If you walk in your own light, you will lie down in sorrow* *ma'atsebah*. **Isaiah 50:11 KJV.** This Hebrew word only appears here in the entire Bible. What does he mean?

## EXTRA CREDIT

Was this last verse **Isaiah 50:11** addressed to those Jews exiled in Babylon who refused to return to Jerusalem after King Cyrus of Persia issued his edict allowing them to return to Jerusalem?

## Pericope 45

### The LORD Will Comfort His People With Righteousness and Salvation

51:1 Listen to me, you people who pursue what is right  
and seek the LORD.

Look to the rock from which you were cut  
and to the quarry from which you were dug.

<sup>2</sup>Look to Abraham, your ancestor,  
and to Sarah, from whom you are descended.  
When I called Abraham, he was childless.  
I blessed him and gave him many descendants.

<sup>3</sup>So the LORD will comfort *nacham* Zion.  
He will comfort *nacham* all those who live among its ruins.  
He will make its desert like Eden.

He will make its wilderness like the garden of the LORD.  
Joy and gladness will be found in it,  
thanksgiving and the sound of singing.

<sup>4</sup>Pay attention to me, my people.  
Open your ears to hear me, my nation.  
My teachings *Towrah* will go out from me.  
My justice *mishpat* will become a light for the people.

<sup>5</sup>My righteousness *tsedeq* is near.  
My salvation *yesha* is on the way.  
I will bring justice *mishpat* to people.

The coastlands put their hope in me,  
and they wait eagerly for me.

<sup>6</sup>Look at the sky.  
Look at the earth below.

The sky will vanish like smoke.  
The earth will wear out like clothing,  
and those who live there will die like flies.

But my salvation **yesha** will last forever,  
and my righteousness **tsedeq** will never fail.

<sup>7</sup> Listen to me, you people who know righteousness **tsedeq**,  
you people who have my teachings **Towrah** in your hearts.  
Don't be afraid of being insulted by people.  
Don't be discouraged by their ridicule.

<sup>8</sup> Moths will eat them like clothing.  
Worms will devour them like wool.  
But my righteousness **tsedeq** will last forever,  
and my salvation **yesha** will last throughout every generation.

### **God's People Call on Their God to Act**

<sup>5:9</sup> Wake up! Wake up!  
Clothe yourself with strength, O LORD!  
Wake up as you did in days long past,  
as in generations long ago.

Didn't you cut Rahab  
into pieces and stab the serpent?

<sup>10</sup> Didn't you dry up the sea,  
the water of the great ocean?  
You made a road in the depths of the sea  
so that the people redeemed by the LORD  
might pass through it.

<sup>11</sup> The people ransomed by the LORD will return.  
They will come to Zion singing with joy.  
Everlasting happiness will be on their heads as a crown.

They will be glad and joyful.  
They will have no sorrow or grief.

<sup>12</sup> I alone am the one who comforts **nacham** you.  
Why, then, are you afraid of mortals, who must die,  
of humans, who are like grass?

<sup>13</sup> Why have you forgotten the LORD, your Creator?  
He stretched out the heavens  
and laid the foundations of the earth.

Why should you live in constant fear of the fury  
of those who oppress you,  
of those who are ready to destroy you?

Where is the fury of those who oppress you?

<sup>14</sup> Chained prisoners will be set free.  
They will not die in prison.  
They will not go without food.

<sup>15</sup> I am the LORD your God who stirs up the sea  
and makes its waves roar.  
My name is the LORD of Armies.

<sup>16</sup> I put my words in your mouth  
and sheltered you in the palm of my hand.

I stretched out the heavens,  
laid the foundations of the earth,  
and said to Zion: You are my people.

### **The Lord Tells Israel to Act**

<sup>5:17</sup> Wake up! Wake up!  
Stand up, Jerusalem.

You drank from the cup in the LORD's hand.  
That cup was filled with his anger.  
You drank from the bowl,  
the cup that makes people stagger,  
and you drained it.

<sup>18</sup> From all the children she gave birth to,  
there was no one to guide her.  
From all the children she raised,  
there was no one to take her by the hand.

<sup>19</sup> Twice as many disasters have happened to you.  
Who will feel sorry for you?  
Violence, destruction, famine, and war have happened to you.  
Who will comfort *nacham* you?

<sup>20</sup> Your children have fainted.  
They lie sleeping at every street corner.  
They are like an antelope caught in a net.  
They experience the anger of the LORD,  
the fury of your God.

<sup>21</sup> Listen to this, you humble people  
who are drunk but not from wine.

<sup>22</sup> The LORD your God defends his people.  
This is what your master says:

I'm taking from your hand the cup  
that makes people stagger,  
the bowl, the cup of my fury.

You will never drink from it again.

<sup>23</sup> I will put it in the hands of those who made you suffer.  
They said to you: Lie down so that we can walk over you.



So you made your back like the ground  
and like a street for them to cross.

### **The Lord Commands Israel to Act**

**52:1** Wake up! Wake up!  
Clothe yourself with strength, Zion.  
Put on your beautiful clothes, holy city of Jerusalem.  
Godless and evil people will no longer come to you.

<sup>2</sup> Shake the dust from yourselves.  
Get up, captive Jerusalem.  
Free yourself from the chains around your neck,  
captive people of Zion.

<sup>3</sup> This is what the LORD says: You were sold, but no price was paid.  
You will be bought back, but without money. <sup>4</sup> This is what the Almighty  
LORD says: In the beginning my people went to Egypt to live there as  
foreigners. Later the Assyrians oppressed them for no reason. <sup>5</sup> So what do I  
find here? asks the LORD. My people are taken away for no reason. Their  
rulers are screaming, declares the LORD. My name is cursed all day long.  
<sup>6</sup> Now my people will know my name. When that day comes, they will know that  
I am the one who says: Here I am.

<sup>7</sup> How beautiful on the mountains  
are the feet of the messenger  
who announces the good news: All is well.

He brings the good news, announces salvation,  
and tells Zion that its God rules as king.

<sup>8</sup> Listen! Your watchmen raise their voices  
and shout together joyfully.  
When the LORD brings Zion back,  
they will see it with their own eyes.

<sup>9</sup>Break out into shouts of joy, ruins of Jerusalem.  
The LORD will comfort *nacham* his people.  
He will reclaim Jerusalem.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD will show his holy power to all the nations.  
All the ends of the earth will see the salvation *yeshuw'ah* of our God.

<sup>11</sup>Run away! Run away!  
Get away from there.  
Do not touch anything unclean.

Get away from it.  
Make yourselves pure,  
you Levites who carry the utensils for the LORD's temple.

<sup>12</sup>You will not go away in a hurry,  
nor will you go away quickly.  
The LORD will go ahead of you.  
The God of Israel will guard you from behind.

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

This is a reflection on the third **Servant of YHWH** Song. Where should God's people get their confidence in the Lord? They should look back to the beginning of the nation of Israel when God made this covenant oath to Abraham:

Leave your land, your relatives, and your father's home. Go to the land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation. I will bless you. I will make your name great and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and whoever curses you, I will curse.

Through you, every family on earth will be blessed. **Genesis 12:1-3**

This pericope is a build up to the fourth **Servant of YHWH** song in the next pericope. Three times God tells his Chosen People to listen. They should listen and remember God's promise to Abraham and how God has fulfilled it. They should listen and remember who God is, the Holy One of Israel.

They should listen and remember what God has promised for them in the future. They will be a great nation.

God says his righteousness is near. **Isaiah 51:5**. But remember that in God's time, a thousand years are as a day and a day is like a thousand years. **Psalms 90:4**; **2 Peter 3:8**. Jesus, the Messiah, will come the first time in 30 or 33 AD. But the second time he comes may be far off. Yet God's salvation will last forever and his righteousness will never fail.

God's people must remember that Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born. **Genesis 21:5**. He had waited 25 years for God's promise to be fulfilled. While Cyrus would bring freedom to the captives in Babylon, the servant Messiah would bring God's salvation to the entire world. While the heavens and earth may disappear, God's word will never disappear. **Luke 21:33**. God always keeps his promises.

The exiles are anxious to go home to Jerusalem so they call to God to awake. Remember how you destroyed Pharaoh and the Egyptians? You made a path in the Red Sea so we could walk over it on land. God replies: The people ransomed by me will return home singing with joy. I have often said to you: I am your God and you are my people.

Now it is God's turn to call Israel to wake up. While I have disciplined you, I am taking the cup of my fury away from you. I will put it in the hands of the Babylonians who made you suffer.

Again God says to the exiles: Wake up! Free yourselves from your captivity. Your watchmen will shout: The Lord will comfort Judah. He will redeem Jerusalem. All people on earth will see God's salvation. The Lord will go ahead of you and guard you from behind. **Exodus 40:36-38**; **Exodus 14:9**

## **THINGS TO THINK ABOUT**

1. Read **Lamentations 1:2**. Jeremiah is crying that destroyed Jerusalem has none to comfort her. Now read **Isaiah 51:3**. What does God promise?

2. God says his righteousness and salvation will never fail. **Isaiah 51:6, 8**. What does this mean, especially for the exiles?
3. The people ask God to wake up. **Isaiah 51:9**. But then God asks the Judean captives to wake up. **Isaiah 51:17, 52:1** What does God ask them to wake up to realize?
4. What is the good news God wants Zion to hear from the messenger with beautiful feet? **Isaiah 52:7**
5. Will God's pillar of fire by night and pillar of smoke by day guide the captives home to Jerusalem?
6. Despite the words of **Isaiah 52:13-14**, Ezekiel indicates the Jews had a great deal of freedom in Babylon. So much freedom that when Cyrus issued his edict allowing all Jews to return to Jerusalem, only a few did. The majority stayed in Babylon. Read **Jeremiah 29:1-9**. What were the Judeans in Babylon not able to do?

## PERICOPE 46

### The Fourth Song of the Servant of YHWH

52:13 My servant will be successful.  
He will be respected, praised, and highly honored.

<sup>4</sup> Many will be shocked by him.  
His appearance will be so disfigured  
that he won't look like any other man.

His looks will be so disfigured  
that he will hardly look like a human.

<sup>5</sup> He will cleanse **nazah**-sprinkle many nations with his blood.  
Kings will shut their mouths because of him.  
They will see things that they had never been told.  
They will understand things that they had never heard.

53:1 Who has believed our message?  
To whom has the LORD's power been revealed?

<sup>2</sup> He grew up in his presence like a young tree,  
like a root out of dry ground.

He had no form or majesty  
that would make us look at him.  
He had nothing in his appearance  
that would make us desire him.

<sup>3</sup> He was despised and rejected by people.  
He was a man of sorrows, familiar with suffering.  
He was despised like one from whom people turn their faces,  
and we didn't consider him to be worth anything.

<sup>4</sup> He certainly has taken upon himself our suffering  
and carried our sorrows,

but we thought that God had wounded him,  
beat him, and punished him.

<sup>5</sup>He was wounded for our rebellious acts.  
He was crushed for our sins.  
He was punished so that we could have peace,  
and we received healing from his wounds.

<sup>6</sup>We have all strayed like sheep.  
Each one of us has turned to go his own way,  
and the LORD has laid all our sins on him.

<sup>7</sup>He was abused and punished,  
but he didn't open his mouth.

He was led like a lamb to the slaughter.  
He was like a sheep that is silent  
when its wool is cut off.  
He didn't open his mouth.

<sup>8</sup>He was arrested, taken away, and judged.  
Who would have thought  
that he would be removed from the world?  
He was killed because of my people's rebellion.

<sup>9</sup>He was placed in a tomb with the wicked.  
He was put there with the rich when he died,  
although he had done nothing violent  
and had never spoken a lie.

<sup>10</sup>Yet, it was the LORD's will to crush him with suffering.  
When the LORD has made his life  
a sacrifice for our wrongdoings,  
he will see his descendants for many days.

The will of the LORD will succeed through him.

<sup>11</sup>He will see and be satisfied  
because of his suffering.  
My righteous servant will acquit many people  
because of what he has learned through suffering.

He will carry their sins as a burden.

<sup>12</sup>So I will give him a share among the mighty,  
and he will divide the prize with the strong,  
because he poured out his life in death  
and he was counted with sinners.

He carried the sins of many.  
He intercedes for those who are rebellious.

## **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?**

Although this pericope is called a song, God is simply describing the activities of his servant. The servant grew up unnoticed, unremarkable in appearance, and rejected by many people. He was despised, a man of sorrows, familiar with suffering.

Looking at him being punished, people thought God had wounded him. Yet later however, we learned that he was punished for our sins serving as our substitute. During his punishment, the servant was quiet as he sang in the third song. He was completely non-violent as in the first servant song.

Amazingly he will see his descendants for many days, that is, he will live again after he dies. Many people will live because God's servant has taken their sin upon himself.

God will highly honor his servant for fulfilling his mission. Right now, he sits at God's right hand interceding for the rebellious sinners.

This song is the announcement of the opportunity of salvation for the entire world.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Throughout the Vision, Isaiah says God will redeem **peduwth** his people. Yet he uses other words. In fact, 37 times he uses two words with redeem in them. What does it mean for God to be a Redeemer and to have redeemed his people?
2. In the KJV, the Servant is referred to as *the Arm of the Lord*. **Isaiah 51:9, 52:10; 53:1**. This suggests the Servant of YHWH was a violent man. Was he? Why then is this expression used?
3. Many scholars say that what the Servant of YHWH did was substitutional atonement. What does this mean?
4. In the song the Servant is both humiliated and exalted. Why do these actions confuse people as to how to interpret God's mission for the Servant?
5. **Isaiah** says the Servant will *sprinkle many nations with his blood*. **Isaiah 52:15**. At Mount Sinai, Moses read the Book of the Lord's Covenant to the people. The people said: We will obey and do everything the Lord has said. Moses then took blood and sprinkled it on the people saying: Here is the blood that seals the promise that the Lord has made with you based on everything you heard. **Exodus 24:7-8**. When Jesus is sprinkling the nations, is he also making a covenant with them? What is it? HINT: **Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 10:22**
6. In the Book of Hebrews, written after 33 AD, the writer says Jesus, our High Priest, is at the right hand of God interceding for us. **Hebrews 7:25**. Did he learn this from **Isaiah 53:12**?
7. In the entire Bible, only the Servant of YHWH is called My Righteous Servant. **Isaiah 53:11**. What does this mean?



## PERICOPE 47

### God Will Restore Jerusalem

54:1 Sing with joy, you childless women  
who never gave birth to children.  
Break into shouts of joy,  
you women who never had birth pains.

There will be more children  
of women who have been deserted  
than there are children of married women,  
says the LORD.

<sup>2</sup>Expand the space of your tent.  
Stretch out the curtains of your tent,  
and don't hold back.  
Lengthen your tent ropes,  
and drive in the tent pegs.

<sup>3</sup>You will spread out to the right and left.  
Your descendants will take over other nations,  
and they will resettle deserted cities.

<sup>4</sup>Don't be afraid  
because you won't be put to shame.  
Don't be discouraged  
because you won't be disgraced.

You'll forget the shame  
you've had since you were young.  
You won't remember the disgrace  
of your husband's death anymore.

<sup>5</sup>Your husband is your Maker.  
His name is the LORD of Armies.

Your redeemer is the Holy One of Israel.  
He is called the God of the whole earth.

<sup>6</sup>The LORD has called you as if you were  
a wife who was abandoned and in grief,  
a wife who married young and was rejected,  
says your God.

<sup>7</sup> I abandoned you for one brief moment,  
but I will bring you back  
with unlimited compassion.

<sup>8</sup> I hid my face from you for a moment  
in a burst of anger,  
but I will have compassion on you  
with everlasting *'olam* kindness *cheeced*,  
says the LORD your redeemer.

<sup>9</sup> To me this is like Noah's floodwaters,  
when I swore an oath  
that Noah's floodwaters  
would never cover the earth again. **Genesis 9:15**

So now I swear an oath  
not to be angry with you or punish you.

<sup>10</sup> The mountains may move, and the hills may shake,  
but my kindness *cheeced* will never depart from you.  
My covenant of peace *shalowm* will never change,  
says the LORD, who has compassion *racham* on you.

<sup>11</sup> You suffering, comfortless, storm-ravaged city!  
I will rebuild your city with precious stones.  
I will reset your foundations with sapphires.

<sup>12</sup>I will rebuild your towers with rubies,  
your gates with sparkling stones,  
and all your walls with precious stones.

<sup>13</sup>All your children will be taught by the LORD,  
and your children will have unlimited peace *shalom*.

<sup>14</sup>You will be established in righteousness *tsedaqah*.  
You will be far from oppression,  
so you will not be afraid.  
You will be far from destruction,  
so it won't come near you.

<sup>15</sup>"If anyone attacks you, it will not be my doing.  
Whoever attacks you will be defeated by you.

<sup>16</sup>I've created blacksmiths to fan the coals into flames  
and to produce useful weapons.  
I've also created destroyers to bring destruction.

<sup>17</sup>No weapon that has been made  
to be used against you will succeed.  
You will have an answer for anyone who accuses you.  
This is the inheritance of the LORD's servants.  
Their victory comes from me, declares the LORD.

## **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?**

Look at the many barren women in the Bible that God gave children to: Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Hannah, Elizabeth, to mention a few. God is the husband of these barren women. God promised Abraham he would have many descendants and so he did.

The peoples' separation from God because of their sin was brief compared to the time they would enjoy fellowship with him. God's loving kindness *chesed* is his greatest attribute. **Exodus 34:6-7**. As God promised that the Great Flood

would never again occur in a covenant with Noah, so God's covenant of peace with his people would never change. **Ezekiel 37:26**.

God now promises the city on his Holy Mountain will be rebuilt even with precious stones. God was looking far into the future to the New Jerusalem as the prophet John did in **Revelation 21:19**.

But God gives even a bigger promise. All of Judah's children would be taught by the Lord and have unlimited peace. **Isaiah 54:13**. Judah as a whole would be established in righteousness and be far from oppression.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. With the redemption of Judah by the Servant of YHWH, God promises to make an eternal covenant of peace with Judah. What is Judah's promise in this covenant or is this covenant unilateral by God?
2. How has the world changed since the substitutional atonement by the Servant of YHWH?
3. How will Judah's children be taught by the Lord? **Isaiah 54:13**
4. What does it mean to be established in righteousness? **Isaiah 54:14**
5. From now on to the end of the book, Isaiah will refer to God's *servants*, that is Israel. **Isaiah 54:17; 56:6; 63:17; 65:8, 9, 13-15; 66:14**. Does that mean the Israelites will now respect God and not rebel against him?

## PERICOPE 48

### The LORD's Invitation to All

**55:1** Listen! Whoever is thirsty, come to the water.  
Whoever has no money can come, buy, and eat!  
Come, buy wine and milk.  
You don't have to pay; it's free!

<sup>2</sup>Why do you spend money on what cannot nourish you  
and your wages on what does not satisfy you?  
Listen carefully to me:  
Eat what is good, and enjoy the best foods.

<sup>3</sup>Open your ears, and come to me!  
Listen so that you may live.  
I will make an everlasting covenant to you—  
the blessings I promised to David. **2 Samuel 7:16**

<sup>4</sup>I made him a witness to people,  
a leader and a commander for people.

<sup>5</sup>You will summon a nation that you don't know,  
and a nation that doesn't know you will run to you  
because of the LORD your God,  
because of the Holy One of Israel.

He has honored you.

<sup>6</sup>Seek the LORD while he may be found.  
Call on him while he is near.

<sup>7</sup>Let wicked people abandon their ways.  
Let evil people abandon their thoughts.

Let them return to the LORD,  
and he will show compassion **racham** to them.

Let them return to our God,  
because he will freely forgive them.

<sup>8</sup> My thoughts are not your thoughts,  
and my ways are not your ways, declares the LORD.

<sup>9</sup> Just as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so my ways are higher than your ways,  
and my thoughts are higher than your thoughts.

<sup>10</sup> Rain and snow come down from the sky.  
They do not go back again until they water the earth.  
They make it sprout and grow  
so that it produces seed for farmers  
and food for people to eat.

<sup>11</sup> My word, which comes from my mouth,  
is like the rain and snow.

It will not come back to me without results.  
It will accomplish whatever I want  
and achieve whatever I send it to do.”

<sup>12</sup> You will go out with joy and be led out in peace.  
The mountains and the hills  
will break into songs of joy in your presence,  
and all the trees will clap their hands.

<sup>13</sup> Cypress trees will grow where thornbushes grew.  
Myrtle trees will grow where briars grew.  
This will be a reminder of the LORD’s name  
and an everlasting sign that will never be destroyed.

## **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?**

The water, wine, and milk are spiritual blessings offered by God to all people.  
There is no price to pay except belief and trust in the Savior. Water could

come metaphorically from God's fountain. **Isaiah 41:18; 44:3.** Water also represents the Holy Spirit. However, the Holy Spirit is future to be poured out in Pentecost 33 AD.

God himself is the feast, the messianic banquet of the eternal state. **Isaiah 25:6.** Belief in God is eternal life, life under the new covenant **Jeremiah 31:31; Hebrews 8:8,** the everlasting covenant God will make with his people, the covenant of peace. **Isaiah 54:10.**

Judeans would be thinking of the covenant God made with David where his descendant would rule over Israel forever. **2 Samuel 7:16; Psalm 89:35-36; Isaiah 55:3.**

**Isaiah 55:6-7** are some of my favorite verses in the Bible. God extends his invitation of salvation to everyone. He is the creator of heaven and earth and loves everyone and everything he has created. His compassion for people is far greater than we could ever hope for or expect. See **John 12:35.**

God thoughts and ways are higher than our thoughts so we must never think we fully understand God. God's thoughts are full of compassion and his ways are that of forgiveness. We can never achieve the **cheeced** of God. God's word is completely reliable. Like the rain and snow, they are a gift from God.

The redeemed captives will go out from Babylon with joy and with peace knowing that God has redeemed or delivered them. God has said their time of discipline is over so that now they can have fellowship with their God. But the real question is: Are their hearts toward God changed? Are they really grateful that their God has resumed the idyllic relationship they always dreamed of?

God may have changed the landscape of Judah and Jerusalem. But will the hearts of God's people toward him have changed. That is what the remainder of Isaiah's Vision contemplates.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Isaiah says three things will be everlasting: God's **cheeced**, and his covenant with this people. But what is the third thing? **Isaiah 55:13**

2. God's lovingkindness cheeced appears 8x in Isaiah's Vision in Isaiah 16:5; 40:6; 54:8, 10; 55:3; 57:1; 63:7 (2x). Only Psalms 129x, Proverbs 11x, and Genesis 11x exceed Isaiah using this word. What impression of God do you receive after reading Isaiah's Vision?
3. Jeremiah uses the word cheeced 6x in his book and 3x in Lamentations. Ezekiel never uses cheeced as an attribute for God. What does this tell you about Ezekiel's vision of God compared to that of Isaiah?
4. The Servant's work makes anyone's relationship with God possible but a sinner must turn from sin by accepting God's gift of salvation to have fellowship with a holy God. Is this a true statement?
5. Isaiah says to *seek the Lord while he may be found*. Isaiah 55:6. Can't the Lord always be found or only when he desires to be found?
6. What are the blessings God promised to King David? Isaiah 55:3. HINT: 2 Samuel 7:16
7. In Jeremiah 29:11, God says I know the plans I have for you. But in Isaiah 55:7, God says my thoughts are not your thoughts. How can we know God's thoughts about us?



## PART 7

### WHAT CHARACTERISTICS SHOULD THE LORD'S SERVANTS POSSESS?

This section will deal with the righteousness God wants his servants to have. While this section pertains principally to Israel, it really applies to all people.

1. God Extends His Blessings to Gentiles
2. God Warns His People of Their Wickedness  
But Says He Will Heal Them
3. The Lord Will Turn His People  
From Their Wrongdoing

## PERICOPE 49

### God Extends His Blessings to Gentiles

**56:1** This is what the LORD says:

Preserve justice *mishpat* and do what is right *tsedaqah*.

My salvation *yeshuw'ah* is about to come.

My righteousness *tsedaqah* is about to be revealed.

<sup>2</sup> Blessed is the one who does these things  
and the person who holds on to them.

Blessed is the one who keeps the day of rest—a holy day *Sabbath*  
from becoming unholy  
and his hands from doing anything wrong.

### God Invites Gentiles to Enter His Temple

**56:3** Foreigners who have joined the LORD should not say: The LORD will separate us from his people. Castrated men should not say: We're only dead trees.

<sup>4</sup> This is what the LORD says: I will remember the castrated men who keep my days of rest as holy days, choose what pleases me, and faithfully observe the conditions of my covenant.

<sup>5</sup> Inside my house and within my walls, I will give them something better than sons and daughters. I will give them a monument and a name. I will give them a permanent name that will not be forgotten.

<sup>6</sup> And I will remember the foreigners who have joined the LORD to worship him, to love the LORD's name, and to be his servants. All of them will keep the day of rest—a holy day, from becoming unholy and will faithfully observe the conditions of my covenant.

<sup>7</sup>Then I will bring them to my holy mountain and make them happy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on my altar because my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.

<sup>8</sup>The Almighty LORD, who gathers the scattered people of Israel, declares: I will gather still others besides those I have already gathered.

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

God is a holy God. Therefore people who want to have fellowship with God must live holy lives. Next to being circumcised, keeping the Sabbath Day holy is the next outward requirement. All of the Ten Commandments **Exodus 20: 1-17; Deuteronomy 5:6-21** are an essential requirement of God's covenant with his Chosen People.

Obedying these Ten Commandments of God means that people are meeting God's requirements for righteousness and justice. Yet people cannot perform these perfectly. No human of themselves can be totally holy or perfect as God is perfect. So God created sacrifices to cover the sins of people. These are requirements of Israel to have fellowship with God at his Wilderness Tabernacle or later the Jerusalem temple.

God also said that foreigners –Ammonites or Moabites – disfigured men, or men born of an illicit marriage could not join the assembly of God. **Deuteronomy 23:1-8**

However, God loves all people. So he made a provision that the Servant of YHWH would be not only a covenant to God's people but also *a Light to the gentiles*. Isaiah will say that foreigners or gentiles could also worship at God's temple.

Yet most Jews as late as Jesus' day were reluctant to allow this but they did allow gentiles to worship only in the outer court of the Jerusalem temple, but not in the inner court of Israel.

Only in Isaiah does God say *the Servant of YHWH is a light to the gentiles* twice: **Isaiah 42:6; 49:6**. God also says gentiles are welcome because *my house*

*is a house of prayer for all nations. Their sacrifices are acceptable on my altar.*  
**Isaiah 56:7**

Near the end of the Vision, Isaiah amazingly says *God will make some gentiles Levites and priests.* **Isaiah 66:21**

Isaiah mentions the Sabbath, the seventh day, in **Isaiah 56:2, 6; 59:13; 58:13; 66:23.** Jeremiah mentions the Sabbath in **Jeremiah 17:21-22, 24, 27.** Ezekiel mentions the Sabbath in **Ezekiel 46:1, 4, 12.** Amos is the only other prophet to mention the Sabbath in **Amos 8:5.**

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why is Isaiah the only prophet to report God saying: I will bring them to my holy mountain and make them happy in my house of prayer? **Isaiah 56:7.** Why didn't the other Hebrew prophets follow up on what Isaiah said?

2. If we look for the reason Jews discriminated against gentiles, it might be because God said to Israel on their first arriving at Mount Sinai:

If you carefully obey me and are faithful to the terms of my covenant, then out of all the nations you will be my special possession ~~cegullah~~-treasure, even though the whole world is mine. You will be my kingdom of priests and my holy nation. **Exodus 19:6**

3. Remember God's dream? **Isaiah 2:2-4.** Is this a foretelling of gentiles coming to God's holy mountain? Does it mean they will worship in his temple there?

4. Is it enough for Israelites to simply follow God's law? The prophet Micah, prophesying at the same time as Isaiah, says:

You mortals, the Lord has told you what is good. This is what the Lord requires from you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to live humbly with your God. **Micah 6:8**

Do Micah's requirements go beyond the Ten Commandments?

5. Pious Jews say the Shema three times every day:

Listen Israel: The Lord is our God. The Lord is the only God. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. **Deuteronomy 6:4-5**

The ancient Shema also included **Deuteronomy 11:13-21**, **Numbers 15:37-41**. Does the Shema extend the requirements of the Ten Commandments?

6. Remember that living a holy life does not give a person salvation. Living a holy life results from God's gift of salvation. Does Isaiah say this in his Vision?

7. Isaiah says God says: *My salvation is about to come. My righteousness is about to be revealed.* **Isaiah 56:1**. Is this a promise that the Messiah will come one day and bring substitutional atonement?

## PERICOPE 50

### God Condemns the Peoples' Wickedness But Says He'll Heal Them

**56:9** All you animals in the field,  
all you animals in the forest,  
come and eat.

<sup>10</sup> Israel's watchmen are blind.  
None of them know anything.  
All of them are like dogs that are unable to bark.  
They lie around dreaming; they love to sleep.

<sup>11</sup> These dogs have huge appetites.  
They are never full.  
They are the shepherds,  
but they don't understand.

All of them have turned to go their own ways.  
Each one seeks his own gain.

<sup>12</sup> Each one cries,  
Let me get some wine,  
and we'll fill ourselves with liquor.  
And tomorrow will be like today, only better.

**57:1** Righteous people die,  
and no one cares.  
Loyal people are taken away,  
and no one understands.  
Righteous people are spared when evil comes.  
<sup>2</sup> When peace comes,  
everyone who has lived honestly will rest on his own bed.

## Israel's Idolatry

<sup>57:3</sup> But you—come here,  
you children of witches,  
you descendants of adulterers and prostitutes.

<sup>4</sup>Whom are you making fun of?  
Whom are you making a face at?  
Whom are you sticking out your tongue at?

Aren't you rebellious children,  
descendants of liars?

<sup>5</sup>You burn with lust under oak trees  
and under every large tree.  
You slaughter children in the valleys  
and under the cracks in the rocks.

<sup>6</sup>Your idols are among the smooth stones in the ravine.  
They are your destiny.  
You have given them wine offerings  
and sacrificed grain offerings to them.

Do you think I am pleased with all this?

<sup>7</sup>You've made your bed on a high and lofty mountain.  
You've gone to offer sacrifices there.

<sup>8</sup>You've set up your idols beside doors and doorposts.  
You've uncovered yourself to the idols.  
You've distanced yourself from me.  
You've made your bed with them.

You've made a deal with those you have pleasure with in bed.  
You've seen them naked.

<sup>9</sup>You've journeyed to the king with perfumed oils  
and put on plenty of perfume.

You've sent your ambassadors far away  
and sent them down to Sheol.

<sup>10</sup> You've tired yourself out with many journeys.  
You didn't think that it was hopeless.  
You've found renewed strength,  
so you didn't faint.

<sup>11</sup> Whom did you dread and fear so much that you lied to me?  
You haven't remembered me or cared about me.  
I've been silent for a long time.  
Is that why you don't fear me?

<sup>12</sup> I'll tell you about your righteous ways  
and what you have done,  
but they won't help you.

<sup>13</sup> When you cry for help,  
let your collection of idols save you.  
A wind will carry them all away.  
A breath will take them away.

But whoever trusts me will possess the land  
and inherit my holy mountain.

<sup>14</sup> It will be said:  
"Build a road. Build a road.  
Prepare the way.  
Remove every obstacle in the way of my people.

### **God Tells Us What He Desires**

<sup>57:15</sup> The High and Lofty One lives forever and his name is holy.  
This is what he says:

I live in a high and holy place.  
But I am with those who are crushed and humble.



I will renew the spirit of those who are humble  
and the courage of those who are crushed.

<sup>16</sup> I will not accuse you forever.

I will not be angry with you forever.

Otherwise, the spirits, the lives of those I've made,  
would grow faint in my presence.

<sup>17</sup> I was angry because of their sinful greed,  
so I punished them, hid from them, and remained angry.  
But they continued to be sinful.

### **God Says He Will Heal His People**

<sup>57:18</sup> I've seen their sinful ways, but I'll heal them.

I'll guide them and give them rest.

I'll comfort them and their mourners.

<sup>19</sup> I'll create praise on their lips:

Perfect peace ~~shalown~~ to those both far and near.

I'll heal them, says the LORD.

<sup>20</sup> But the wicked are like the churning sea.

It isn't quiet,

and its water throws up mud and slime.

<sup>21</sup> There is no peace for the wicked, says my God.

### **Worship the LORD as He Wants to Be Worshiped**

<sup>58:1</sup> Cry aloud. Don't hold back.

Raise your voice like a ram's horn.

Tell my people about their rebellion

and the descendants of Jacob about their sins.

<sup>2</sup> They look for me every day and want to know my ways.

They act as if they were a nation that has done what is right

and as if they haven't disregarded God's judgment **misphat** on them.

They ask me for just decrees.  
They want God to be near them.

### **God Explains Why He Doesn't Honor Their Fasts**

<sup>58:3</sup> Why have we fasted if you are not aware of it?  
Why have we inflicted pain on ourselves if you don't pay attention?

Don't you see that on the days you fast,  
you do what you want to do?  
You mistreat all your workers.

<sup>4</sup> Don't you see that when you fast,  
you quarrel and fight and beat your workers?  
The way you fast today keeps you from being heard in heaven.

<sup>5</sup> Is this the kind of fasting I have chosen?  
Should people humble themselves for *only* a day?  
Is fasting just bowing your head like a cattail  
and making your bed from sackcloth and ashes?  
Is this what you call fasting?  
Is this an acceptable day to the LORD?

### **God Explains What a Proper Fast Is**

<sup>58:6</sup> This is the kind of fasting I have chosen:  
Loosen the chains of wickedness,  
untie the straps of the yoke,  
let the oppressed go free,  
and break every yoke.

<sup>7</sup> Share your food with the hungry,  
take the poor and homeless into your house,  
and cover them with clothes when you see *them* naked.  
Don't refuse to help your relatives.

<sup>8</sup>Then your light will break through like the dawn,  
and you will heal quickly.  
Your righteousness ~~tsedeq~~ will go ahead of you,  
and the glory of the LORD will guard you from behind.

<sup>9</sup>Then you will call, and the LORD will answer.  
You will cry for help, and he will say: Here I am.  
Get rid of that yoke.  
Don't point your finger and say wicked things.

<sup>10</sup>If you give some of your own food to feed those who are hungry  
and to satisfy the needs of those who are humble,  
then your light will rise in the dark,  
and your darkness will become as bright as the noonday sun.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD will continually guide you  
and satisfy you even in sun-baked places.  
He will strengthen your bones.  
You will become like a watered garden  
and like a spring whose water does not stop flowing.

<sup>12</sup>Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins  
and restore the foundations of past generations.  
You will be called the Rebuilder of Broken Walls  
and the Restorer of Streets Where People Live.

<sup>13</sup>If you stop trampling on the day of rest  
and doing as you please on my holy day,  
if you call the day of rest a delight  
and the LORD's holy day honorable,  
if you honor it by not going your own way,  
by not going out when you want, and by not talking idly,

<sup>14</sup>then you will find joy in the LORD.  
I will make you ride on the heights of the earth.

I will feed you with the inheritance of your ancestor Jacob.  
The LORD has spoken.

## **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?**

This is a long pericope and it is hard to read for many of Israel's sins are described. God also describes how he wants to be worshiped. He doesn't want Israel to simply follow the rules, but to act righteously as God does by being compassionate to others who need help. God wants people to share God's heart for all people. God wants heartfelt obedience rather than mere ritual observance of the Torah.

Isaiah begins by castigating Israel's rulers, the secular leaders, the priests, and the prophets. All the Hebrew prophets do this. God gives these people their authority so that they can act as shepherds over his people – his flock. Abuse my people and I will punish you, says God.

Isaiah goes on to criticize Israel's obsession with the pagan gods of Canaan and of other nations. He primarily identifies Baal and Asherah, the mother goddess worshiped in the groves in the valley and under large evergreen trees. The people have set up models of Baal and Asherah beside their doorposts as household gods or teraphim. Even King David's wife had them in their home.

But then Isaiah tells us whom God looks to: a person who is crushed and humble rather than those who are proud and arrogant. He promises to renew the spirit of those who are crushed. He will give them perfect peace.

Isaiah gives an example of strictly following the ritual law of fasting but neglecting the poor and needy, sharing food with the hungry, and clothing the naked. People fast from food but then beat their employees.

Then Isaiah returns to keeping the Sabbath holy. This is important.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. The first people God criticizes are the shepherds of the people, the secular leaders, priests, and prophets. The Lord becomes furious with these watchmen he has placed over his sheep as they are bad shepherds. They are blind and abuse their authority. Why will God punish them severely?
2. The Israelites were absolutely addicted to the Canaanite gods of Baal and Asherah. To them they added the Ammonite god Molech who required human sacrifices of children. In Jeremiah's time, they worshiped the Queen of Heaven Astarte, a Phoenician goddess, on the rooftops of their homes. What was the attraction of these gods?
3. God saw idolatry in his people when they looked to foreign alliances to protect them instead of God. Why does God look at this as *going down to Sheol*? **Isaiah 57:9**
4. What does God mean when he says *he will renew the spirit of those who are crushed and humble*? **Isaiah 57:15**
5. God says he will give them *perfect peace* or rest. **Isaiah 57:19**
6. God commanded fasting only on the Day of Atonement when people were to *afflict their souls*. **Leviticus 26:27**. King David said:  

The sacrifice pleasing to God is a broken spirit. O God, you do not despise a broken and sorrowful heart. **Psalm 51:17**

But some people fasted more often. That made them unpleasant causing them to abuse people. What did Isaiah say was a good fast?
7. God promises people who act toward others with good hearts, feeding the hungry and clothing the needy, will receive *the inheritance of Israel's ancestor Jacob*. **Isaiah 58:14**. What does that inheritance of Jacob consist of? Hint: **Deuteronomy 33:4**

## PERICOPE 51

### The LORD Will Turn His People from Wrongdoing

**59:1** The LORD is not too weak to save  
or his ear too deaf to hear.

<sup>2</sup>But your wrongs have separated you from your God,  
and your sins have made him hide his face  
so that he doesn't hear you.

<sup>3</sup>Your hands are stained with blood,  
and your fingers are stained with sin.  
You speak lies,  
and you mutter wicked things.

<sup>4</sup>No one calls for justice,  
and no one pleads his case truthfully.  
People trust pointless arguments and speak lies.  
They conceive trouble and give birth to evil.

<sup>5</sup>They hatch viper eggs  
and weave spiderwebs.  
Those who eat their eggs will die.  
When an egg is crushed, a poisonous snake is hatched.

<sup>6</sup>Their webs can't be used for clothes,  
nor can they cover themselves with their works.  
Their works are evil.  
Their hands have committed acts of violence.

<sup>7</sup>Their feet run to do evil.  
They hurry to shed innocent blood.  
Their plans are evil.  
Ruin and destruction are on their highways.

<sup>8</sup>They don't know the way of peace *shalom*.  
There's no justice *mishpat* on their highways.  
They've made their paths crooked.  
Whoever walks on them will never know peace *shalom*.

<sup>9</sup>That is why justice *mishpat* is far from us,  
and righteousness *tsedaqah* doesn't reach us.  
We hope for light, but we walk in darkness.  
We hope for brightness, but we walk in gloom.

<sup>10</sup>We grope like blind men along a wall.  
We grope like people without eyes.  
We stumble at noon as if it were twilight.  
We are like dead people among healthy people.

<sup>11</sup>We all growl like bears.  
We coo like doves.  
We hope for justice *mishpat*, but there is none.  
We hope for salvation *yeshuw'ah*, but it's far from us.

<sup>12</sup>You are aware of our many rebellious acts.  
Our sins testify against us.  
Our rebellious acts are with us.  
We know our wrongdoings.

<sup>13</sup>We have rebelled and denied the LORD.  
We have turned away from our God.  
We have spoken about oppression and revolt.  
We have conceived and uttered lies in our hearts.

<sup>14</sup>Justice *mishpat* is turned back,  
and righteousness *tsedaqah* stands far away.  
Truth has fallen in the street,  
and honesty can't come in.

<sup>15</sup>Truth is missing.

Those who turn away from evil make themselves victims.

The LORD sees it and he's angry

because there's no justice **mishpat**.

<sup>16</sup>He sees that there's no one to help.

He's astounded that there's no one to intercede.

So with his own power he wins a victory **yasha'**-salvation.

His righteousness **tsedaqah** supports him.

<sup>17</sup>He puts on righteousness **tsedaqah** like a coat of armor

and a helmet of salvation **yeshuw'ah** on his head.

He wears clothes of vengeance.

He wraps himself with fury as a coat.

<sup>18</sup>He will pay them back according to their deeds.

He will pay back his opponents with wrath and punish his enemies.

He will pay back the people who live on the coastlands.

<sup>19</sup>The people of the west will fear the name of the LORD.

Those in the east will fear his glory.

He will come like a rushing stream.

The wind of the LORD pushes him.

### **God's Promise of a Coming Savior**

<sup>59:20</sup> Then a savior will come to Zion,

to those in Jacob who turn from rebellion, declares the LORD.

<sup>21</sup> This is my covenant to them, says the LORD. My Spirit, who is on you,

and my words that I put in your mouth will not leave you. They will be with

your children and your grandchildren permanently, says the LORD.



## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

In the previous pericope we learned about Israel's sins. Now we hear Israel reflect on their sins and what God will do to relieve their consciences. The words justice, righteousness, and salvation occur many times.

Israel here confesses their sins. Apparently, they are in exile in Babylon when they do this. They are incapable of doing righteous behavior. So God comes to their rescue. He is angry. He will pay them back according to their deeds. Yet then he will send them a Savior, the Servant of YHWH. He will pour out his Spirit on them and allow them to hear his words of reconciliation.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. This pericope is a wonderful turning point for Israel. Finally, they confess their sins. For some it is so hard to confess their sins, *they can only growl*. **Isaiah 59:11**. Why is it so hard for humans to confess that they have rebelled against God or against what he would have them to do?
2. Define righteousness and justice. Do they mean the same thing?
3. *When people hope for salvation but admit it is far from them*, why does God then visit them? **Isaiah 59:11**
4. Is it true that when people sin, then God hides his face from them? **Isaiah 59:2**
5. What does it mean to *make your path crooked*. **Isaiah 59:8**
6. After God's judgment, he will heal his broken people. He will send them a Savior who will give them God's Spirit. **Isaiah 59:21**. Who is this Savior?
7. The word Savior appears 25x in Isaiah's Vision. Who is the Savior?

## PART 8

### GOD'S KINGDOM REIGNS ON EARTH

One of the reasons this last section of Isaiah is difficult to understand is that Isaiah sees the exiles coming home from Babylon to a Messianic Kingdom. We know from the books of Ezra and Nehemiah that this certainly wasn't the case.

Not many of the Judean exiles returned from Babylon. Most of them stayed in Babylon. After King Cyrus of Persia conquered Babylon in 539 BC and issued his edict allowing the exiles to return home, only 42,360 men and their families followed Zerubbabel, a descendant of King David 1 Chronicles 3:17-19, and High Priest Joshua. They also had 7,337 male and female servants with them. Ezra 2:64. So things weren't that hard for the Judeans in Babylon.

Times were difficult though in Jerusalem when they returned in 535 BC. It took Zerubbabel until 515 BC to rebuild the Temple that was much smaller than Solomon's Temple. Then Zerubbabel disappeared. He wasn't the Davidic Messiah as the prophet Haggai thought. Haggai 2:20-23. Instead, the High Priest ruled the nation.

The people in the land harassed them as did the foreigners who had squatted on the land for the previous 70 years. Israel was never again independent as a nation until 1948 AD although the Davidic Messiah came in 5 BC but left in 33 AD.

## PERICOPE 52

### God's Kingdom Reigns on Earth: Part I

#### The Coming Kingdom of the Lord

60:1 Arise! Shine! Your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD has dawned.

<sup>2</sup>Darkness now covers the earth,  
and thick darkness covers the nations.  
But the LORD dawns,  
and his glory appears over you.

<sup>3</sup>Nations will come to your light,  
and kings will come to the brightness of your dawn.

<sup>4</sup> Look up, look around, and watch.  
All of your people assemble and come to you.  
Your sons come from far away.  
Your daughters are carried in their arms.

<sup>5</sup>Then you will see this and rejoice,  
and your heart will be thrilled with joy,  
because the riches of the sea will be brought to you.  
The wealth of the nations will come to you.

<sup>6</sup> Many camels will cover your land  
young camels from Midian and Ephah.  
Everyone from Sheba will come.  
They will bring gold and incense.  
They will sing the praises of the LORD.

<sup>7</sup>All of the flocks from Kedar will gather and come to you.  
The rams of Nebaioth will serve you.  
They will be sacrificed as acceptable offerings on my altar.  
So I will honor my beautiful temple.

<sup>8</sup>Who are these people that fly by like clouds,  
like doves to their nests?

<sup>9</sup>Certainly, the coastlands wait with hope for me.  
The ships from Tarshish are the first  
to bring your children from far away.

Their silver and their gold comes with them  
to honor the name of the LORD your God,  
the Holy One of Israel,  
because he has honored you.

### **Gentiles Will Be Subservient to the Jews**

<sup>60:10</sup> Foreigners will rebuild your walls,  
and their kings will serve you.  
In my anger I struck you,  
but in my favor I have compassion on you.

<sup>11</sup>Your gates will always be open.  
They will never be closed day or night **Revelation 21:25**  
so that people may bring you the wealth of nations, **Revelation 21:26**  
with their kings led **nahag** <as prisoners>. **Revelation 21:24**

<sup>12</sup>Nations and kingdoms that do not serve you  
will be destroyed.  
The nations will certainly be ruined.

<sup>13</sup> Lebanon's glory will come to you:  
Cedar, fir, and cypress trees will come  
to beautify my holy place,  
and I will honor the place where my feet rest.

<sup>14</sup>The descendants of those who oppress you will bow in front of you.  
All who despise you will bow at your feet.  
They will call you the city of the LORD,  
Zion, the city of the Holy One of Israel.

<sup>15</sup>You have been abandoned and hated;  
no one has passed through you.  
But now I will make you a source of everlasting pride,  
a joy for all generations.

<sup>16</sup>You will drink milk from other nations  
and nurse at royal breasts.  
Then you will know that I am the LORD, your Savior,  
the Mighty One of Jacob, your Redeemer.

<sup>17</sup>I will bring gold instead of bronze.  
I will bring silver instead of iron,  
bronze instead of wood, and iron instead of stone.  
I will appoint peace *shalom* as your governor  
and righteousness *tsedaqah* as your ruler. **Isaiah 9:7; 54:10**

<sup>18</sup>No longer will you hear about violence in your land  
or desolation and destruction within your borders.  
You will call your walls Salvation *yeshuw'ah*  
and your gates Praise *tehillah*.

<sup>19</sup>The sun will no longer be your light during the day,  
nor will the brightness of the moon give you light, **Revelation 21:23**  
But the LORD will be your everlasting light.  
Your God will be your glory.

<sup>20</sup>Your sun will no longer go down,  
nor will your moon disappear.  
The LORD will be your everlasting light,  
and your days of sadness will be over.

<sup>21</sup>Then all your people will be righteous,  
and they will possess the land permanently.  
They will be the seedling I have planted,  
the honored work of my hands. **Isaiah 45:11**

<sup>22</sup>The smallest of them will become a family.  
The weakest of them will become a mighty nation.  
At the right time I, the LORD, will make it happen quickly.

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Isaiah sees the exiles returning to a Messianic Kingdom. Messiah will *be a light to the gentiles* **Isaiah 49:6; 51:4** and so *the gentiles will come to his light*. **Isaiah 60:3**

Not only will the Babylonian exiles return but so will Israelites and Judeans from all the nations where they were scattered because of the Assyrians and the Babylonians. The gentiles will bring them to Jerusalem.

The Messiah will rule the world and all the kings of the earth will come and give allegiance to him. *The word of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.* **Isaiah 11:9**

There will be no need for light from the sun or moon as the Lord will be their light. The gates of Jerusalem will be open day and night.

Gentile kings will bring their glory and the wealth of the nations to the king of the earth. The word glory ~~ka~~bowd will appear 38x in the Vision and frequently in this last part of the book.

All of God's people will be righteous.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. It seems the prophet John who wrote the Revelation of Jesus Christ in 98 AD had Isaiah at his fingertips, especially in describing this final picture of the New Jerusalem. What was different in John's picture from Isaiah's picture?

2. Isaiah stresses throughout his Vision that God will bring his people back to Israel from the ends of the earth. They will return from Assyria and Babylon and from Egypt to where they have escaped. We see this happening now as many Jews returned to the modern nation of Israel formed in 1948. Is this fulfilling God's prediction he will bring the Jews home to the Promised Land from all the nations of the earth?
3. God says that *Jerusalem will be called Zion, the city of the Holy One of Israel. It will be a light that shines in the darkness that covers the nations.* **Isaiah 60:2.** Why will Jerusalem be such a light?
4. God says *all your people will be righteous.* **Isaiah 60:21.** What does this tell us as to when this will occur?
5. Why will Jerusalem be *a source of everlasting pride?* **Isaiah 60:15**

## PERICOPE 53

### God's Kingdom Reigns on Earth: Part II

61:1 The Spirit of the Almighty 'adonay LORD is with me  
because the LORD has anointed me  
to deliver good news **basar** to humble people.

He has sent me  
to heal those who are brokenhearted,  
to announce that captives will be set free  
and prisoners will be released.

<sup>2</sup> He has sent me  
to announce the year of the LORD's good will **ratsown**-acceptance  
and the day of our God's vengeance,  
to comfort all those who grieve.

<sup>3</sup> He has sent me  
to provide for all those who grieve in Zion,  
to give them crowns instead of ashes,  
the oil of joy instead of tears of grief,  
and clothes of praise instead of a spirit of weakness.

They will be called Oaks of Righteousness,  
the Plantings of the LORD,  
so that he might display his glory.

<sup>4</sup> They will rebuild the ancient ruins.  
They will restore the places destroyed long ago.  
They will renew the ruined cities,  
the places destroyed generations ago.

<sup>5</sup> Foreigners will come forward  
and become shepherds for your flocks,  
and children of foreigners  
will work your fields and vineyards.



<sup>6</sup>You will be called the priests of the LORD.  
You will be called the servants **sharath**-ministers of our God.  
You will consume the wealth of the nations.  
You will boast in their splendor.

<sup>7</sup>You will receive a double measure of wealth  
instead of your shame.  
You will sing about your wealth  
instead of being disgraced.

That is why you will have  
a double measure of wealth in your land.  
You will have everlasting joy.

<sup>8</sup>I, the LORD, love justice **mishpat**.  
I hate robbery and wrongdoing.  
I will faithfully reward my people's work.  
I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

<sup>9</sup>Then their offspring will be known among the nations  
and their descendants among the people.  
Everyone who sees them will recognize  
that they are the descendants  
whom the LORD has blessed.

<sup>10</sup>I will find joy in the LORD.  
I will delight in my God.  
He has dressed me in the clothes of salvation **yesha**.  
He has wrapped me in the robe of righteousness **tsedaqah**  
like a bridegroom with a priest's turban,  
like a bride with her jewels.

<sup>11</sup>Like the ground that brings forth its crops  
and like a garden that makes the seed in it grow,  
so the Almighty LORD will make righteousness **tsedaqah**  
and praise **tehillah** spring up in front of all nations.

## Jerusalem's Salvation Is Coming

**62:1** For Zion's sake I will not remain silent.  
For Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,  
until its righteousness **tsedeq** shines like the dawn  
and its salvation **yeshuw'ah** burns brightly like a torch.

<sup>2</sup>The nations will see your righteousness **tsedeq**.  
All kings will see your glory.  
You will be given a new name  
that the LORD will announce.

<sup>3</sup>Then you will be a beautiful crown  
in the hand of the LORD,  
a royal crown in the hand of your God.

<sup>4</sup>You will no longer be called Deserted,  
and your land will no longer be called Destroyed.  
But you will be named My Delight,  
and your land will be named Married.

The LORD is delighted with you,  
and your land will be Married.

<sup>5</sup>As a young man marries a woman,  
so your sons will marry you.  
As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride,  
so your God will rejoice over you.

<sup>6</sup>I have posted watchmen on your walls, Jerusalem.  
They will never be silent day or night.

Whoever calls on the LORD,  
do not give yourselves any rest,  
<sup>7</sup>and do not give him any rest  
until he establishes Jerusalem

and makes it an object of praise **tehillah**  
throughout the earth.

<sup>8</sup>The LORD has sworn with his right hand  
and with his mighty arm:  
I will never again let your enemies eat your grain,  
nor will foreigners drink the new wine which you made.

<sup>9</sup>Those who harvest grain  
will eat it and praise the LORD.  
Those who gather grapes  
will drink wine in my holy courtyards.

<sup>10</sup>Go through. Go through the gates.  
Prepare a way for the people.  
Build up! Build up the highway **mecillah** !  
Clear away the stones.  
Raise a flag for the people.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD has announced to the ends of the earth:  
Tell my people Zion:

Your Savior **yesha**-salvation is coming.  
His reward is with him,  
and the people he has won  
arrive ahead of him. **Isaiah 40:10**

<sup>12</sup>They will be called Holy People, Those Redeemed by the LORD,  
and you will be called:  
Sought After, a City Not Deserted.

## **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?**

Many call **Isaiah 61:1-4** the fifth song of the **Servant of YHWH**. In the Gospel of Luke **Luke 4:18-19**, Jesus sang this song at his local synagogue in Nazareth ending with the words the *Year of the Lord's good will*. This year is the Jubilee, the 50th year when all slaves are freed. **Leviticus 25:9-10**

The song points to the restoration of the land of Israel, and the elevation of the nation of Israel to glory after their exile in Babylon. The Servant's mission by God is to heal the broken-hearted and to announce the Jubilee to all those who grieve in Zion. He will replace tears of grief with shouts of joy.

The Judeans will rebuild their ruined cities. Gentiles will be shepherds for Judah's flocks, plowmen for their fields, and vinedressers of their grapevines. But the Judeans will be called *priests of the Lord* and *minsters of their God*. They shall eat the riches of the gentiles.

Israel will soon be a glory to the nations, a beautiful crown in the hand of God. God has announced to the world: Tell my people, your salvation is coming. You will be called Holy People Who Have Been Redeemed by the Lord.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. **Isaiah 61:1** pictures the Holy Trinity: *The Almighty Lord* is God the Father; *me* is the Son of God, the Servant of YHWH; and *the Spirit* is the Holy Spirit of God. Is this the Anointed One of **Isaiah 11:1-2**?
2. In Luke, Jesus stopped in the middle of the verse not mentioning the day of vengeance. This will come at the Battle of Armageddon. **Revelation 19:15-20**. What will Jesus do there?
3. In **Isaiah 61:6**, as priests and ministers of God, the Judeans would serve as mediators between God and the gentiles. **Exodus 19:6**. Has this ever happened?
4. What is the new everlasting covenant God will make with Israel? **Isaiah 61:8**.  
HINT: **Jeremiah 31:31-34; 32:40; Ezekiel 16:60; 37:25-26**
5. Israel would be given two new names to replace *Forsaken* and *Desolate*. Use [www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org) to look up these two new names in Hebrew in **Isaiah 62:4**.
6. Why will Jerusalem become an object of praise throughout the earth? **Isaiah 62:7**

7. The Lord swore with an oath that enemies would never again invade Israel. **Isaiah 62:8-9**. Why does God need to swear an oath? How does he do it. HINT: **Genesis 15:22-18; Isaiah 45:23** How did Israelites swear an oath by God's name? HINT: **Jeremiah 23:7-8**

## **EXTRA CREDIT**

God says that Israelites will be priests and ministers for God. Why hasn't this ever happened? This was the hope of God when the Israelites first came out of Egypt to Mount Sinai. **Exodus 19:6**. Most of the nation of Israel today is secular, although they honor some of the customs of their ancestors.

## PERICOPE 54

### The LORD Alone Wins His Victory

63:1 Who is this coming from Bozrah in Edom  
with his clothes stained bright red?  
Who is this dressed in splendor,  
going forward with great strength?

It is I, the LORD.

I am coming to announce my victory.  
I am powerful enough to save you.

<sup>2</sup>Why are your clothes red  
and your garments like those  
who trample grapes in a winepress?

<sup>3</sup>I have trampled alone in the winepress.  
No one was with me.

In my anger I trampled on people.  
In my wrath I stomped on them.  
Their blood splattered my clothes  
so all my clothing has been stained.

<sup>4</sup>I planned the day of vengeance.  
The year for my redeeming you has come.

<sup>5</sup>I looked, but there was no help.  
I was astounded that there was no outside support.  
So with my own power I won a victory *yasha'* salvation.  
My anger supported me.

<sup>6</sup>In my anger I trampled on people.  
In my wrath I made them drunk  
and poured their blood on the ground.

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

This is a brutal picture of a bloody warrior returning home after a battle. This battle was God versus Edom, to the southeast of Israel, the most vicious and hated of Israel's enemies. The word Edom means red and Bozrah means vintage or wine.

The watchman in Zion asked the warrior why his clothes were red. He said he had been angry with those grapes and their juice had stained his clothes.

Why had the warrior done this? He explained that he was bringing redemption to Zion. The day of vengeance had arrived. **Isaiah 61:2**. In **Revelation 14:17-20**, we have a prefiguring of God's wrath during the bowl judgments brought on unbelievers. **Revelation 16:1-18, 24**

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. We don't like to think of the wrath of God. But God is holy and sin makes him angry. We are grateful that God's lovingkindness ~~cheer~~ is his greatest attribute. So was King David:

You, O Lord, are good and forgiving ready to forgive KJV full of mercy toward everyone who calls out to you. **Psalm 86:5**

2. The word *wrath* appears 8x in Isaiah, 8x in Jeremiah, and 8x in Ezekiel. **Isaiah 9:19; 10:6; 13:9, 13; 14:6; 16:6; 54:8; 60:10**. Read the last two verses cited here in Isaiah. Why do both temper God's wrath with his mercy?

3. John the prophet in the Book of Revelation describes Jesus' actions at the Battle of Armageddon:

And out of his mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it he should strike the nations. He shall rule them with a rod of iron. He treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath *orge* of Almighty God. **Revelation 19:15 KJV**

Jesus was angry *orge* only once in the Gospels. When was this? HINT **Mark 3:5**. The word *orge* means anger, wrath, indignation.

4. God allowed Israel to fight only holy wars that defended their territory against the nations who attempted to take territory away from them. This is why Israel always wanted to be certain that God was with them when they fought a war. Read Deuteronomy 20:1-8 and state why God required this action before any battle Israel fought.
5. Read Psalm 137:7-9. What sin did Edom commit against Israel?



## PERICOPE 55

### The LORD's People Pray for His Help

#### God Has Been Merciful to Israel in the Past

**63:7** I will acknowledge the LORD's acts of mercy *checed*,  
and sing the praises of the LORD,  
because of everything that the LORD has done for us.

He has done many good things for the nation of Israel  
because of his compassion *racham* and his unlimited mercy *checed*.

<sup>8</sup> He said: They are my people,  
children who will not lie to me.  
So he became their Savior *yasha*.

<sup>9</sup> In all their troubles he was troubled,  
and he was the Messenger *mal'ak*-angel *paniym*-presence who saved them.  
In his love *'ahaba* and compassion *chemiah* he redeemed *ga'al* them.  
He always held them and carried them in the past.

#### Israel Frequently Rebelled Against Their God

**63:10** But they rebelled and offended his Holy Spirit.  
So he turned against them as their enemy.  
He fought against them.

#### Israel Remembers God's Goodness

**63:11** Then his people remembered Moses and the distant past.  
Where is the one who brought them out of the sea  
with the shepherds of his flock? **Exodus 15:1-10; Psalm 77::20; Micah 6:4**

Where is the one who put his Holy Spirit in them?

<sup>12</sup> Where is the one who sent his powerful arm  
to support the right hand of Moses? **Exodus 17:8-13**

Where is the one who divided the water in front of them  
to make an everlasting name for himself?

<sup>13</sup>Where is the one who led them through the deep water?  
Like horses in the wilderness,  
they didn't stumble.

<sup>14</sup>Like animals going down into a valley,  
they were given rest by the LORD's Spirit.  
In this way you guided your people  
to make an honored name for yourself.

### **Israel Prays to God to Have Pity on His Chosen People**

<sup>63:15</sup> Look down and see from heaven,  
from your holy and beautiful dwelling.

Where is your determination and might?  
Where is the longing of your heart and your compassion?  
Don't hold back.

<sup>16</sup>You are our Father.  
Even though Abraham doesn't know us  
and Israel doesn't pay attention to us,  
O LORD, you are our Father.

Your name is our Redeemer From Everlasting.

<sup>17</sup>O LORD, why do you let us wander from your ways  
and become so stubborn that we are unable to fear you? **James 1:13**  
Return for the sake of your servants.  
They are the tribes that belong to you.

<sup>18</sup>Your holy people possessed the land for a little while.  
Our enemies have trampled on your holy place.

<sup>19</sup>We have become like those whom you never ruled,  
like those who are not called by your name.

## **Israel Asks God to Come Down to Earth**

**64:1** If only you would split open the heavens and come down!  
The mountains would quake at your presence.

<sup>2</sup>Be like the fire that kindles brushwood and makes water boil.  
Come down to make your name known to your enemies.  
The nations will tremble in your presence.

<sup>3</sup>When you did awe-inspiring things that we didn't expect,  
you came down and the mountains quaked in your presence.

<sup>4</sup>No one has ever heard,  
no one has paid attention,  
and no one has seen any god except you.  
You help those who wait for you.

## **Israel Confesses Their Sin**

**64:5** You greeted the one who gladly does right  
and remembers your ways.  
You showed your anger, because we've sinned.  
We've continued to sin for a long time.

Can we still be saved?

<sup>6</sup>We've all become unclean<sup>1</sup>  
and all our righteous acts  
are like permanently stained rags.  
All of us shrivel like leaves,  
and our sins carry us away like the wind.

<sup>7</sup>No one calls on your name  
or tries to hold on to you.  
You have hidden your face from us.  
You have let us be ruined by our sins.

## Israel Pleads with God for Forgiveness

<sup>64:8</sup> But now, LORD, you are our Father.  
We are the clay and you are our potter.  
We are the work of your hands.

<sup>9</sup> Don't be too angry, LORD.  
Don't remember our sin forever.  
Now look, we are all your people.

<sup>10</sup> Your holy cities have become a desert.  
Zion has become a desert.  
Jerusalem is a wasteland.

<sup>11</sup> Our holy and beautiful temple,  
where our ancestors praised you,  
has been burned to the ground.  
All that we valued has been ruined.

<sup>12</sup> Despite these things, LORD, will you hold back?  
Will you be silent and make us suffer more than we can bear?

## The LORD Recalls Israel's Many Sins

<sup>65:1</sup> I was ready to answer those who didn't ask.  
I was found by those who weren't looking for me.  
I said: Here I am! Here I am!  
to a nation that didn't worship me.

<sup>2</sup> I stretched out my hands all day long  
to stubborn people.  
They chose to go the wrong direction.  
They followed their own plans.

<sup>3</sup> These people constantly and openly provoked me.  
They offered sacrifices in gardens  
and burnt incense on brick altars. **Exodus 20:25; Deuteronomy 27:5-6; Joshua 8:31**

<sup>4</sup>They sat among the graves and spent their nights in caves.  
They ate pork and in their pots made broth from unclean foods.

<sup>5</sup>They said: Stay away! Don't touch me!  
I'm holier than you are.  
They have become like smoke in my nose,  
like a smoldering fire all day long.

<sup>6</sup> Look! It is written in front of me.

I will not be silent, but I will repay.  
I will repay you in full.

<sup>7</sup>I will repay you for your sins  
and for the sins of your ancestors, says the LORD.  
They burnt incense on the mountains  
and slandered me on the hills,  
so I will be the first to pay them back in full.

### **God Forgives His Rebellious People**

<sup>65:8</sup> This is what the LORD says:

When someone finds juice for new wine in a cluster of grapes,  
another person will say,  
Don't destroy it, because there's a blessing in it.  
In the same way, I will do this for my servants:  
I will not destroy everything.

<sup>9</sup>I will bring with me Jacob's descendant,  
one who will inherit my mountains from Judah.  
My chosen ones will inherit them.  
My servants will live there.

<sup>10</sup>The Sharon Plain will be a pasture for flocks.  
The Achor Valley will be a resting place for cattle  
and for my people who search for me.

<sup>11</sup>You have abandoned the LORD  
and forgotten my holy mountain.  
You have prepared a table for the god of good fortune  
and offered cups full of spiced wine to the goddess of destiny.

<sup>12</sup>Now I will destine you for death.  
All of you will bow to be slaughtered.

I called, but you didn't answer.  
I spoke, but you didn't listen.  
You did what I consider evil.  
You chose what I don't like.

<sup>13</sup>This is what the LORD God says:

My servants will eat, but you will be hungry.  
My servants will drink, but you will be thirsty.  
My servants will be glad, but you will be ashamed.

<sup>14</sup>My servants will sing because of the gladness in their hearts.  
But you will cry because of your sadness  
and wail because of your depression.

<sup>15</sup>Your name will be used as a curse by my chosen ones.  
The Almighty LORD will kill you  
and call his servants by another name.

<sup>16</sup>Whoever asks for a blessing in the land  
will be blessed by the God of Truth.  
Whoever swears an oath in the land  
will swear by the God of Truth.

Past troubles are forgotten.  
They are hidden from my eyes.

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Israel first remembers God's goodness to them. In their troubles he was troubled. He was the angel who constantly saved them. However, they rebelled and offended his Holy Spirit. So he disciplined them.

But then rebellious Israel remembered God's mercy as he brought them out of Egypt to Mount Sinai. He brought them through the Red Sea by dividing the water and allowing them to walk on dry land.

But even as they walked through the desert to Mount Sinai, they complained and complained and complained even asking: Is the Lord with us or not? **Exodus 17:7.** But then they remembered the Exodus where Moses, Aaron, and Miriam led them from Egypt to Mount Sinai. They were God's shepherds. They remembered when God sent his powerful arm, the Holy Spirit, to keep Moses' arms held high during their battle with the Amalekites. God led them to rest in the Promised Land through Joshua, stopping the flowing Jordan River and sending his hornets against the Canaanites.

Then the Israelites plead with God remembering his covenant with Abraham. God is their Father as Abraham was the patriarch of Israel. YHWH is Israel's Redeemer from Everlasting. Return please for the sake of your servants. Our enemies have trampled on your temple.

Please come down to earth and make your name known to our enemies. The nations will tremble in your presence. Only you are truly known to people. You always help those who wait for you as we are.

We have sinned against you. You rightly showed your anger when we sinned. Can we now be saved? Although you have rightly hid your face, will you now redeem us. You are our Father. You are the potter and we are the clay in your hands. Everything we valued, our pleasant and good land and your temple have been destroyed. Will you restore us?

God recounts Israel's sins. They worshiped false gods and openly provoked me. So I will now repay my people for their sins. Yet I am merciful. I will not

destroy them. My chosen ones, Jacob's descendants, will inherit my mountains in Judah.

Yet you people have forgotten my holy mountain and worshiped the false gods Fortune and Destiny so I will destine you for spiritual death. Those who still are my servants will I favor but not you. You will cry because I am not with you. However, I am merciful. Past evil from you will be forgiven.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. The Israelites sin against God again and again. Yet God constantly forgives them, although he also disciplines them. Why is God so loyal to his Chosen People?
2. Isaiah says God put his Holy Spirit in his people. **Isaiah 63:11**. When did he do this? The Holy Spirit was promised **Isaiah 59:21** but not given to people until Pentecost in 33 AD.
3. The people ask God to split open the heavens and come down. **Isaiah 64:1**. God did this in 5-6 BC. Explain.
4. Why is confession of sin necessary? God already knows what we have done.
5. Rarely do Israelites call God "Father", although Christians do. Why is that?
6. What does it take for God to call a person his servant?



## PERICOPE 56

### God Will Create a New Heaven and a New Earth

65:17 I will create a new heaven and a new earth.

Past things will not be remembered.

They will not come to mind.

<sup>18</sup> Be glad and rejoice forever in what I'm going to create,  
because I'm going to create Jerusalem to be a delight  
and its people to be a joy.

<sup>19</sup> I will rejoice about Jerusalem and be glad about my people.  
Screaming and crying will no longer be heard in the city.

<sup>20</sup> There will no longer be an infant who lives for only a few days  
or an old man who doesn't live a long life.

Whoever lives to be a hundred years old  
will be thought of as young.

Whoever dies before he is a hundred years old  
will be cursed as a sinner.

<sup>21</sup> They will build houses and live there.

They will plant vineyards and eat fruit from them.

<sup>22</sup> They will not build homes and have others live there.

They will not plant and have others eat from it.

My people will live as long as trees,  
and my chosen ones will enjoy what they've done.

<sup>23</sup> They will never again work for nothing.

They will never again give birth to children who die young,  
because they will be offspring blessed by the LORD.

The LORD will bless their descendants as well.

<sup>24</sup> Before they call, I will answer.

While they're still speaking, I will hear.

<sup>25</sup>Wolves and lambs will feed together,  
lions will eat straw like oxen,  
and dust will be food for snakes.

They will not hurt or destroy anyone anywhere  
on my holy mountain,  
says the LORD.

### **The People of the LORD's New Creation**

**66:1** This is what the LORD says:

Heaven is my throne.  
The earth is my footstool.  
Where can you build a house or resting place for me?

<sup>2</sup>I have made all these things.  
That is why all these things have come into being,  
declares the LORD.

I will pay attention to those  
who are humble and sorry for their sins  
and who tremble at my word.

<sup>3</sup>Whoever kills a bull is like  
someone who kills a person.

Whoever sacrifices a lamb  
is like someone who breaks a dog's neck.

Whoever offers a grain sacrifice  
is like someone who offers pig's blood.

Whoever burns incense  
is like someone who worships an idol.

People have certainly chosen their own ways,  
and their souls delight in detestable things.

<sup>4</sup> So I will choose harsh treatment for them  
and bring on them what they fear.

I called, but no one answered.  
I spoke, but they didn't listen.  
They did what I consider evil.  
They chose what I don't like.

<sup>5</sup> Listen to the LORD's word,  
all who tremble at his word.

Your relatives, who hate you  
and exclude you for my name's sake, say:  
Let the LORD show his glory.  
Then we will see your joy.

But they will be put to shame.

<sup>6</sup> Listen to the uproar from the city.  
Listen to the sound from the temple.  
It is the sound of the LORD  
paying back his enemies as they deserve.

<sup>7</sup> Before a woman goes into labor, she gives birth.  
Before she has labor pains, she delivers a child.

<sup>8</sup> Who has heard of such a thing?  
Who has seen such things?  
Can a country be born in one day?  
Can a nation be born in a moment?

When Zion went into labor,  
she also gave birth to her children.

<sup>9</sup> Do I bring a mother to the moment of birth  
and not let her deliver? asks the LORD.  
Do I cause a mother to deliver

and then make her unable to have children?  
asks your God.

<sup>10</sup>All who love Jerusalem,  
be happy and rejoice with her.  
All who mourn for her,  
be glad with her.

<sup>11</sup>You will nurse and be satisfied from her comforting breasts.  
You will nurse to your heart's delight at her full breasts.

<sup>12</sup>This is what the LORD says:

I will offer you peace *shalom* like a river  
and the wealth of the nations  
like an overflowing stream.

You will nurse and be carried in Jerusalem's arms  
and cuddled on her knees.

<sup>13</sup>As a mother comforts *nacham* her child,  
so will I comfort *nacham* you.  
You will be comforted in Jerusalem.

<sup>14</sup>When you see it, your heart will rejoice  
and you will flourish like new grass.

The power of the LORD  
will be made known to his servants,  
but he will condemn his enemies.

<sup>15</sup>The LORD will come with fire  
and with his chariots like a thunderstorm.  
He will pay them back with his burning anger  
and punish them with flames of fire.

<sup>16</sup>The LORD will judge with fire  
and he will judge all people with his sword.  
Many people will be struck dead by the LORD.

<sup>17</sup>People make themselves holy  
and prepare themselves for their garden rituals.  
They go into the garden  
and devour pork, disgusting things, and mice.

“They will come to an end at the same time,  
declares the LORD.

<sup>18</sup>Because of their actions and their thoughts,  
I am coming to gather the nations of every language.  
They will come and see my glory.

<sup>19</sup>I will set up a sign among them  
and send some of their survivors to the nations:  
to Tarshish, Put and Lud, Meshech, Rosh, Tubal, Javan,  
and to the distant coastlands  
who have not heard of my fame or seen my glory.

They will tell about my glory among the nations.

<sup>20</sup>They will bring all your relatives  
from every nation like a grain offering to the LORD.  
They will come on horses, in chariots, in wagons,  
on mules and camels to my holy mountain, Jerusalem,  
declares the LORD.

They will come like the people of Israel who bring  
their grain offerings in clean dishes to the LORD’s temple.

<sup>21</sup> I will make some of them priests and Levites,  
declares the LORD.

<sup>22</sup>The new heaven and earth that I am about to make will continue in my presence, declares the LORD. So your descendants and your name will also continue in my presence.

<sup>23</sup>From one month to the next and from one week to the next all people will come to worship me, declares the LORD.

<sup>24</sup>Then they will go out and look at the corpses of those who have rebelled against me.

The worms that eat them will not die.  
The fire that burns them will not go out.  
All humanity will be disgusted by them.

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Isaiah still conceives of the new earth as physical earth with people still having the ability to sin, produce children and die . Unlike John in The Revelation of Jesus Christ, Isaiah does not see the new earth as a spiritual world and eternal.

Yet on this new earth, the Messiah rules the earth from his throne in Jerusalem through the Chosen People, the righteous remnant. Gentiles will come and recognize the Lord as the Jews will evangelize gentiles. They will tell about my glory among the nations. **Isaiah 66:19**

People will no longer rely on cult ritual to cover their sins. **Isaiah 66:3**

In this new earth, Israel will not experience enemies or have sickness, but people will still die at a very old age. **Isaiah 65:20**

God will be in constant communication with people and the animal world will be peaceful. **Isaiah 65:25**

However there will be some people who sin and will be punished by the Lord. **Isaiah 66:6, 14-17**

In Jerusalem, God's servants will be comforted. **Isaiah 66:13**. This is the last of the seven times comfort is mentioned in Isaiah.

Nations will stream to Jerusalem to worship the Lord. **Isaiah 66:18-20**. God's dream will be accomplished. **Isaiah 2:2-4**

God will make some gentiles Levites and priests. **Isaiah 66:21**

Apparently, there will be a graveyard outside the city of Jerusalem. **Isaiah 66:24**

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. God's love for Jerusalem is reflected in the verse:

Be glad and rejoice forever in what I'm going to create, because I'm going to create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people to be a joy. **Isaiah 65:18**

How many times does God say: my holy mountain?

2. Isaiah says:

I will pay attention to those who are humble and sorry for their sins **nakeh**-contrite **ruah**-spirit and who tremble at my word. **Isaiah 66:2**

This refers back to **Isaiah 57:15** where the same words are used. Define a contrite spirit. Why does God love those with this attitude?

3. What does God mean when he says *the earth is my footstool* **regel hadom** ? **Isaiah 66:1**

4. What does God mean when he says the exiles will be comforted in Jerusalem? **Isaiah 66:11**

5. Why does Isaiah end his Vision on a sad note:

Then they will go out and look at the corpses of those who have rebelled against me. **Isaiah 66:24**

## EPILOGUE

I call Isaiah “The First Gospel” or “The Gospel Before the Gospels”. The Vision of Isaiah is mentioned 80x in the New Testament, second only to the Psalms. Jesus of Nazareth makes his appearance here dramatically throughout the Vision, especially in the fourth Song of the Servant of YHWH. **Isaiah 52:13-53:12**

Isaiah’s Vision covers a long scope from the time of King Ahaz 732 BC to the End Times – the Last Days. It proceeds chronologically in a meandering way, often thematically. This makes it difficult at times to determine the historical context.

But the main theme of the Vision is the salvation of God. This is why it was so useful and encouraging to the exiles in Babylon, reading the Vision of Isaiah 150 years after it was written as it predicted their exilic return to Jerusalem in 535 BC.

The prophets Micah, Amos, and Habakkuk prophesied during the time of Isaiah’s ministry. The Hebrew prophets copied from each other so we can see words of Isaiah within their books. **Micah 4:1-2** and **Isaiah 2:2-4** is an excellent example. Another is **Habakkuk 2:14** and **Isaiah 11:9**.

The prophets Daniel, Ezekiel and Jeremiah prophesied during the time of the 70 years of Babylonian exile from 605 -535 BC. All three of them must have known the Vision of Isaiah as the historian Josephus says that the Vision of Isaiah was shown to Cyrus of Persia when he arrived in Babylon in 539 BC so he could see what Isaiah wrote about him.

Isaiah demonstrates wonderful theology when he talks about God’s righteousness, justice, and salvation—words that appear frequently throughout the Vision. And Isaiah was a poet as well. He is a delight to read with many memorable verses. Handel included many of them in his musical oratorio.