

## 8. ISAIAH

740 – 680 BC

Isaiah prophesied in Judah for nearly sixty years. The first half of his book concerns events that happened in his lifetime. He told King Uzziah that Judah would be taken into exile by the king of Babylon, but this didn't happen until nearly one hundred years later. The second half of Isaiah provides prophecies that focus on the Lord's deliverance of Israel, their Deliverer, the servant of the Lord, and the renewed heavens and Earth that God will create.

He speaks much about a peaceful Messianic age when a descendant of King David will reign in righteousness, and all nations will stream to Jerusalem. God's people will no longer be oppressed by wicked rulers and Jerusalem will be the Lord's holy city. Many of Isaiah's prophecies throughout the book relate to this distant future. The chosen passages relate to the last days and give us information about the Great Tribulation, Jesus' return to Earth, and the Messianic reign from Mount Zion. Please read the passages from Isaiah in conjunction with the comments made.

### **All nations will flow to Zion the mountain of the Lord's temple (Isa 2:2-4).**

This passage is almost identical to Micah 4:1-3. Mount Zion is in the land of Moriah where Abraham offered up his son Isaac (Gen 22:2), the mountain on which King Solomon built the first Jewish temple (2 Chron 3:1). Zion is mentioned 154 times in the OT and it always refers to a geographical area synonymous with Jerusalem, which is regarded as the most holy place for the Jewish nation, the city God chose for himself. In Islam, it is regarded as the second most holy place on Earth. Isaiah prophesied that in the last days, this mountain would be elevated higher than the surrounding mountains and that during the Messianic reign, all the nations would make pilgrimages to it. This exaltation is not a metaphor for its importance, Isaiah said that the mountain which bears the temple of the Lord will one day tower above the surroundings. The literal interpretation of the prophecy is supported

by other prophecies. Ezekiel and John both call it a very high mountain (Ezek 40:2, Rev 21:10), while Zechariah adds that the surrounding land will be turned into a plain (Zech 14:10). It is the mountain of the house of the Lord. A new Jewish temple will be built there where a Muslim mosque called the Dome of the Rock now stands. This mosque was deliberately built on the site of the second Jewish temple, completed in 692 AD, by Muslims who believed that their religion was superior to that of Jews and Christians.

The context is the “latter days,” a phrase that is used by the prophets eschatologically, denoting the Messianic era. During the Messianic reign, the nations will walk by the light that surrounds the Temple Mount and all of Jerusalem, and the kings of the Earth bring their glory to it (Isa 60:3, 5, 15-16, Rev 21:24). The nations will make yearly pilgrimages to the temple where the light of the Messiah’s presence will illuminate the whole area by night and by day. They will go there to worship, bring offerings from their wealth, and learn his ways so that they can walk in his paths. In this way, the Earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Jesus the Messiah, as God’s regent, will judge the nations, reigning over them and eliminating warfare. “They will forge their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nations will not take up sword against their neighbors, neither will they train for war anymore.” This text is not about Christianity and its influence on the world; it can never stop wars. It is about Mount Zion and its central place in the world when the Jewish Messiah as king. The Messiah is not explicitly mentioned in this text, it is the God of Jacob who “will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. Elsewhere, he is called the “Prince of Peace,” and Jerusalem, “the city of Righteousness” (Isa 1:26) and “the Lord is There” (Ezek 48:35).

### **Man to be humbled on the Day of the Lord** (*Isa 2:10-21*).

Judgment day is reflected in these verses, the judgment of the nations which immediately precedes the Messianic era of Isaiah 2:2-4. It is a day of judgment on the proud and unbelieving, the day of the Messiah’s arrival, when rebellious, arrogant, mankind will be confronted and terrified by the physical presence of the Lord as he returns to Earth. The opening of the sixth seal (Rev 6:12-17) reveals the terrifying events that will occur on that day: earthquakes, darkness,

meteorites, mountains crumbling, and islands sinking. People will hide themselves in caves and among rocks and mountains to try and hide from God and his Messiah. It is the day of God's wrath on the wicked who will be confronted while in open rebellion against God. The context implies massive destruction. The proud achievements of man will be obliterated, as was the tower of Babel, before the Messiah begins his work of restoration of the Earth together with his redeemed and resurrected 'kingdom of priests.'

## **The sprout of the Lord, the pride and glory of the survivors of Israel (Isa 4:2-6).**

The Branch of the Lord is the Messiah, as the prophets Jeremiah and Zechariah refer to him (Jer 33:15, Zech 3:8, 6:12). The Hebrew word here could be translated as "sprout" or "shoot." He springs from the Lord and his rule extends over the whole Earth. Jeremiah calls the righteous Branch, the LORD our righteousness. Salvation is the result of Christ's righteousness being imputed or ascribed to God's people, whether Jew or Gentile. The Lord will judge Judah and Jerusalem for their sins, but one day in the future, when the Messiah comes, he will rule over the surviving remnant. He will be majestic and glorious, the pride and glory of the survivors of Israel. Cf. Isa 11:1-2.

These survivors will be called holy because their names have been recorded for life in Jerusalem. Their filth will be washed away, including the bloodstains of their murders. Zechariah says that when the Messiah arrives, the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will look on him whom they pierced, and he will pour out on them a spirit of grace and mercy (Zech 12:10). A fountain will be opened to cleanse them from their sin and uncleanness (Zech 13:1). All Israel will be saved at that time (Rom 11:26-27) and they will be the Messiah's holy nation during his reign.

The Lord will *create* over the whole site of Mount Zion and those who assemble there, a cloud by day, and smoke and the brightness of a flaming fire by night. This will be just as literal as the pillar of fire and smoke that led the Israelites in the wilderness after the exodus from Egypt. It is evidence of the Lord's presence and glory. It will emanate from New Jerusalem in the sky above earthly Jerusalem. New Jerusalem is other-worldly and glorious and its light will be seen above

the earthly Jerusalem. As Delitzsch says (p. 159): “The glorified Jerusalem of Earth and the glorified Jerusalem of heaven appeared as if fused into one.”

The assemblies that gather there are the pilgrims who come to worship the Lord from all the nations of the world. The cloud and its glory will be like a canopy for them, a protection, a shelter and shade, a refuge and hiding place from the elements.

## **The King enthroned in the temple**

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne up high, and the end of his robe that fell around his feet filled the temple. Seraphim were above his head, each with six wings ... They were calling to one another: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty, the whole Earth is full of his glory (Isa 6:1-3).

The vision that Isaiah sees, at his call to be a prophet, is of the glorified Jesus, the Messiah, reigning from Jerusalem during the millennium. He said his eyes had seen the King. No wonder many of Isaiah’s prophecies are Messianic! The apostle John interpreted ‘the Lord’ in this vision as Jesus (John 12:41-42). When the latter prophets spoke of the Lord being King, they had the Messiah and his reign over the nations in mind (Zech 3:15, 20; Zech 4:9, 16-17; Mal 1:11, 14).

Ezekiel had a similar vision of the glory of the Lord entering the temple through the gate facing East (Ezek 43:4-7). This was the temple in Jerusalem and Ezekiel heard the Lord say, “Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place for the soles of my feet. This is where I will live among the Israelites forever.” This is the only indication we have of the Messiah living on Earth during the millennium. His earthly throne will be in the temple. He may not be visible after his glorious return when “every eye will see him” and “everyone” may only refer to the Jews, those who pierced him. They are the ones who will mourn for him at his coming, not the inhabitants of the Earth who can only curse him (Rev 16:9, 11, 21).

## **The government will be upon his shoulders**

For a child is born for us, a son is given to us.

God has put the governance on his shoulders,  
And he will be called Wonderful Counselor,  
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.  
There will be no end to his great kingdom and its peace.  
He will sit on David's throne reigning over his kingdom.  
He will establish it firmly with justice and righteousness  
from that time on and forever.  
The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this (Isa 9:6-7).

The child that is born is the Christ-child, the one born to be the king of the Jews (Mt 2:2, Lk 1:32-33) and who will return one day soon as the victorious Messiah to rule the world (Jer 23:5-6). The governance of the world will rest upon his shoulders during his thousand-year rule. The government is not yet on his shoulders. Christ is seated at the right-hand of the Father in heaven, but he is not running the world. John points out that the whole world lies under the control of the evil one (1 Jn 5:19). No, only when the Messiah returns to Earth will the governance be on his shoulders and he will have a billion saints to serve him. He has been and will be a Wonderful Counselor, Almighty God, none the less. Everlasting Father should not be confused with the Father in the Trinity. He is Everlasting Father in relation to his people. The name can also be translated as Father of Eternity, the creator of time. Prince of Peace expresses the fact that the world under his rule will be at peace; there will be no wars. Nations will no longer need to spend billions of dollars on defense.

He will rule the world with a rod of iron, a theocracy. This is the Kingdom of God, the Messianic kingdom which Jesus continually spoke about. His rule is not in the context of heaven or the Church or in human hearts. It is the climax and culmination of this world's history. The Kingdom of God is an earthly, Jewish kingdom, based in Jerusalem. The Messiah will rule from the throne of David. He will establish true justice and righteousness on Earth while Satan is imprisoned and unable to exert his evil influence. While the Messiah rules the Earth, his people Israel will live in an enlarged Israel and organize temple worship (Ezek 40 -48). The saints, who come from all the nations of the world, will rule with Jesus from their home in New Jerusalem. The subjects of the kingdom are the ungodly inhabitants of the Earth who survived the great catastrophes.

The Lord loves his people. It is his zeal and passionate commitment that will cause him to accomplish this. He longs to see Israel functioning as a righteous, just, and peaceful nation; not one led by evil kings or oppressed by foreigners. The Messianic reign is the answer. Isaiah said: The remnant of Judah who survive will take root below and bear fruit above. For from Jerusalem will come a remnant, and from Mount Zion survivors. The zeal of the Lord of Armies will accomplish this (Isa 37:31-32).

There can be no doubt that the Messiah is divine. He is the Lord of Armies, Immanuel (God with us), and as Isaiah says later regarding the coming Messiah, “Here is your God” (Isa 40:7).

### **A Shoot from Jesse will rule a new world** (Isa 11:1-16).

This passage is a summary of the Messiah’s ministry during his first and second comings. The Spirit of the Lord will rest upon him, giving him wisdom, understanding, counsel, power, and the fear of the Lord, making him the perfect leader; the anointed one, the Messiah. Jesus understood that he was this anointed one. In the synagogue at Nazareth he read a passage from Isaiah commencing with the words “The Spirit of the Lord is on me,” and after reading it he said, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (Lk 4:18-21).

How much did Isaiah understand about Jesus’ life and ministry? He ‘saw’ and prophesied about Jesus’ birth, his teaching, and his death, but most of his prophecies concentrated on the regathering of Israel and the Messiah’s rule over the nations in the latter days. This famous passage describes the Messiah as the shoot of Jesse, David’s father.

Isaiah begins by talking about the Messiah’s Spirit-empowered ministry which describes Jesus’ work in Galilee. He tells of Jesus’ just judgment of the poor and deciding disputes for the meek with equity. But the scene changes dramatically in verse 4: “His speech will strike the inhabitants of the Earth, the breath of his lips will slay the wicked (Ps 2:9). This is second-coming activity. Then follows his rule on Earth with righteousness, faithfulness, and harmony in the world of nature that will characterize life in the millennium. In those days the Earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea, and creation will be set free from its bondage to corruption (Rom

8:21). This will never happen under secular governments, but only under a theocracy in which God is honored and worshiped.

“In that day” (11:10), is a sure sign that Isaiah is now prophesying about the latter days. The Messiah has arrived and he, the Root of Jesse, will stand as a banner (rallying point) for the peoples. The nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious. This glorious resting place is the temple in Jerusalem where the nations will come to worship and offer gifts.

The prophecy predicts both a scattering of Israel and then their regathering to their promised land. Half of the Jews in the world have already returned, and when he begins his reign, the Lord will gather the remainder of his chosen race from all over the world, the Church having already been resurrected and united to the Lord in New Jerusalem.

Examples of the surrounding nations that the Jews would return from are given in verse 11. In Isaiah’s day, there was no diaspora of Israel among these nations, so his words are purely prophetic. He predicts three things concerning the regathering of Israel to their land. Firstly, they would be united; there would be no more jealousy between Israel and Judah. Secondly, they would be successful in conquering their neighbors; Assyria (Iran, Iraq) in the East, Jordan (Edom, Moab, and Ammon) to the West, Egypt to the South, and Syria in the North, and the islands and coastal regions of the Mediterranean. Thirdly, the Lord would raise a banner to the nations and assemble the banished of Israel. Millions of Jews have returned to Israel from these countries in the past 100 years and the Muslim governments were glad to get rid of them and send them on their way home. The passage must be taken literally in this way because its fulfillment is recent history.

## **God will gather armies to destroy the world’s sinners** (Isa 13:4-13).

Chapter thirteen of Isaiah is entitled “A prophecy against Babylon that Isaiah son of Amoz saw.” This is the first of a series of prophetic utterances that the prophet makes concerning the surrounding nations. God is sovereign and all kingdoms will eventually become the kingdoms of God and his Messiah. The fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians was still over one hundred years away, but Isaiah saw

Babylon as the extension of the pride of man that set itself against God in building the tower of Babel (Gen 11:1-9, Dan 4:30, Rev 14:8, 17:5, 18:2-3). The prophecy is double-barreled as many prophecies are. Comparing Revelation 17-18 with verses 4-13 suggests that they describe the destruction of “Babylon” at the end of the age, while Isaiah 13:14-22 refers to the fall of Babylon to the Medes in 539 B.C.

The Lord has summoned his consecrated ones, his warriors, to carry out his angry judgments on the nations. His consecrated ones are not angels or the Lord’s people; they are the armies of the nations over whom he has sovereign power. They are the weapons of his indignation, and in this case, the armies come from a distant land to destroy the whole Earth. The context demands a global context, so ‘Earth’ is a better translation than ‘land’. The Hebrew is ambiguous. The Lord’s armies at the end of the age will destroy the whole Earth, probably in a nuclear holocaust. Every hand will go limp and every man’s courage will melt. People will be terrified. The Day of the Lord’s visitation is cruel, exhibiting fierce anger, turning the entire inhabited Earth into desolation and destroying the sinners within it.

As confirmed by Jesus (Mt 24:29), the sun, moon, and stars will be obscured as the world is enveloped by smoke and darkness in the last few days (Rev 6:12, 8:12). The judgment that coincides with Jesus’ return will not be a pretty sight. Apart from global warfare, there will be worldwide earthquakes. God has had enough of the world’s pomp and arrogance and he will punish the wicked for their evil. However, this is not the end of the world; it is followed by the millennium when the world is renewed. This is not the final judgment when individuals are judged according to what they have done. This is a judgment of the nations. The slaughter will be such that people will become “scarcer than pure gold,” but the survivors will continue to inhabit the Earth. As for those who love Jesus, it is at his coming that they are resurrected, raptured, and glorified.

**The Lord will again choose Israel and settle them in their land** (Isa 14:1-2).

After more than two thousand years of life in the wilderness, the Lord will again have compassion for Jacob and choose Israel. He has not yet poured out his Spirit on them; that will occur at the Messiah’s

return (Zech 12:10) when he makes a new covenant with them (Jer 31:31-34). During the past hundred years, the Lord has been settling the Jews back in their land, and foreigners (mainly Palestinians) have joined them, affiliating themselves with the house of Jacob. Currently, 75% of the population of Israel is Jewish and 21% Arab. When the Messiah returns to be king over Israel, the whole world will be subservient to Israel; they will rule over those who oppressed them in the past. OT prophecies are not concerned with the Church which will have been resurrected and live in New Jerusalem in the sky during the Messianic era. Only Daniel speaks of their exalted position when all the kingdoms under heaven are handed over to them and all rulers serve and obey them (Dan 7:27).

### **The Messiah will reign on David's throne with love and faithfulness** (Isa 16:4-5).

Isaiah 16 is an oracle concerning Moab. The context of verses 4-5 is when the oppressor (the Antichrist) is no more and the destruction has ceased. When this one who trampled everything underfoot has vanished from the land, a throne will be established in love and faithfulness, justice and righteousness. The man who will sit on David's throne and reign in faithfulness is the Messiah.

This is reminiscent of Luke 21:24: "Gentiles will trample Jerusalem until their times are fulfilled." Historically Moab was offered deliverance from Assyria by submitting to Judah, but the prophecy here points to a later and greater deliverance under the Messiah. Moab was almost destroyed as a people, but Jeremiah prophesied that the fortunes of Moab would be restored in the latter days (Jer 48:47). The Moabites were descendants of Lot and were located in the modern-day country of Jordan.

### **Egypt, Assyria, and Israel united** (Isa 19:16-25).

Six times in these verses we have the phrase "in that day." It is the Messianic era when the land of Israel will extend from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates, thus annexing parts of Egypt and ancient Assyria. In that day the land of Judah will become a terror to the Egyptians (Isa 19:17). The Lord will make himself known to the Egyptians and the Egyptians will know the Lord. There will be a

highway from Egypt to Assyria running through Israel. Maybe Isaiah mentions these two nations as southern and northern representatives of all nations who will come to worship the Lord during that time. The enlarged land of Israel will be a blessing amid the Earth because all the Messianic blessings will spread abroad from Zion. As Egypt and Assyria are absorbed into greater Israel, their populations will constitute the “foreigners who join themselves to the Lord” (Isa 56:6-8) and they will be regarded as the Lord’s people, the work of his hand, and his inheritance. These Muslims will at last realize that Jesus is more than a prophet.

### **The Lord’s devastation of the Earth** (Isa 24:1-23)

Chs. 24-27 form an exciting series of prophecies about the end of this age and the beginning of the next. After devastating prophecies about the judgment of the Earth and its total population in ch. 24, chs. 25-27 gives us joyful information about victory over death, the resurrection, and the blossoming of God’s chosen people, Israel, in the new world.

The Lord will strip the Earth bare and make it desolate. Cities and all man-made infrastructure will be destroyed, just as the tower of Babel was destroyed. Earthquakes will twist the Earth’s surface and its inhabitants will be decimated and scattered. Everyone will be affected; neither wealth nor position will help in that day. Mankind has defiled their habitation and broken the laws God gave them. The Earth is under a curse that devours it like fire. The inhabitants will be scorched by the heat and only a few will survive.

“The worldly lifestyle of escapist revelry falls silent” (ESV Study Bible comment on Isaiah 24:7-13). The world of entertainment with its dancing and drinking has ceased. But in stark contrast, there is a multitude of people from the West and the East and from the ends of the Earth, who are celebrating and singing for joy over the majesty of the Righteous One (vv. 14-16).

Vv. 17-20 revert to the terror experienced by the unbelievers as the windows of heaven are opened with meteorological disasters and the Earth is utterly broken and split apart and violently shaken by earthquakes. The fall of the Earth, never to rise again applies to the world in its present form, because we are told that there will be survivors and the outcome is that the Lord, Jesus the Messiah, reigns

on Mount Zion, in Jerusalem in the presence of his elders (Rev 4:4). Isaiah later speaks of new heavens and a new Earth, which is a renewal of the present world rather than a new one.

On that day the Lord will punish the world rulers and the evil powers that support them (2 Pet 2:4, Jude 6), but the judgment occurs in two stages. They are immediately defeated, but not annihilated. They are imprisoned for many days until the end of the millennium (Rev 20:2) at the final judgment. Satan is then released from his prison and cast into the lake of fire (Rev 20:10), and the evil spiritual forces and their lackeys, the world rulers, will be punished with him. We don't know much about these heavenly powers but we are told that the Lord fixed the borders of the nations according to the number of the sons of God (Deut 32:8); angels who were given responsibility for the nations, while the Lord chose Israel to be his people. Vv. 21-22 are confirmation that there are two judgment days; the defeat of the evil powers and the unregenerate, secular world of mankind at the Lord's coming, and then the Last Judgment after the millennium, when unbelievers are judged according to what they have done.

After the destruction of the Great Tribulation, the Lord Almighty will be king over the entire Earth. This is none other than Jesus, the Messiah. His reign is distinct from God's sovereignty over the universe. His resting place will be so glorious (Isa 4:5, 11:10) that the light of the sun and moon are eclipsed. His elders (Rev 4:4) represent the resurrected redeemed who will dwell with him in New Jerusalem.

## **Death will be swallowed up forever** (Isa 25:6-8)

Following the apocalyptic terror of Isaiah 24, the cities of the world (the Babylon of Revelation 18) lie desolate, never to be rebuilt (Isa 25:2). From the judgment of the nations, we now turn to the blessed state of the Messianic reign. The Lord has prepared a great feast for all peoples, not Israel, but the resurrected redeemed from all nations. Jesus said, "Many will come from the East and the West and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven (=Messianic reign), but the sons of the kingdom (unbelieving Jews) will be thrown outside (Mt 8:11). When feasting at a Pharisee's home, one of the guests said, "Blessed is the one who will eat in the Kingdom of God (=Messianic reign) (Lk 14:15), and Jesus

at the Last Supper said, “I will not eat (this Passover) again until it finds fulfillment in the Kingdom of God (=Messianic reign)” (Lk 22:16).

The Kingdom of God in these contexts concerns the monarchy, the redeemed Church who celebrate the wedding supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:9) in New Jerusalem. Only in that context will God wipe away every tear from their eyes because there is no more death or mourning or crying or pain (Rev 7:17, 21:4).

We don't know enough about resurrection life to say what feasting means for the resurrected. We enjoy eating and drinking and it would be disappointing if that were to stop. Resurrected bodies are spiritual bodies that don't need food but they become physical when in the world. The resurrected Jesus ate food with his disciples and when angels visited Abraham, they ate food prepared for them.

At the last supper, Jesus said to his disciples, “I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Lk 22:29-30). A king's table was the place where he and his officials would sit down and eat together. David and Jonathan were regular attendees at King Saul's table. King Solomon's table was extensive. Daily provisions included 3 tons of flour, 6 tons of meal, 30 cattle, 100 sheep, plus deer, antelope, and fowl (1 Ki 5:22-23).

Promises to those who are victorious include eating from the Tree of Life in God's paradise, eating the hidden manna, and sitting with Jesus on his throne.

Note that this prophecy does not extend to the whole Earth. It is only on Mount Zion that death has been swallowed up (destroyed) and it applies only to the immortal, resurrected Church in New Jerusalem. As the curse is lifted from the Earth, the unredeemed inhabitants will live longer lives, but one can only become immortal through the miracle of regeneration and resurrection.

## **Resurrection and judgment**

Your people who have died will live, their corpses will rise, those who dwell in the dust will wake up and shout for joy.

Your dew is like the dew of the morning,  
the soil will give birth to her dead (Isa 26:19).

Can there be any doubt that Isaiah is speaking these remarkable words about the resurrection of the dead? Verse 14 says the wicked are now dead, they live no more; their spirits do not rise. In contrast, vs. 19 is a clear statement of the bodily resurrection of the righteous dead. He is talking about God's people: the saints, the elect. God's dew is a heavy life-giving morning dew, and the soil will give birth to the dead that are buried in it. The dead in Christ will rise and meet the Lord in the air at his coming (1 Thess 4:16-17). Isaiah prophetically tells them to awake and ululate, to hoot with joy. An ululation is a cry made in the throat, especially by African women, to mark a significant event or celebration. God's dew is like the morning dew that mysteriously revitalizes the grass. He enables the soil to give birth to the spirits of the righteous dead. The dead are sown in dishonor, but the righteous dead are raised in glory, they reappear in supernatural, immortal bodies. It does not imply that the spirits of the righteous were in their graves since they died.

Vv. 20-21 go back a step to the Great Tribulation. The righteous are counseled to go into hiding for a short time until God's wrath passes by. Jesus said that if those days had not been cut short for the sake of the elect, no human being would be saved. He will come out of his dwelling to punish the people of the Earth for their sins and the soil will reveal the blood of the martyrs, it will no longer conceal the slain who are in it.

The saints will be given into the hand of Antichrist for 3 ½ years (Dan 7:25). When the devil is thrown down to Earth at the end of the age, he will know that his time is short (Rev 12:10-12). Israel will be given two wings of the great eagle so that she might flee from Satan into the wilderness for 3 ½ years, and then he will make war on the rest of her offspring, Christians who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus (Rev 12:14-17). Israel will be protected in the wilderness, but even so, two-thirds of them will die. The Church, to a large extent, will be martyred. Jesus posed this important question to his disciples: "When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on Earth?" (Lk 18:8). The answer is yes because the rapture of the living saints will accompany the resurrection of the righteous, but the

Christian population at the Lord's coming will be a fraction of what it is now. The False Prophet will cause those who don't worship the image of the beast to be slain (Rev 13:15). The Antichrist will make war with the saints and overpower them for 3 ½ years (Dan 7:21, 25). And there will be those who apostasize.

The Messiah is coming down from his throne in heaven to punish the evildoers who side with the Antichrist and rebel against him, the armies who lay siege to Jerusalem to wipe out God's people from the world.

## **Israel will blossom and fill the Earth with fruit**

(Isa 27:6, 12-13)

Israel has become established in their ancient land and they have filled the world with their fruit and more especially their technological expertise. In the 1950s and 1960s, Jaffa oranges became emblems of the Israeli state. Israel is a major exporter of fresh produce and a world leader in agricultural technologies even though the geography of the country is not naturally conducive to agriculture (Wikipedia). They export gems, precious metals, electrical machinery, pharmaceuticals, optical, technical, and medical apparatus, and computers.

The present area of Israel is only a fraction of what it was under King Solomon. The promised land will extend to the Euphrates River, as the Lord promised to Abraham (Gen 15:18), and will include parts of present-day Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq. "*In that day* the Lord will thresh out grain from the ever-flowing Euphrates River to the wadi of Egypt." This is to be explained by the exodus of 850,000 Sephardi and Mizrahi Jews from Arab and Muslim countries from 1948 to the 1970s. Another wave took place from Iran in 1979–80. The majority lived in French and Italian-controlled North Africa, 18% in Iraq, 10% in Egypt, 7% in Yemen, 23% in Iran and Turkey.

*In that day*, a great trumpet will be blown. It is not only a signal for the resurrection of the righteous (Mt 24:31, 1 Cor 15:52, 1 Thess 4:16); it is also a signal for the inauguration of the Kingdom of God (Rev 10:7, 11:15) when remaining Jews will return to Israel and worship the Lord at Mount Zion in Jerusalem.

## **The Messiah will save Jerusalem from a siege by many nations** (Isa 29:5-8, 18-20)

The siege of Jerusalem spoken about here is not specified. Some think of Sennacherib, and others of the Romans, and the prophet may have had them in mind. Still, the multitude of nations that fight against Mount Zion and the intervention of the Lord with thunder, earthquake, and great noise, and with whirlwind, tempest, and flames of devouring fire indicates the time when the world coalition of nations will lay siege to Jerusalem in the last days, the battle of Armageddon.

The most satisfactory interpretation of Ariel is God's hearth, the hearth of the altar where the sacrifices were burnt. Israel will be brought very low, and Jerusalem will be besieged, reduced to a whisper, like a dying man. But suddenly, in an instant, she will be visited by the Lord, at the return of the Messiah, elsewhere described as coming with lightning, thunder, earthquake, and great noise (Rev 16:18). The multitude of nations fighting against Jerusalem will suddenly become like a bad dream; they will be no more. Jerusalem will become like an altar hearth when the surrounding armies of the nations meet their destruction by the flame of a devouring fire.

The Messianic reign that follows is a time of restoration when things are transformed. Those who were deaf to God's word and blind to spiritual matters will gain understanding and enlightenment. The meek and the poor will rejoice in the Lord while tyrants, scoffers, slanderers, fraudsters, and all evildoers will come to an end.

## **A king will reign in righteousness** (Isa 32:1-5)

The king who will rule in righteousness is the Messiah, the princes who will rule with justice are the righteous; they are co-heirs with the Messiah. There will be no corrupt government during the millennium. Every leader will be a safe refuge for those in need, a shelter from the storms of life. Disabilities will be cured, spiritual, mental, and moral deficiencies will be corrected. People will be ruled over and taught correctly. No more rubbish from the media. They won't call good evil, or evil good. Fools and scoundrels will not be respected. The populace will be enlightened as righteousness fills the Earth.

## **Your eyes will see the King in his beauty** (Isa 33:17-24)

The context of this chapter is the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah, and his struggle with the might of Assyria. The people of Judah need to repent as their defeat by Assyria approaches, but out of this darkness, the prophet Isaiah sees a bright future for God's people.

In those future days the righteous "will see the King in his beauty." They will see his face (Rev 22:4). The Lord (Jehovah) will be their king, their judge, and their lawgiver who saves them. They will view a land that stretches far; the land of promise at last at peace, restored, and cleared of all enemies. The peace they experience includes physical and psychological health. No one will say he is sick, and their sins will be forgiven (cf. Jer 33:6-8). It is the millennium.

## **The Lord is angry with all nations** (Isa 34:1-10)

Isaiah calls on all the nations of the world to realize that the Lord is enraged with them and has devoted them to destruction. This is a severe condemnation that we might read carelessly, not realizing the implications. God has condemned all our countries because they have chosen secular ideology. They have embraced the idol of science and rejected anything spiritual, including God who is the fountain of life. The Lord makes it clear that one day, at the climax of history, the nations will suffer a severe slaughter, and the mountains will flow with their blood. This was prophesied long ago by the composer of the second psalm which speaks of the nations raging and plotting in vain against the Lord and his Messiah. Armageddon is real; the spirit of lawlessness is already increasing. Paul said the Day of the Lord will not come unless the rebellion comes first when the man of lawlessness is revealed. The Antichrist will oppose and exalt himself above every so-called god or object of worship.

This passage has a connection to the opening of the sixth seal (Rev 6:12-17) which describes the Lord's coming on the day of his wrath and alludes to this passage: "All the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shriveled leaves from the fig tree." The stench of the corpses is literal and evokes a feeling of repulsion. Cf. Joel 2:20 for a similar descripti

There will be severe earthquakes, the sky will vanish from view, the mountains and islands will be removed from their places, and unbelieving mankind will be slaughtered. It is not hyperbole. Isaiah said that mankind will become scarcer than pure gold. Jeremiah 25:30-33 has a parallel prophecy.

Edom, the descendants of Jacob's twin brother Esau, must represent the Islamic nations who descended from him and are hostile toward God's people. They are the immediate object of God's condemnation here. The ancient land of Edom and their capital city Bozrah are south of the Dead Sea in the Kingdom of Jordan. Isaiah 63:1-6 is a prophecy of the Messiah returning from a victorious battle in Edom on the day of vengeance. This battle against Muslim forces is part of the final battle and results in the oilfields of Arabia becoming burning pitch that will never be quenched (Isa 34:9-10). The thick black plumes of smoke will go up forever and will contribute to the sun becoming black like sackcloth and the moon turning red like blood.

### **The ransomed of the Lord will return (Isa 35:1-10)**

This passage lends itself to allegory and spiritualization. As Christians sing the popular chorus, "The ransomed of the Lord will return," they naturally think of themselves as the ransomed of the Lord. John Gill says in his Exposition of the Entire Bible (1746-63):

All this may be applied to the state of the saints in heaven; for the highway before described not only leads to Zion the church below, but to the Zion above, to the heavenly glory; and all the redeemed, all that walk in this way, shall come thither; at death their souls "return" to God that gave them, and are in immediate happiness with Christ; and in the resurrection shall return from their dusty beds, and shall appear before God in Zion above.

When interpreting Isaiah, we must remember that this was not what was in his thoughts. His concern, and that of all the OT prophets was with God's people Israel. The Church was not yet revealed to the OT prophet. They knew nothing about the Church that Jesus said he would establish and they didn't make their prophecies with Christians in mind. Israel is never called the Church and the Church is never called Israel. The "Israel of God" (Gal 6:16) refers to the Jewish believers who recognized that circumcision was no longer important.

During the millennium, the resurrected Church will reign with the Lord in New Jerusalem, while redeemed Israel will live on Earth with the other nations as subjects of the kingdom.

When Stephen spoke of “the church in the wilderness” (Acts 7:38), he used the word Greek word ἐκκλησία, of which the primary meaning is assembly or congregation. To translate it as ‘church,’ is an anachronism. Nearly all modern translations of the Bible translate it as ‘assembly’ or ‘congregation’. The Mosaic covenant could not save, but the righteous found salvation through faith and are presently in the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb 12:22).

The previous chapter described judgment on Edom and those who lived there, and this chapter describes the restoration of the people of God and the glorification of their habitation. *The ransomed of the Lord are the redeemed nation of Israel*, and they are returning to the restored and glorified land of Israel, to Zion, the eternal city of their God.

Their land has already been restored today but more restoration is to come. Once a wilderness, it now blossoms abundantly. Waters break forth in the wilderness; the desert flourishes with God’s blessing of abundant water. It has already started, but during the Messiah’s reign, the curse will be lifted from the world, and the glory of Lebanon, Carmel, and Sharon will be given to the whole land. Israel will see the glory of the Lord in this transformation of their land, more especially there than anywhere else, because it is to Zion that the Lord will return. Isaiah tells Israel to be strong and not to fear, because their God brings vengeance and divine retribution, and he will save them. Their nation will be converted and their land and the whole world will be gradually transformed from the destruction of the tribulation period caused by war, earthquake, and fire. When Jesus came, he opened the eyes of the blind and healed the deaf and dumb and the lame; a foretaste of greater things to come during his reign.

There will be a highway in the land of Israel leading to Zion, and only the redeemed of the Lord will walk on that way. It will be called the way of Holiness. The unclean and fools can’t take this road, it is for pilgrims who will be overtaken with gladness and joy, Sorrow and mourning will flee away.

## **All flesh will see the glory of the Lord when he returns to Jerusalem** (Isa 40:1-1)

These verses are a prologue to the second half of the Book of Isaiah in which the main theme is the coming of the Messiah. The words of comfort are a prophecy directed firstly towards the exiles of Israel as they return to their land after their exile in the sixth century BC. But the long-range fulfillment will coincide with the coming of the Messiah to reign. Only then will “the glory of the Lord be *revealed* and everyone will *see* it together (at the same time). Or as expressed later: “The Lord has *bared* his arm before all the nations, and all the ends of the Earth shall *see* the salvation of our God” (Isa 52:10).

The message proclaimed to Jerusalem is one of comfort; her hardship will be over; her sins forgiven. Mankind is mortal and perishing like the grass, but the word of God will stand forever. This may refer to the wealth and glory of godless mankind in the last days. When the breath of the Lord blows on them, they wither and their glorious accomplishments pass away. The Lord will come as a mighty warrior and ruler, but he is coming to save his people and they will be comforted, because he will deal with them gently as a shepherd with his sheep, feeding and protecting and guiding them. He treated his disciples in this way, and during his reign, he will shepherd his nation Israel nation in this loving fashion.

The voice crying in the wilderness had a fulfillment in John the Baptist’s ministry (Mk 1:1-4, Jn 1:23), but the big, visible event that all the ends of the Earth will see is future (1 Pet 4:13). On that day Jerusalem will be raised up on a high mountain (Zech 14:10) and from that high standpoint will proclaim to the towns of Judah “Behold your God!”

The Messiah came in the person of Jesus, born to be the king of the Jews, but his coming in glory to rule the world from Jerusalem is future. He will come with mighty power and his arm will bring into subjection those that oppose him. His reward is with him (Rev 22:12) and the righteous will inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world (Mt 25:34).

## **Israel the Lord's chosen** (Isa 44:1-5)

Israel has not been abandoned by God. He chose them and this passage is his promise to them. When he comes, he will pour out his Spirit and his blessing upon their descendants, restoring them and their land, Israel. At that time they will *all* know the Lord, and they will flourish and want to acknowledge that they belong to the Lord. The Jews, who have been so often persecuted and marked physically to humiliate them, will in the millennium be so proud to call themselves, the Lord's or Israelites. The following prophets made similar promises to those in this passage (Ezek 39:25-29, Joel 2:28-32, Zech 12:10).

## **Every knee will bow to the Lord and every tongue will swear allegiance** (Isa 45:22-25)

The Lord offers an invitation to people all over the world to turn to him and be saved. Salvation here is liberation from the idols and false gods they have been serving, but who cannot save them. It is also a precursor to the wonderful invitation spoken by Joel and quoted by Peter at Pentecost that, "whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Acts 2:21).

The Lord predicts and swears by himself that every knee will bow to him and every tongue will swear oaths by him. While Isaiah prophesies universal submission to the Messiah during the Messianic rule, Paul quotes the statement (Rom 14:11) with reference to the final judgment. Everyone will submit to God/Jesus and acknowledge that he is Lord (Phil 2:10-11).

During the millennium the nations that raged against him will recognize that only in the Lord is there deliverance and strength. They will come to him at Jerusalem and be ashamed. The remnant of Israel, on the other hand, will be delivered and make their boast in him. The "offspring of Israel" always refers to the future generation of Israel that is converted at the Messiah's return (Isa 43:5, 44:3, 45:25).

## **The nations gather Israel back to their land** (Isa 49:22-23)

The Lord says that he will beckon to the nations and they will bring a future generation of Israel back to their land. Kings and queens will in effect be their foster fathers and nursing mothers. They will bow down

to Israel and lick the dust at their feet. Cf. Isa 45:14, 60:10-14. The Reformers liked to think that this passage was talking about the relationship between Church and State, but Isaiah is a Jewish prophet and he has Jewish people in mind.

Many national leaders have helped the Jews return to the promised land, including British prime ministers and American presidents. In January 2020, forty-six world leaders, including many presidents, met to attend the fifth World Holocaust Forum in Jerusalem. The subservience of world leaders will be more pronounced during the millennium when all the nations and their leaders will make pilgrimages to Jerusalem. The nation or kingdom that does not show honor and respect to Israel in those days will be utterly laid waste (Isa 60:12).

### **Messiah will bring justice to all nations** (Isa 51:3-6)

The Lord promises Israel he will comfort Zion and look with compassion on her ruins. He will make Israel's deserts like the Garden of Eden and there will be joy and gladness, thanksgiving and singing. This geographical transformation results in praise to God and happiness for the nation. When his kingdom comes, instruction will proceed from the Lord personally, he will rule the world with justice and be a light for the nations. This does not refer to Jesus' ministry as recorded in the gospels. At that time he was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Mt 15:24). During the millennium the Messiah will be present at Jerusalem and will bring justice to the nations. He will teach them the right way to live and bring about deliverance from the world's ruined state. His arm (power and authority) will bring justice to the nations, the remnant of the wicked who survive the Great Tribulation. The far-off people of the coastlands will put their hope in the Messiah and have faith in his ability. The Messiah's salvation goes out to the coastlands and they will eagerly wait for his instruction.

Israel is told to look up at the heavens and down at the Earth because they are destined for destruction. When the Messiah comes, they will vanish like smoke, and the Earth will wear out like a garment, and the ungodly inhabitants will die like flies. But the subsequent reign of the Messiah is forever, his justice and salvation will never fail.

## **The Lord will reign from Zion** (Isa 52:1-2, 7-10)

God's eternal city Jerusalem will soon be free, free from oppressors who don't worship Israel's God. Zion is told to clothe herself in strength, to sit enthroned because her God has come to reign. Her servitude will change to dominion, and her bondage to freedom.

Vs. 7 is often interpreted as the spread of the gospel of God's grace throughout the world. Paul quotes the first sentence in that context (Rom 10:15), but the good news here is clearly on Jerusalem's victory and the physical coming of the Messiah Jesus to reign. The Israeli surveillance team will see him with their own eyes. The Lord will begin to reign when the seventh trumpet is blown and the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Messiah. Jesus is presently seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven, he is the sovereign ruler over the universe, but not until this moment in history does he come into the world to reign in Israel on David's throne. It is the Day of the Lord.

He will come to redeem Jerusalem at the time of the greatest battle ever fought, and he will bear his holy arm in the sight of all nations. Jesus' divine strength, which up to this point has been concealed, will be revealed before the eyes of the whole world – every eye will see him. The Messiah will reign over the world from Jerusalem and Israel will be vindicated as God's people. The good news of this coming kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come (Matt 24:14).

## **Israel will possess surrounding nations** (Isa 54:1-3)

These prophetic words are addressed to Jerusalem who during captivity and exile became depopulated, but the prophet encourages them to prepare for a bright future. Ever since Israel started returning to the promised land near the end of the nineteenth century, they have spread abroad to the left and right. Facing East this would mean North and South. The promise in vs. 3 is that Jerusalem's future offspring (lit. her seed) will dispossess nations and occupy their desolate towns and villages. Especially after the Second World War, the growth has been exponential.

Preachers may spiritualize the passage, but the original and best meaning pertains to Jerusalem and Israel. Jesus said the meek will inherit the Earth, a related doctrine, but not a reason to Christianize this passage. The promise of land to Abram (Gen 15:19-20), from the wadi of Egypt to the great River Euphrates includes the Palestinian territories and parts of Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria.

The following verses reassure Israel, that although she was like a wife deserted by her husband for a very long time, the Lord her Maker will have compassion on her and regather her again. His steadfast love will not depart from her and his covenant with her will not be in doubt.

### **A Redeemer will Come to Zion** (Isa 59:14-21)

A time will come when there will be no more justice in the world, no right living; truth will be ignored in the public square and the media. Those who turn from evil will become prey for not conforming to the godless society around them. We are there now! The Lord will be displeased at this situation and surprised at the lack of opposition to it. The lie will be universally accepted. Even the faithful are silent; there is not enough intercession. So, the Lord himself will have to intervene in the world's affairs. The King of kings and Lord of lords will come to execute righteousness and justice. Jesus, the Word of God, who is called Faithful and True, the Savior of the world, will put on garments of vengeance and will repay the evildoers according to their deeds. He will repay the 'coastal areas', which in that time meant the heathen nations, and in our time means the powerful cities of the world, so that they will all learn to fear him from East to West; the whole world. Jesus will come in judgment like a rushing stream, driven by the wind of the Lord.

But to Zion, he will come as a Redeemer, to the Israelites who turn from their transgression. The remnant of Israel who will be rescued through this judgment on the nations are guaranteed that God's new covenant with them is eternal. Paul quotes the Septuagint version of vs. 20 as proof of the final restoration of all Israel (Rom 11:26). He will remove ungodliness from Jacob. The Hebrew of Isaiah 59:20 says the Redeemer will come *to Zion* to those in Jacob who turn from their transgression. The LXX says *for the sake of Zion*, and Paul says *from Zion*. They are all true. When the Lord returns in glory, he raises the

dead who meet him in the air, then he sets foot on the Mount of Olives with all the saints with him (Zech 14:4-5), then he enters the temple on Mount Zion (Ezek 43:43) and from there he goes out to save Israel from their enemies and pour out his Spirit upon on all Israel. So he comes to Zion for Israel's sake and he comes out of Zion to save them at the battle of Armageddon. It is from Zion that his glory will shine and from Zion that his mighty scepter will extend (Ps 110:2).

Repentance must precede their conversion. At the Lord's coming, the survivors of the earthquake in Jerusalem "give glory to God" (Rev 11:13, an expression of repentance, and "they will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him (Zech 12:10, Rev 1:7). It is not unbelievers who repent. We are told many times that all they can do is curse God (Rev 16:9, 11, 21).

### **The Lord's glory will shine over Jerusalem** (Isa 60:1-22)

This prophecy is about light returning after a dark night of sin, punishment, and suffering. The prophet addresses Zion as it emerges from the destruction of the world, and being saved from the last world empire symbolically called Babylon.

How literally should we take the expressions "the glory of the Lord rises upon you" and "the Lord rises upon you?" In the last days, darkness will cover the Earth and thick darkness the peoples, but the Lord will rise upon Jerusalem, and his glory will be seen upon her. The Lord himself is returning to Jerusalem. No prophecies suggest that people will see the Messiah returning without his glory. It is a glorified Messiah who returns with bright light and loud noise, and when the events accompanying his arrival are all over, his glory will continue to be seen, not only in the temple on Mount Zion but also in the Holy City above Jerusalem. This is God's dwelling place on Earth. "The dwelling place of God is with man" (Rev 21:3).

During the millennium the nations will come to Jerusalem's light and kings will come to the brightness of her dawn. Jerusalem will look like a sunrise. It will be beatified above by the glory of the Lord, and below by the gold and silver that the nations will bring, and also by the return of the Jewish people from all over the world and the extension of Israel's borders from Egypt to Iraq. The population of enlarged Israel

will be the Messiah's people, and all nations will submit to Jerusalem's status as the Messiah's capital city, and they will worship at the temple, the place of the Messiah's throne (Ezek 43:7) and footstool (Ps 99:5, 132:7). Heaven is his throne and the Earth is his footstool (Isa 66:1). The temple will be the central point of the earthly presence of the Messiah, but it is only his footstool, his real dwelling place is in New Jerusalem. It will hover above in the heavenly realm where only his glory is seen (Rev 22:1-5). He has come down from heaven to live among Israel; that is the emphasis of the OT prophets.

The brilliant and glorious light of New Jerusalem is what is meant by the expression "new heavens." The whole chapter needs to be interpreted literally with this supernatural addition in view. Jerusalem will have no need of sun and moon to shine on it, for the glory of the Lord will be its everlasting light (Isa 60:19-20, Rev 21:23). The moon will be confounded and the sun ashamed, because the glory of the Lord above Mount Zion and Jerusalem will eclipse them. The rest of the Earth will still need the light of the sun and moon.

In those days all the inhabitants of Jerusalem will be righteous and they will 'possess the land' forever. The whole nation of Israel has at last been converted, "all Israel will be saved" (Rom 11:26). A fountain will be opened for them to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness. The inhabitants of New Jerusalem above, the resurrected Church, are also righteous because they are glorified by resurrection. Jesus said they would "inherit the Earth" (Mt 5:5). It is Christians who will rule the world; a position forfeited by Israel. The Jerusalem of the millennium and New Jerusalem in the sky overlap, the physical and heavenly realms flow into one another." Jerusalem is very much a part of this world, New Jerusalem is not.

Nations will come to the light of Jerusalem's glory, as the glory of the Lord is seen high above it. Kings will make pilgrimages to Jerusalem and bring their wealth as offerings that will be used to beautify the temple. The nations will bring all the remaining Jews home and Jerusalem will be the glorious capital of the world. The Messiah will glorify the place of his feet (Isa 60:13, Ezek 43:7) and beautify his sanctuary. Jerusalem will be the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. The name of the city is "the Lord is there" (Ezek 48:35).

## **The Messiah and restored Israel (Isa 61:1-11)**

Jesus cited verses 1-2 to describe his ministry in the synagogue at Nazareth and in so doing he declared himself to be the Messiah (Lk 4:16-21). The Spirit of the Lord was upon him, he was the anointed one, the Messiah, and his ministry entailed preaching good news to the poor, setting people free from evil spirits who bound them, and healing those who were oppressed by disease. But then the scene changes and Jesus didn't quote these words at Nazareth. The Messiah will proclaim the day of God's vengeance on the world; the wrath of God will be displayed at his second coming, the Day of the Lord.

Then those who mourn in Zion will rebuild the ancient ruins and cities and restore the places that have been devastated for many generations. The wealth of the nations will be brought to Israel and foreigners will tend their flocks and plow their fields. This is the Messianic rule, the millennium. The people of Israel will finally fulfill their role as a kingdom of priests of the Lord and as a holy nation. They will possess a double portion of land, extending from Egypt to the Euphrates, and be elevated above the nations. God will faithfully give Israel their recompense and make an everlasting covenant with them (c.f. Isa 54:10). Ezekiel also calls it a covenant of peace and describes Israel's peaceful existence during the Messianic reign (Ezek 34:23-31). Israel will be prominent in the world and acknowledged by everyone. They will all be taught of the Lord and experience his peace and righteousness. It is a mistake to interpret these verses as referring to the Church which is rarely in focus in these OT prophecies.

## **Jerusalem's future glory (Isa 62:1-7)**

You who call on the Lord, don't rest, and don't give him rest, until he establishes Jerusalem and makes her a subject of praise in the Earth (Isa 62:6b-7).

Isaiah again prophecies about Jerusalem, about a time when her righteousness will go forth as brightness and her salvation as a burning torch. The brightness is like that of the dawn, as the sun appears over the horizon. Jerusalem will be the abode of redeemed Israel. From a NT perspective, Christians might see here the glorious New Jerusalem (Rev 21), pictured as God's masterpiece of salvation, a city whose inhabitants are united to God in love by a marriage covenant, a

kingdom of priests who rule the world with their God and Savior. Both the nation of Israel and the international Church are the Lord's people, both look to Jerusalem as their eternal home, and both are described as the Lord's bride. However, Israel's hope is the ancient city of Jerusalem on Earth, the Church's Jerusalem comes down out of heaven and is a heavenly city. Things are often duplicated in the heavenly and physical realms: principalities and powers, a temple, a city called Jerusalem, and God's bride, whether Church or Israel.

## **The Messiah's day of vengeance (Armageddon) (Isa 63:1-6)**

Edom refers to the descendants of Jacob's brother, Esau, who was Israel's constant foe and the name became a symbol of the world in its hostility to Israel, the people of God. In a very graphic way, the Lord is seen here returning from Edom to Zion dressed in blood-stained clothes, victorious and powerful. This paints the same picture as the rider on the white horse (Rev 19). It is the Messiah, the Faithful and True, the Word of God, who is Lord of lords and King of kings (Rev 19:13, 16). He has trodden the winepress alone, the winepress of God's wrath, and the blood of his enemies has spattered his garments. It is not his own blood; this is Armageddon, not Calvary. The Messiah has trodden the winepress alone; no nation would support him, not even the UK or the US. Only the armies of heaven; angels and resurrected saints, follow him (Rev 19:14). He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is the Word of God (Rev 19:13).

Revelation 19:11-21 describes John's vision of the Lord's return. Most of his visions are described symbolically just as Isaiah's are, but the interpretation is a literal historic day of judgment and vengeance, the Day of the Lord. It is God's victory over the godless nations of the world carried out by the returning Messiah. "I have trodden the winepress alone" (Isa 63:3) is alluded to by John (Rev 14:19-20, 19:15-16) which confirms this interpretation. Armageddon is mentioned by name in Revelation 16:16 where the kings of the East confront the Messiah after the pouring out of the sixth bowl of wrath.

Compare, I trampled the nations in anger, I made them drunk in my wrath, and I poured out their blood on the ground (Isa 63:6) with, Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down

the nations. He will rule them with an iron scepter (Rev 19:15), and They trampled the grapes in the winepress outside the city and blood flowed out of it, rising as high as the horses' bridles for a distance of 1,600 stadia (Rev 14:20). It is a day of salvation for Israel, followed immediately by the binding of Satan and the millennial rule of the Messiah (Rev 20:1-4).

Edom doesn't exist as a nation anymore, but the name is appropriate for nations who are hostile to Israel because they are God's chosen people. It is especially applicable to the Arab neighbors who claim to be descendants of Esau, whom Jacob dispossessed of his birthright and kingship. This passage describes the day of judgment on the nations, a day of vengeance against all their rebellions of the past, culminating in the Day of the Lord. Psalm 2 is also a commentary on this battle.

There is a positive and negative side to the second coming of the Lord. It is a time of salvation for Israel and a time of judgment for the wicked. The above verses and much of the book of Revelation are gory passages that cannot be ignored or erased from God's word. God is holy, righteous, and just and everyone will be judged according to what they have done. The Battle Hymn of the Republic, written in 1861, borrows from Isaiah:

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;  
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;  
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword:  
His truth is marching on.

## **New heavens and a new Earth** (Isa 65:17-25)

I will create new heavens and a new Earth. The former things won't be remembered, they won't be brought to mind.

A reading of the following verses clearly shows that the Jewish expectation was for a *renewed*, transformed Earth, not a brand-new one. People will build houses, plant vineyards, and enjoy long lives. Peter said that we should look forward to and hasten the coming of the day of God when the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved and the elements will melt with fire because in keeping with God's promise, we are looking forward to new heavens and a new Earth, where righteousness is at home (2 Pet 3:13). This is the millennium when the

Messiah will rule in righteousness. John saw a vision of “a new heaven and a new Earth” (Rev 21:1) to which he adds, “and the sea was no more.” John uses “sea” symbolically, referring to the world of rebellious nations from which world empires arise (Isa 17:12-13, Dan 7:2-3). There is no other mention in the Bible about a new Earth. The Hebrew adjective is based on the verb “to renew or repair” and the content of the prophecy is clearly on restoration and transformation. So many commentators talk about a new planet and the eternal state of which the Bible only says: “And they will reign forever and ever” (Rev 22:5).

I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people (Isa 65:18). This is a transformation of the earthly Jerusalem and its people; not a description of New Jerusalem which comes down from heaven. Human lifespan will be extended, the fierceness of nature will be tamed, and all mankind will come and worship the Lord at Jerusalem. Isaiah says “The former things will not be remembered,” while John says “The first heaven and the first earth had passed away (Rev 21:1). The rest of the chapter is about the Holy City in the sky and should not be confused with the millennial Earth. Building houses, planting vineyards, and bearing children are not what we are led to expect in the heavenly realm.

“From the OT point of view, nothing was known of a state of blessedness beyond the grave. Hades lay beyond this present life, and nothing was known of a heaven in which men were blessed” (F. Delitzsch *Commentary on Isaiah*, page 493). “Throughout the entire Bible, the ultimate destiny of God’s people is an earthly destiny ... not in a heavenly realm removed from earthly existence” (G. E. Ladd, *A commentary on the Revelation of John*, page 275).

## **Israel born in a day**

Before she goes into labor, she gave birth;  
before the pains come upon her, she delivered a son.  
Can a country be born in a day  
or a nation be brought forth in a moment?  
Yet no sooner was Zion in labor  
than she gave birth to her children (Isa 66:7-8).

Is this the birth of Jesus as in Revelation 12? No, this is the birth of the nation, Israel. Will it happen after the Great Tribulation? No, this birth occurs before labor, before the pains come upon her. It happened in one day, in one moment when the United Nations declared Israel to be a nation on May 14<sup>th</sup> 1948. The next day Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria went to war against the new Jewish state. The war lasted seven months and resulted in Israel extending its area by fifty percent.

Franz Delizsch died in 1890, but he said this in his commentary: “The child who is born with such marvelous rapidity is a whole land full of men, an entire nation – the new Israel of the last days.” However, he interpreted it as the conversion of Israel in the last days; not the formation of a new nation which is still in a state of unbelief. Zion, or the Zionist movement, is the mother. Israel cannot be separated from its capital city Jerusalem. All who love Jerusalem should rejoice with her because she is the holy city, the city which God has chosen, the city where Jesus was crucified, and where he died and was resurrected. Christians should rejoice and be glad for the re-establishment of Israel and its capital city. It necessarily means suffering for others, especially the Palestinians, of whom up to two percent are Christians, but we need to see things from God’s perspective. The nations have oppressed *his* people and divided up *his* land, and they will be judged and punished for that.

Jesus said that Jerusalem would be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. He prophesied that Gentile domination of Jerusalem would come to an end. God will extend peace to Jerusalem like a river and the glory of the nations will come to her like an overflowing stream throughout the millennium, when they will show honor and respect to Israel and bring offerings of everything of which Israel has need (Isa 49:23).

## **The Messiah comes in judgment**

See, the Lord is coming with fire,  
and his chariots will be like a whirlwind.  
He will come down on them with hot anger,  
and rebuke them with flames of fire.  
For with fire and with his sword  
the Lord will execute judgment on all people,

and many will be those slain by the Lord (Isa 66:15-16).

These verses that describe the ferocity of the Messiah's return to Earth in judgment agree with other descriptions of his return (2 Thess 1:7-10, Rev 19:11-16). Before his return, the nations will increasingly give themselves to pagan and animistic beliefs and practices called, "woke" as they turn their backs on God and follow their secular beliefs, excluding God from education, civil affairs, and politics. The fire mentioned in these passages points to destructive forces of nature like lightning, while the sword belongs to the opposing armies who destroy each other with bombs and missiles. This is represented metaphorically in Revelation by the Messiah's eyes being flames of fire and a sharp sword coming from his mouth. It is God's judgment on the ungodly during the time of distress at the Messiah's return.

### **The Messianic reign** (Isa 66:22-24)

Isaiah's prophecy finishes in the same way as the Book of Revelation; there is a new heaven and a new Earth. "As the new heavens and the new Earth that I am making will endure before me, so will your name and your descendants endure." The prophet of course is speaking to Israel. The Church will endure in New Jerusalem, and Israel will endure on Earth. New Moon and Sabbath continue because sun and moon are still there during the millennium and all humanity will go and offer weekly worship to the Lord, made possible by the ministry of Israelite priests and the Levites.

The last verse of Isaiah (66:24) is quoted by Jesus when he describes Gehenna, or hell, as the place where "their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched" (Mk 9:48).

In Ezekiel 39, the Lord creates a cemetery, a huge burial place where numberless bodies from the battle of Armageddon are buried as a permanent reminder to the nations during the millennium of what happens to those who rebel against God, a visible equivalent of the spiritual lake of fire in Revelation which is defined as the second death. Worms and fire don't exist together; they are metaphors for the gruesome destiny of the wicked. Over the following centuries, when the nations who go and worship at Jerusalem, they must leave the city and pass by this huge burial ground of Gog and his armies in front of the Dead Sea about 20 km to the East of Jerusalem, and they will be

disgusted at the sight and be reminded of the awfulness of God's judgment.

Those who spiritualize this passage must fabricate a new planet with a moon, a Jerusalem, a new mankind, and dead bodies from a battle on Earth! They need to explain who 'all mankind' represents, when and why they are coming to Jerusalem to worship God, and what it is that will be so loathsome to them.