



# DAYBREAK

UNIT  
5

Joel, Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah



<input type="checkbox"/> Joel 1:1-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 5:1-30	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 37:1-38
<input type="checkbox"/> Joel 2:1-32	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 6:1-13	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 38:1-22
<input type="checkbox"/> Joel 3:1-21	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 7:1-25	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 39:1-8
<input type="checkbox"/> Jonah 1:1 — 2:10	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 8:1-22	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 40:1-31
<input type="checkbox"/> Jonah 3:1-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 9:1 — 10:4	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 41:1-29
<input type="checkbox"/> Jonah 4:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 10:5-34	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 42:1-25
<input type="checkbox"/> Amos 1:1-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 11:1 — 12:6	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 43:1-28
<input type="checkbox"/> Amos 2:1-16	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 13:1-22	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 44:1-28
<input type="checkbox"/> Amos 3:1 — 4:13	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 14:1-32	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 45:1-25
<input type="checkbox"/> Amos 5:1-27	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 15:1-9	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 46:1-13
<input type="checkbox"/> Amos 6:1 — 7:17	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 16:1-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 47:1-15
<input type="checkbox"/> Amos 8:1-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 17:1-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 48:1-22
<input type="checkbox"/> Amos 9:1-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 18:1-7	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 49:1-26
<input type="checkbox"/> Hosea 1:1 — 2:1	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 19:1 — 20:6	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 50:1 — 51:23
<input type="checkbox"/> Hosea 2:2 — 3:5	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 21:1-17	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 52:1-12
<input type="checkbox"/> Hosea 4:1 — 5:15	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 22:1-25	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 52:13 — 53:12
<input type="checkbox"/> Hosea 6:1 — 7:16	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 23:1-18	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 54:1-17
<input type="checkbox"/> Hosea 8:1 — 10:2	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 24:1-23	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 55:1-13
<input type="checkbox"/> Hosea 10:3-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 25:1-12	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 56:1-12
<input type="checkbox"/> Hosea 11:1 — 12:14	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 26:1-21	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 57:1-21
<input type="checkbox"/> Hosea 13:1 — 14:9	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 27:1-13	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 58:1-14
<input type="checkbox"/> Micah 1:1 — 2:13	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 28:1-29	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 59:1-21
<input type="checkbox"/> Micah 3:1 — 4:13	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 29:1-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 60:1-22
<input type="checkbox"/> Micah 5:1-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 30:1-17	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 61:1-11
<input type="checkbox"/> Micah 6:1-16	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 30:18-33	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 62:1-12
<input type="checkbox"/> Micah 7:1-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 31:1-9	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 63:1-19
<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 1:1-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 32:1-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 64:1-12
<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 1:16-31	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 33:1-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 65:1-25
<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 2:1-22	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 34:1-17	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 66:1-24
<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 3:1 — 4:1	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 35:1-10	
<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 4:2-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 36:1-22	

Daybreak is a personal Bible study continuum for the high school and adult levels. Scripture references are taken from the King James Version of the Bible. A companion series of Sunday school lessons, titled Discovery, is also available. All of the material is available on our website, as well as in printed form. The print version is designed to be stored in a binder; subsequent modules can then be easily inserted. Daybreak is an official publication of the Apostolic Faith Church. All rights are reserved.



## Overview for Joel

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**Purpose:** The prophecy warned of God's future judgment on those who oppose Him, persecute His Church, oppress the Jewish nation, or generally sin against Him. Joel presented the possibility of God turning from judgment to blessing if the unrighteous would repent. This book was written to warn the people to turn back to God and prepare for the "day of the Lord," the time of great future crisis when God will destroy His enemies and set up His Kingdom on earth.

**Author:** Joel, whose name means "Jehovah is God." Nothing is known about Joel other than that he was the son of Pethuel. He was possibly an inhabitant of Jerusalem.

**To Whom Written:** The people of Judah (the Southern Kingdom), and God's people everywhere, until the return of the Lord.

**Date Written:** Unknown, but Christian scholars maintain a very early date for Joel, estimating between 837 B.C. to 796 B.C. Historians believe that Joel's writings were compiled about 400 B.C.

**Setting:** The people of Judah had become wealthy and complacent, and had turned to idolatry. The prophet rebuked their self-centeredness, and warned

that this type of lifestyle would result in God's judgment. References within the book to "blowing the trumpet," "solemn assemblies," and "consecrating a fast," suggest that the prophecy may have been issued from the Temple court.

**Key People:** Joel and the people of Judah.

**Summary:** The Book of Joel opens with a vivid description of an unprecedented plague of locusts (Joel 1:1 — 2:11). In verse 15 of chapter 1, the prophet introduced a key point of the book: the day of the Lord. The plague was then used as a type of coming judgment upon Israel.

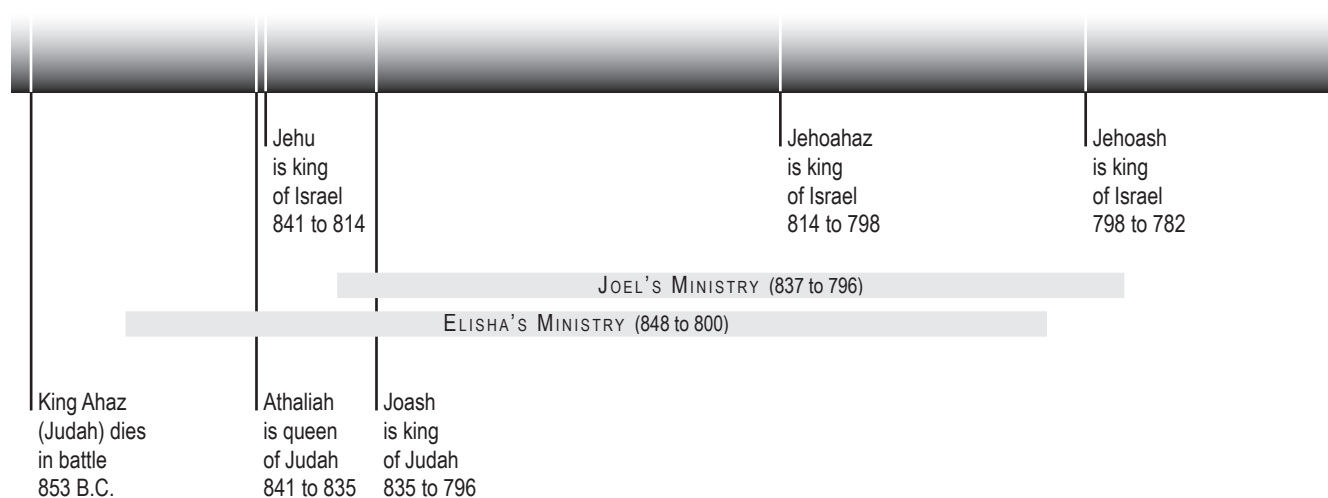
In the second segment of the book (Joel 2:12-19), the prophet called the people to repentance. He promised a return of God's blessing if the people would repent and turn from their sins. The hope of future blessings is described in verses 20-32.

In chapter 3, the prophet foretold the day of Jehovah, in which judgment will be poured out upon unbelievers. In conclusion, the triumph of Jerusalem and the redeemed is described in Joel 3:18-21.

Perhaps Joel's most profound contribution was the promise of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and during the latter rain (Joel 2:28-32).

# Timeline

*Some dates are approximate, as reference materials differ.*



# Outline

*Hannah's Bible Outlines used by permission per WORDsearch.*

*A complete amplified outline of this book is available on our website at [www.apostolicfaith.org](http://www.apostolicfaith.org).*

- I. Introduction (1:1)
- II. The day of the Lord in Joel's time (1:2-20)
  - A. The disastrous locust plague (1:2-14)
  - B. The disastrous drought (1:15-20)
- III. The day of the Lord in the latter time (2:1 — 3:21)
  - A. The invasion from the north (2:1-11)
  - B. The challenge to the people (2:12-17)
  - C. The restoration of Israel (2:18-32)
  - D. The judgment of the nations (3:1-17)
  - E. The blessing of Israel (3:18-21)



### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation.” (Joel 1:3)**

As human beings, we learn by repetition. If you have ever memorized a chapter of the Bible or learned to type without looking at the keys, you know this. Perhaps you had a grandfather who, as you were growing up, told and retold stories about his youth. No doubt in your mind you can still hear him telling them.

All of us have personally experienced this principle. For example, when I was in fourth grade, I had to learn my multiplication tables in order to pass, and I practiced them over and over. Now, many years later, I still know them. When my son was practicing the piano, I saw this principle illustrated again. He would play a difficult measure repeatedly. Yes, at times it was tiresome to hear, but it was necessary in order for him to learn to play it right. And the things we learn through repetition, we will remember!

The Lord knows how we learn best, and He knows it is easy for us to forget. That is why He tells us to continually rehearse His promises of blessings and His sure judgments to our children. Then, when they are grown, they will teach their children, so the message will carry on to successive generations. As long as we live, we can influence later generations. If we do not have children or grandchildren, we can be mentors to neighborhood children or church friends.

In order for us to be good teachers or mentors, we must commune with the Lord regularly. We must study His Word continually. We must talk about the Lord repeatedly. Learning the multiplication tables or a piano piece can get boring; however, as we study and rehearse the precepts and concepts of the Lord, they become richer and deeper. We will enjoy it more and more!

### BACKGROUND

The Book of Joel likely was written between 837 B.C. and 796 B.C. Athaliah usurped the throne in Judah in 841 B.C. and Joash became king in 835 B.C. There had been much sin and corruption in the land, and Joel wrote to the people of Judah to warn them of God’s judgments for disobedience.

The theme that recurs throughout the book is the warning of the day of the Lord, in which God’s judgments for sin would be poured out. Joel warned

the people of Judah to inform their children and each succeeding generation about the consequences of turning from the Lord.

In chapter 1, Joel described a great plague of locusts bringing terrible devastation upon the land. When locusts invade, the swarms are so thick that the sky is blackened and the earth is covered. Every speck of vegetation is devoured. After the locusts, Joel described a great famine and drought that would ravage the land. These were just a foretaste of the day of the Lord. Although Joel was referring to a day of judgment from God upon Judah, there are overtones of a great and final day of the Lord, when all sinful mankind will face judgment.

Joel pled with Judah to cry unto the Lord, and to fast and pray for mercy. In subsequent chapters Joel referred to a time of hope and blessing if the people would repent and turn from their sins.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

Hannah’s Bible Outlines  
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- I. Introduction (1:1)
- II. The day of the Lord in Joel’s time (1:2-20)
  - A. The disastrous locust plague (1:2-14)
    - 1. The destruction of the plague (1:2-4)
      - a. The rehearsal of the plague (1:2-3)
      - b. The totality of the plague (1:4)
    - 2. The directions to the people (1:5-14)
      - a. The drunkards (1:5-7)
      - b. The people (1:8-12)
      - c. The priests (1:13-14)
  - B. The disastrous drought (1:15-20)
    - 1. The nature of the drought (1:15)
    - 2. The effect of the drought (1:16-20)
      - a. On daily life (1:16-17)
      - b. On animal life (1:18-20)

### A CLOSER LOOK

1. What did Joel admonish the people to do in order to avert God’s judgment?

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**2.** The land of Judah was enjoying prosperity before Joel's prophecy. Why do you think the plagues were a blessing to these people?

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**3.** What are some ways you can influence people of a younger generation toward the Lord?

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## CONCLUSION

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We want to remind ourselves and those around us to prepare for the great day of the Lord. This will take repetition—daily awareness of God's instructions to us. God will help us if we keep looking to Him.

## NOTES

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.” (Joel 2:25)**

Years ago, after the “locust and cankerworm” of sin had all but destroyed his life, a man named Joel heard a Gospel meeting on a street corner in Portland, Oregon. Calloused by sin, he listened with a pipe in his mouth and a sneer on his face.

Joel was the father of four children. He and his wife had been married over twenty years, and he’d had a good and steady job at the General Electric plant in Boston, Massachusetts. However, a few social drinks had led to misery. Alcohol got a hold on his life, and he lost his job and then left his family. He spent years on skid roads, staying in flophouses and working in railroad camps, selling the clothes off his back and even his blood to get liquor.

In spite of the pipe and the sneer, God spoke to Joel’s heart, telling him that the Gospel story he heard that day was as real as the sin he was in. He followed the people to their church, and he said he stepped “out of Hell into Heaven.” He prayed after the service, and then continued to pray when he got back to his cheap hotel room.

That night, God came down and changed Joel’s heart, saving his soul and delivering him from his sinful habits in an instant of time. He got a job, and he wrote to his wife. She had been so hurt that she did not respond immediately, but Joel began to send money and clothes for the children to her. Eventually, she came to Portland, and their home was reunited. God restored what sin had taken away. For many years after that, Joel testified of a victorious life, and then the day came when he went to be with the Lord.

Our focus verse today speaks of restoration. Even though the circumstances of our lives may not be as deplorable as Joel’s were, sin separates every person from God. However, that rift can be bridged. In His love, God wants to heal and restore what sin has destroyed in our lives. When we repent of our sins and give our lives to Him, God forgives and makes us fit for Heaven. Has that restoration taken place in your life? If not, let God do His work in you today.

### BACKGROUND

The prophet Joel is thought to have prophesied in Judah during the reign of King Joash. The accounts of

King Joash can be found in 2 Kings 11-12 and 2 Chronicles 22-24.

Joel described three days “of the LORD” throughout this book. The first was an immediate plague of locusts; the second, an army of destruction; the third, the ultimate and final day of judgment.

The second chapter of Joel tells of an army that would destroy the land. It would cause utter destruction as a part of God’s plan to bring the people of Israel back to Him. Joel tried to let the people know that this day was imminent and also gave an illustration of the grace and mercy of God.

This chapter provides a prophetic look at the redemption available to all. The army represents the destruction awaiting the unrepentant soul. Verses 12 and 13 sound a call for repentance. Jewish people customarily showed deep grief by tearing their outer garments, but God was not looking for these outward actions—He wanted their hearts to be broken in contrition. The purpose of the plague was to cause the people to recognize their sin and repent of it.

Joel is known as the Prophet of Pentecost. His prophecy concerning the dispensation of the Holy Spirit was quoted by the Apostle Peter in Acts 2. This outpouring of the Holy Spirit was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. It is interesting to note that in the Hebrew Bible, the five verses of Joel 2:28-32 are a separate chapter in themselves. This seems to indicate an understanding on the part of the Jews of the importance and necessity for the Spirit of God to be working in every heart prior to the “great and the terrible day of the LORD.” It is in these verses that the remnant of Israel is prophetically called back to the salvation offered to them.

Verses 28-32 are of great significance to the Christian today. Joel said that God’s Spirit would come “upon all flesh.” Young and old, men and women, servants and handmaids—all were included in this prophecy. In Old Testament times, God’s Spirit came upon individual people, often for a specific task. However, Joel was inspired to tell of a time when every person could have the Spirit abiding within.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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- III. The day of the Lord in the latter time
  - A. The invasion from the north (2:1-11)
    - 1. The announcement of distress (2:1)
    - 2. The analysis of the “day” (2:2-3)
      - a. The darkness and the destroyers (2:2)
      - b. The destruction (2:3)

- 3.** What things did the Lord restore in your life at salvation?

God wants to provide restoration and blessing for us. He wants us to be filled with His Spirit. Are we willing to allow Him to work in our lives?

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**1.** What actions did God, through Joel, tell the people of Judah to take?

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.” (Joel 3:16)**

Our son was set to appear before the judge for a traffic violation, and he was apprehensive. We had been instructed by our insurance company to contest the violation, which was given following a traffic accident. The other party involved in the accident had hired an attorney who was calling and harassing us. The police officer who wrote the police report had made some errors in the details of what happened. Then the date for the appearance was postponed. Finally, our own insurance company decided to settle rather than continue the claim. It seemed that there was no hope of clearing our son’s name. Truth and integrity appeared to be of little value. We took the matter to God in prayer. We not only desired that our son be spared, but also that he would learn that integrity and truth actually do matter. We told him, “Our only hope is the Lord. He knows what really happened, so we can trust Him.”

Even though the insurance claim had been settled, the traffic violation still had to be dealt with. Our son preferred to go to the courthouse alone and face the judge, hoping that the judge would see the truth. When the judge asked what had happened, our son somewhat timidly explained the situation. Without any hesitation the judge answered, “Well, it is obvious that this was not your fault. I will dismiss the violation.” The harassing attorney, the impatient insurance company, and the mistakes of the police officer were all forgotten in a moment. What a joyful son returned home to tell us of God’s intervention!

At times we may look at a judge only in negative terms and be afraid to go before him, but judgment can also be positive. God’s judgment against sin is strong and terrible, yet He has provided a way for His judgment to be satisfied before it falls upon us. That way is through Jesus Christ who gave His life in place of ours as payment for our sin. He died to give us hope!

Our Judge is also our Savior. Without Him, we face a lost eternity and are hopeless. However, if we take advantage of His offer of salvation, we have the hope of eternal life. “The LORD will be the hope of his people.”

### BACKGROUND

Chapters 1 and 2 are prophetic utterances related to Israel. In chapter 3, the prophet revealed God’s judgment upon all the earth. This portion of the Book of Joel begins with the account God had kept concerning the nations that had persecuted His people. Tyre and Zidon (Sidon) were located north-east of Israel along the Mediterranean Sea, and the “coasts of Palestine” referred to the southern coasts which were occupied by the Philistines. Even in their rebellion God loved His people, and He promised to turn things around and bring judgment on these nations rather than His people. God promised to recompense the selling of Jews to the Grecians by allowing the children of Tyre, Sidon, and Philistia to be sold to the Sabeans. The Sabeans were inhabitants of Arabia, which was where the Queen of Sheba had come from a century earlier.

Although the final “day of the Lord” will bring peace and tranquility, it will be prefaced with a time of devastation that the world has never known. The “valley of Jehoshaphat,” referred to in verse 12, may be used figuratively, as it means “valley of decision, or judgment.” God calls us to repentance and decision for Him but ultimately, rejection of His message will bring His judgment.

Joel’s prophecy concluded with a beautiful contrast to God’s impending judgment, in which he described God’s mercy and provision extended to His people. There will be new wine, milk, and flowing rivers in place of the desolation of famine, burned land, and drought. Every major city in antiquity was located by a river (Alexandria—Nile; Rome—Tiber; Nineveh—Tigris; Babylon—Euphrates), but the promise for Jerusalem is a river that will flow out of the house of the Lord. This river is mentioned in Ezekiel 47 and also in Revelation 22:1. The desolation of Egypt and Edom, which was brought about because they had shed innocent blood, is contrasted with the fruitfulness and surety of Judah and Jerusalem, which will be brought about through the cleansing of their blood by the Lord.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

Hannah’s Bible Outlines  
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- III. The day of the Lord in the latter time
  - D. The judgment of the nations (3:1-17)
    - 1. The time of the judgment (3:1)
    - 2. The participants in the judgment and the basis for the judgment (3:2-6)
      - a. The dispersion of Israel (3:2)

- b. The enslavement of Israel (3:3)
  - c. The pillage of Israel (3:4-6)
- 3. The result of the judgment (3:7-8)
- 4. The gathering for the judgment (3:9-12)
- 5. The actuality of the judgment (3:13-16)
- 6. The result of the judgment (3:17)
- E. The blessing of Israel (3:18-21)
  - 1. The description of Israel's blessing (3:18)
  - 2. The desolation of Israel's enemies (3:19)
  - 3. The duration of Israel's blessing (3:20)
  - 4. The activity of Israel's God (3:21)

## A CLOSER LOOK

1. List three of the charges God made against the enemies of Judah and Jerusalem.

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2. In today's chapter, God promised to deliver Judah. How might God deliver people today?

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3. The day of the Lord is a hope to those who are ready to meet God. What steps should we take to prepare for that day?

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## CONCLUSION

God is the source of all true hope. We want to allow Him access to our hearts so that the hope of meeting Him is bright in our souls.

## NOTES

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## Overview for Jonah

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**Purpose:** The purpose of the prophecy of Jonah is two-fold. First, it shows the sovereignty of God working in the life of an individual—Jonah. It also serves to display God’s merciful concern for a heathen nation and people.

**Author:** Jonah

**Date Written:** Approximately 785-760 B.C. 2 Kings 14:25 indicates that one of Jonah’s prophecies was fulfilled during the reign of Jeroboam II, who reigned from 793-753 B.C. Since it was written in the third person, it is assumed that this book was written after Jonah returned from his evangelistic trip to Assyria, and his subsequent humble response to God’s rebuke.

**Setting:** Nineveh was the ancient capitol of the Assyrian Empire. Located on the eastern bank of the Tigris River, it was the largest city in the world during this time. Instead of going to Nineveh, Jonah chose to head the opposite direction and set his sights on Tarshish. Tarshish was located on the western edge of the Mediterranean region, possibly on the Atlantic coast of present-day Spain.

**Key People:** Jonah, the heathen sailors, and the Ninevites.

**Summary:** God displays His ever-merciful treatment of unregenerate man in this book. Being a heathen city, Nineveh had no one to tell its people what was right and wrong according to God’s law. Rather than destroying them without giving them an opportunity

to repent, God called Jonah, a prophet in Israel, to go and preach to these people.

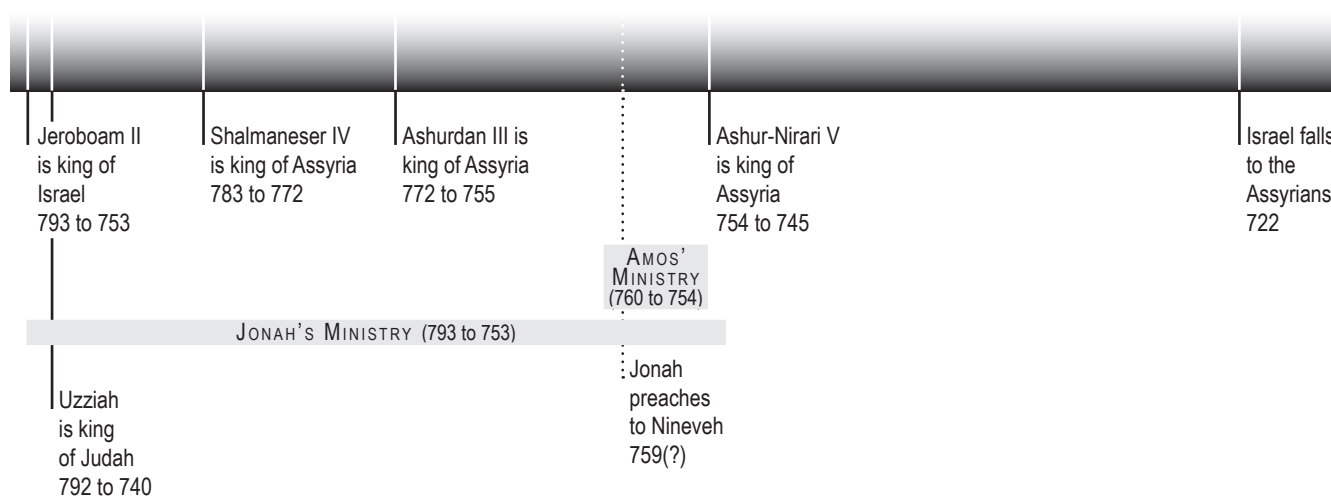
The Assyrians were a mighty people and a great threat to Israel. It would have been easier for Jonah to go with a message of destruction, offering no hope of mercy to these people, but God wanted to give them a chance to do right. Though Jonah fled from his initial call, God used a storm and a great fish to bring him to obedience.

Ninevah had a population of 120,000 children (“sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand”—Jonah 4:11). This would indicate that the total population was somewhere near one million. God, not willing that anyone should perish, set in motion a plan which would offer a means of escape for these people. Because of the size of the city, it took Jonah a while to make his way through the city with his message from the Lord. Soon, however, the people began to respond to Jonah’s message and humble themselves before God, repenting of their evil ways, and God stayed His hand of judgment.

The book ends with the disgruntled prophet being rebuked by God. Jonah thought that the Ninevites deserved to die, as they were an enemy of God’s chosen people. However, God will spare no effort to get His message to everyone—even if that means using the very forces of nature to bring it to pass. The response of the people of Nineveh was remarkable in that all levels of the social structure chose to repent.

# Timeline

*Some dates are approximate, as reference materials differ.*



# Outline

*Hannah's Bible Outlines used by permission per WORDsearch.*

*A complete amplified outline of this book is available on our website at [www.apostolicfaith.org](http://www.apostolicfaith.org).*

- I. The disobedience of Jonah (1:1 — 2:10)
  - A. The commission (1:1-2)
  - B. The disobedience (1:3)
  - C. The consequences (1:4-17)
  - D. The results (2:1-10)
- II. The obedience of Jonah (3:1 — 4:11)
  - A. The recommission (3:1-2)
  - B. The obedience (3:3-4)
  - C. The consequences (3:5-10)
  - D. The results (4:1-11)



### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.” (Jonah 1:3)**

Fleeing from the presence of the Lord may sound like radical behavior. However, people may “flee” in ways that might not be as obvious as Jonah’s flight to Tarshish. One retired pastor tells how he came to know he was called to preach. Whenever God would speak to his heart about it, he always put it off or gave excuses. He never told anyone, not even his wife, about God’s dealings with him regarding the ministry. At times when they faced crises, such as when one of their children became sick, he would tell the Lord yes, but when the crisis passed, he backed up on his promise.

One night as they were driving home from church, his wife slipped close to him and took his hand. She told him that God had asked her to get ready to be a minister’s wife, and asked him if he was called to preach. She said, “You are the only husband I have!” Eventually, this man wrestled in prayer and answered God’s call.

Jonah ran from the call of God, and drastic measures were required before he would turn around and submit. Yet, God in His mercy prepared a great fish to save Jonah, and ultimately, the people of Nineveh.

When Jonah fled “from the presence of the LORD,” he likely did not believe he could actually find a place where God could not speak to him. Rather, he probably wanted to ignore God’s call by simply finding something else to do, which included traveling in the opposite direction. Today, individuals may flee “from the presence of the LORD” and God’s call by getting busy with the cares of life. The pursuit of prosperity and wrong priorities can cause people to ignore the Word of the Lord. Some, such as the minister mentioned previously, may try to put off God’s call. Often God is merciful and faithful to call time and time again.

Most likely God will not call you to proclaim divine judgment to a great city as He did Jonah. However, it is likely that God will call you to give your testimony to a coworker or classmate. God may call you to give financial assistance to a family in need or to help with a specific responsibility at church. Purpose in your heart that you will be sensitive to God’s guidance each and every day, and then be quick to obey.

### BACKGROUND

The prophet Jonah is first identified by Scripture in 2 Kings 14:25, where he is called God’s “servant.” Jonah was accustomed to hearing “the word of the LORD” while he prophesied during the reign of Israelite King Jeroboam II.

Nineveh was located approximately five hundred miles northeast of Jerusalem on the banks of the Tigris River, which was near the current city of Mosul, Iraq. This exceedingly wicked city was soon to be the capital of the great Assyrian Empire. The prophet Nahum identified Nineveh as being “full of lies and robbery.” Nineveh was also an enemy of the people of Israel, as the Assyrian Empire dominated the world.

Tarshish was most likely located in southern Spain, a couple thousand miles west of Nineveh.

Casting lots was a common way to determine what course of action to take. It was similar to drawing straws and was used to ascertain the will or direction of the gods. Objects were thrown on the ground or taken from a container. Significant matters were decided in this way. The hope was that God would control the lots, and in the case of Jonah, He most certainly did.

The fish prepared by the Lord may not have been of the whale species. The original text simply indicates that God prepared a great fish. In Matthew 12:40, when Jesus referred to the “great fish,” the translation uses the word “whale.” However, it could just as easily have been translated as “huge fish” or “sea monster.” The actual water creature may have been a common Mediterranean shark, whose physical structure would much more easily house a man. Whatever the exact species, God used the fish to get Jonah to a place of prayer, although in a very unlikely location.

The prayer of Jonah in chapter 2 is an excellent example of how to approach God. Jonah began by realizing his need for God to intervene (verse 2). His prayer included repentance or godly sorrow (verse 4). Jonah also placed himself in proper perspective relative to a holy God (verse 4). His prayer included faith that God was paying heed to his cry (verse 7). Finally, Jonah forsook his own motives by yielding to God (verses 8 and 9).

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

Hannah’s Bible Outlines  
Used by permission per WORDsearch

- I. The disobedience of Jonah (1:1 — 2:10)
  - A. The commission (1:1-2)
  - B. The disobedience (1:3)
  - C. The consequences (1:4-17)
    1. The great wind (1:4-16)

- a. The distress (1:4-5)
  - b. The interrogation (1:6)
  - c. The cause (1:7)
  - d. The confession (1:8-9)
  - e. The result (1:10-16)
    - (1) The concern (1:10-14)
    - (2) The calm (1:15-16)
- 2. The great fish (1:17)
- D. The results (2:1-10)
  - 1. The prayer (2:1-9)
    - a. The past (2:1-5)
    - b. The present (2:6-8)
    - c. The future (2:9)
  - 2. The deliverance (2:10)

## A CLOSER LOOK

**1.** How did Jonah respond when asked who he was in verse 8 of chapter 1?

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**2.** How is God's mercy made evident throughout the first two chapters of the Book of Jonah?

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**3.** If God has been speaking to you about performing a specific task, how can you pay heed to His call?

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## CONCLUSION

God speaks to our hearts by His still small voice, through His Holy Spirit. Keep an obedient heart as He leads you in His work.

## NOTES

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days’ journey.” (Jonah 3:1-3)**

A while back, my computer was not working properly. When I would open up a program and click on an icon, a strange info-box would pop up. It said something like: “Your computer is busy. It has either stopped responding or is waiting for a command from you.” Well, I knew it wasn’t waiting for a command from me, because I had just commanded it to do something, which was what had caused the box to pop up.

The buttons at the bottom of the info-box gave me two options: I could wait a little longer, or close the program entirely. I would usually wait for a few moments and then give up and close the program. This box continued to appear for several months, and each time, I would wait and then close the program.

One day, I turned on my computer and I could tell something was wrong. I couldn’t open any of the files. My computer had crashed. In the end, its hard drive had to be wiped clean and all of my programs had to be reinstalled.

The words of the info-box kept coming back to me. God frequently sends us commands concerning our lives. For some reason, people do not always respond to His direction, so He waits a little while and then sends it again. However, it is dangerous to ignore the Lord. Eventually it can lead to a spiritual crash and the need to start all over.

Jonah was an example of someone who ignored God’s instruction and eventually “crashed.” What a warning to us! Yet, God in His faithfulness restored Jonah when he repented. Today’s focus verse tells us, “The word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time.”

Let us determine in our hearts to be open to what the Lord would say to us and to answer Him with willing hearts the first time He speaks.

### BACKGROUND

Although it is unknown where the great fish actually deposited Jonah, the Lord was right there to repeat His command to go to Nineveh. Jonah was faced with an exceedingly large challenge. Four times

in the Book of Jonah, Nineveh was referred to as a “great city,” a term well deserved according to archeologists. The city was actually founded by Noah’s great-grandson Nimrod (Genesis 10:8-11) and was great in size; the circumference of the city with its suburbs was sixty miles, with a population of approximately a million people.

Besides being a city of great size, Nineveh was great in its wickedness. It was one of the major cities of the Assyrian Empire, which was known for its violent treatment of enemies. One practice included beheading people by the thousands and displaying their skulls by the city gates. Jonah may have wondered if he would end up with the same fate, but he was determined to follow God this time.

It was not his own message that Jonah preached, but God’s: “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.” The message was one of judgment, and it was proclaimed to all. The number forty seems significant in Scripture, when identified with testing or judgment (for example, it rained forty days and forty nights in the time of Noah, Jewish spies explored Canaan for forty days, and Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years). The text of Jonah’s sermon may have been just a portion of his message to the people of Nineveh, which could have also included God’s displeasure with their wickedness and their need to repent.

The forty days of grace were not needed however, because the people of Nineveh repented. All classes, from the king down, participated in a national repentance. An official fast was decreed, and it was proclaimed that the people should put on sackcloth, and cry out and humble themselves before God. The English word *sackcloth* is derived from the Hebrew word *sak*, which was a dark, coarse cloth usually made from goat’s hair and worn when the people were in a state of mourning. All who heard Jonah’s message received it and were in a true state of mourning or repentance. God evaluated it and knew it was genuine. The Scripture says, “God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.” God did not change His intentions toward dealing with the sins of the Ninevites, but He deferred judgment because they repented.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

Hannah’s Bible Outlines  
Used by permission per WORDsearch

- II. The obedience of Jonah
  - A. The recommission (3:1-2)
  - B. The obedience (3:3-4)
    - 1. The trip (3:3)

2. The message (3:4)
- C. The consequences (3:5-10)
  1. The action of the people (3:5)
  2. The action of the king (3:6-9)
    - a. His repentance (3:6)
    - b. His proclamation (3:7-9)
  3. The action of God (3:10)

## A CLOSER LOOK

1. What four things did the King of Nineveh do to show his repentance?

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2. What actions on the part of the people of Nineveh revealed that they knew they were deserving of God's judgment?

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3. What are some of the reasons we might find it difficult to witness to people today?

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## CONCLUSION

We can avoid a spiritual "crash" by heeding and quickly obeying God's commands.

## NOTES

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.” (Jonah 4:2)**

God is amazingly merciful! He will go to astounding measures to rescue one soul. Our focus verse indicates that Jonah knew this well, but sadly, he was not happy when God did not destroy Nineveh. Unlike Jonah, we want to rejoice when any soul turns toward God.

One time the Lord gave me the opportunity to participate in His extension of mercy to a young man. Although I wish I had responded more quickly, I rejoice at the mercy God showed.

“Go talk to that guy.” I knew it was God speaking to me. “That guy” was one I was trying to avoid. What was I going to do?

The day had been completely normal until then. It was a midsummer day, warm but not hot. I had decided to walk to a nearby store when I heard a young man playing a guitar on a front porch.

Before my conversion, I had been a musician and played in rock and country groups. I had been “on the road” and seen the inside of many nightclubs and dance halls. When God saved me, I knew the influence of such places would not be healthy for my soul. I told my musician friends I would not be playing with them any longer.

But here was someone playing on a porch on a warm summer evening.

I walked across the street to get further away and continued to my destination. But when I arrived, the store was already closed. Turning around to go back, I heard God’s voice again, “Go talk to that guy.” With each step I took the phrase was repeated. By the time I had crossed the street I was convinced, and I knew that I was to speak to him about God’s plan of salvation.

However, I had no idea where to start. Walking across the street to the house where he was playing, the words that came out of my mouth were, “Can I listen for awhile?”

“Sure” was all he said, looking rather surprised. He continued playing, and after several minutes asked if I had any marijuana.

“No,” I said. “I am a Christian, I don’t need that any more.”

He played some more—all songs he had composed, based on his experiences in life. Then he asked me what I was going to do the next day. The next day was Sunday, so I told him I would be going to church. To my amazement, he asked if he could come with me!

As we talked further, he told me how he came to be on that porch that evening. He had been homeless, living in a nearby city park and spending his money on drugs and alcohol. The people living at that house were letting him sleep in their backyard for a few days. That morning he had prayed, “God, show me today what I need to straighten out my life.” He had been waiting all day to see if God was going to answer his prayer.

It was almost 9 p.m. before God directed someone—someone who did not want to talk to “that guy”—in answer to that prayer. But God’s mercy was in time. The man came to church the next day, prayed at the altar, and had his life changed, receiving God’s salvation.

God’s desire is for everyone to be saved, and we thank Him for His willingness to extend mercy to every soul. Perhaps today you will have the opportunity to see God’s mercy in action. Maybe He will even allow you to participate in it!

### BACKGROUND

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Jonah could be called the reluctant prophet. Perhaps his reason for running away when God sent him to pronounce judgment on Nineveh was not because he was afraid of being killed by the Ninevites, but because he thought they might repent and find God’s mercy! When the people of Nineveh heard God’s message and did repent, Jonah became angry because they had obtained the same divine mercy that he had just experienced himself. He reminded God that he tried to run away because he knew God was “a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness” (Jonah 4:2). Jonah was repeating words spoken by Moses in Exodus 34:6. Jonah knew God’s Word, but apparently did not feel the love for mankind that was in God’s heart. Also, Jonah may have felt that his reputation as a prophet would be hurt if the judgment he predicted did not come to pass. So he asked God to kill him, preferring to die rather than be the one through which Israel’s chief enemy was spared (Jonah 4:3).

When Jonah went outside the city, perhaps hoping for fire and brimstone to come from Heaven, God





## Overview for Amos

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**Purpose:** The Book of Amos was a proclamation urging Israel to repent of violence, social injustice, and idolatry as well as inward attitudes of pride and ritualistic worship. It also prophesied of the coming Messianic age.

**Author:** Amos, a shepherd from the Southern Kingdom (Judah). He lived in Tekoa, a small hilltop town overlooking the Dead Sea, located ten miles south of Jerusalem. The name *Amos* means “burden” or “burden bearer.”

**To Whom Written:** The Northern Kingdom of Israel, and those associated with its idol worship at Bethel.

**Date Written:** Text references reveal that Amos prophesied during the reigns of Jeroboam II (793 B.C. through 753 B.C.) and the southern king Uzziah (790 B.C. through 740 B.C.). Most scholars date his ministry to about 760 B.C.

**Setting:** The wealthy Jews of the Northern Kingdom were enjoying peace and prosperity. They had become complacent and were oppressing the poor, even selling them into slavery. The righteousness of God and His teachings had been replaced with selfishness.

**Key People:** Amos, Amaziah, Jeroboam II, and the people of the Northern Kingdom (Israel).

**Summary:** Amos was a humble herdsman who farmed sycamore (fig-bearing) trees, but also a man of God. God gave Amos a vision, and he traveled to the temples of Israel, where the rich vacationed rather than worshiped, to proclaim God’s condemnation of their wicked values and to warn them of the judgment to come.

The inspired words written by Amos give a glimpse of God as One who cares intensely for the poor and has a deep commitment to personal and social justice. The word *justice* in the Old Testament is also translated *righteousness* in our English versions (Amos 5:7, 5:24, 6:12). Its basic meaning is a standard by which right and wrong can be measured. In the Old Testament, this standard is God’s Law.

Israel’s territory almost reached the borders of the united kingdom of David’s day at the time Amos proclaimed his message. Great economic success accompanied prosperous military endeavors. Israel was in control of ancient trade routes, and expansion had given rise to a new social class of wealthy merchants.

Wealth created a demand for the many luxuries available from all over the known world.

This surge of prosperity caused class distinctions that occurred at the expense of their poor. The rich piled up profits and exorbitant prices were charged. The poor farmers were evicted from their land so that the rich could build up great estates. These luxuries were enjoyed by the wealthy, whose eyes were closed to the afflictions and needs of the poor (Amos 6:6).

In political circles, there was tumult and oppression, violence and robbery (Amos 3:9-10). People hated any judge who would reprove them or speak uprightly (Amos 5:10).

Then, suddenly, against this background of prosperity and oppression, a man who knew poverty appeared from Judah. For a few short months, he denounced the sins of Israel and promised judgment.

Amos was distressed by the moral, social, and religious situation, so he stood at Bethel and denounced the lifestyle of Israel. In a series of scathing proclamations, he confronted the wicked rich and ruling classes, exposed their sins, and pronounced punishment from God if they would not repent. The wicked of Israel did not repent. To these sinful men, Amos seemed fanatical and out of touch with the times.

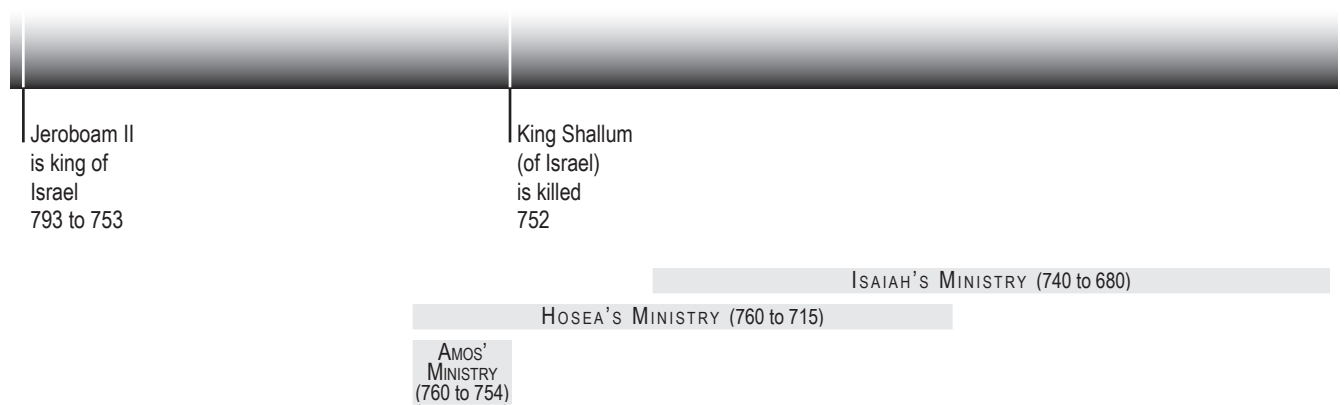
Amos continued by proclaiming the coming punishment of the “day of the Lord,” which was already looming. There was threat of invasion by Assyria, which did happen in 722 B.C. Amos was the first to teach that there would be a faithful remnant that would survive.

In Amos 7:7-9, the Lord spoke to Amos and showed him a plumbline. Through the books of the Law and the judges, God demonstrated His will through signs and wonders. Since His Law had been written and demonstrated for hundreds of years, God announced to Amos that he would no longer direct man by signs and wonders as in times past. From then on, man would be judged by the plumbline (the written Word of God). Indeed, from that time until now, God has revealed His will for man mainly through His Word.

After proclaiming judgment for the sins of the people, Amos concluded with a message of hope: there is coming a time when God will restore His people and make them great again (Amos 9:8-15).

# Timeline

*Some dates are approximate, as reference materials differ.*



# Outline

*Hannah's Bible Outlines used by permission per WORDsearch.  
A complete amplified outline of this book is available on our website at [www.apostolicfaith.org](http://www.apostolicfaith.org).*

- I. Introduction (1:1-2)
  - A. Title (1:1)
  - B. Theme (1:2)
- II. The announcement of judgment upon the nations (1:3—2:16)
  - A. Judgment upon the surrounding nations (1:3—2:3)
  - B. Judgment upon God's people (2:4-16)
- III. The reasons for the judgment of Israel (3:1—6:14)
  - A. Present privilege brings responsibility (3:1-15)
  - B. Past chastenings unheeded (4:1-13)
  - C. Future judgment sure (5:1—6:14)
- IV. The visions of judgment upon Israel (7:1—9:10)
  - A. The vision of locust plague (7:1-3)
  - B. The vision of devouring fire (7:4-6)
  - C. The vision of the plumb line (7:7-9)
  - D. Historical parenthesis: Amaziah's reaction (7:10-17)
  - E. The vision of the basket of summer fruit (8:1-14)
  - F. The vision of the Lord beside the altar (9:1-10)
- V. The promise of the restoration of Israel (9:11-15)
  - A. The nation restored (9:11)
  - B. The possessions restored (9:12)
  - C. The land restored (9:13)
  - D. The people restored (9:14-15)



### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron.”**  
(Amos 1:3)

For a number of years, a World War II veteran testified of God’s mercy to him. While in the service, he was a sailor and also a sinner. He said, “Once, we were standing on the deck when two allied fighter planes flew toward us, very low. We thought they were Australians. Suddenly, I noticed their guns winking! I could feel the concussion as the bullets struck the ship. The enemy had captured these two Australian planes and was using them against us. Just as they neared our ship, they ceased firing. They pulled up in a banking formation to about thirty feet above me. The enemy pilot looked down at me and grinned. You figure that out!

“Another time, a suicide bomber set his course for us. He was really moving! But as he reached our ship, the bomber tilted so that it flew on its side between the bridge and the forward mast, right into the sea on the other side of the ship. It was like a hand swatting a fly. I was not far from the bridge, and if that plane had hit us, I would probably have died in my sins.”

More than once, God spared this man’s life. God is a God of justice, but He is also a merciful God. The focus verse illustrates this. God, knowing what the people of Damascus had been doing, gave them a number of opportunities to change before meting out the punishment they deserved. He justifiably could have punished them after their first infraction. Instead, He showed mercy to them for their multiple offences, and it was only after the fourth (or more) violation that the just punishment was given.

Although God extended mercy to these people for a time, there was a limit to His tolerance. Today, too, He often extends mercy to those who are violating His laws, but there is still a limit to the mercy He will offer. There will be a day of judgment for those who reject Him, just as there was for Damascus. As in Amos’ time, justice demands punishment for transgressions. The only chance anyone has is to take advantage of God’s mercy while it is still available. Happily, the World War II sailor did just that, and God saved his soul.

God is amazingly patient toward flawed humanity, but He is righteous and cannot tolerate sin. Although mercy is available, it is not always automatically bestowed. Each individual must request it. It is incumbent on each of us to search our hearts and be sure we are aligned with God’s will. Peace and security come with knowing that all is well between God and us.

### BACKGROUND

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The Book of Amos was probably written in Israel during the later part of the reign of Jeroboam II (793 B.C. through 753 B.C.). Amos was identified as a sheep herdsman and cultivator of the sycamore fig. He was one of the twelve minor prophets. He spoke out against the empty ritualism of a people who, in a time of material prosperity, had lost sight of justice and were indifferent to the plight of the poor and the oppressed.

Most scholars date Amos’ ministry, which lasted only a few months, to about 760 B.C. Although he prophesied to the Northern Kingdom, Amos was a native of Judah, Israel’s sister nation to the south. He came from the village of Tekoa, situated about ten miles south of Jerusalem. After preaching in Israel, Amos probably returned to his home in Tekoa. No facts are known about his later life or death. He was an example of courage and faithfulness.

The first chapter of Amos addressed the nations around Palestine that had been summoned to judgment because of their sins.

- Damascus, the capital of Syria, was noted first. Hazael and Benhadad were Syrian kings.
- Philistia had five major cities: Gath, Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Ekron. Already destroyed, Gath was not mentioned, so Amos prophesied the destruction of all Philistia.
- Tyrus, or Tyre, was a major city of Phoenicia. The predicted destruction referred to that entire nation.
- The Edomites were descendants of Esau, and their treatment of Israel promised punishment.
- The Ammonites were Lot’s descendants, and they were also destined for judgment. The capital of Ammon was Rabbah, and it was strongly fortified. However, God promised to destroy it.

By beginning with predictions of punishment for their enemies, Amos caught the people’s attention and disarmed them for their own message of judgment (beginning in the next chapter). The skill and tact his approach demonstrated were remarkable.

*Hannah's Bible Outlines*  
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- 3.** In what ways are the examples of God's justice a lesson to us today?

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We have no way of knowing how long God's mercy will be available to us, so it is vital for us to act upon it right away, while we can.

## NOTES

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## A CLOSER LOOK

**1. Who were the enemies of the people of Israel that the Lord punished?**

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**2.** Why do you think this chapter mentions that the punishment was for, “three transgressions and also for four”?

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“Behold, I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves.” (Amos 2:13)**

One year, I was with my grandparents at harvest time. My grandfather, a very tall, hard-working individual, set out with his sons to harvest corn. This time he took my brother and me, too. However, we were told that we were expected to work and not distract the men from working. We assured our grandfather that we would comply.

With a sickle in his hand, Grandfather proceeded to cut the corn stalks with speed and precision. My uncles raced between themselves to see who could cut the fastest! My brother and I had to figure out how to use a sickle without hurting ourselves, and we enjoyed trying. Most of all, we enjoyed watching the progress and productivity of our grandfather and uncles.

Before long the sheaves of corn were stacked, forming a tent-like structure. My brother and I were quick to try to spread the stalks apart enough so we could go in the “tent” and play. Our fun lasted until the stacks were packed onto a cart. One of my most vivid memories is how my uncles tried to get as many sheaves on the cart as possible. They would load it up so high that I thought for sure it would fall and they would have to start all over. But it never did! They knew how to secure it well.

When I read the focus verse, where the Lord speaks of being pressed by the Children of Israel as a cart that is pressed full of sheaves, images of those carts carrying sheaves of corn loaded way above what seemed reasonable came to mind. There was no more room; but my uncles kept piling the sheaves higher. What an illustration of how the people of Amos’ time kept “piling” their disobedience higher and higher!

The Lord is patient with us, but our disobedience is displeasing to Him. He is long-suffering and often waits for us to obey Him. He desires only the best for us, but if we continually disregard His love, there will come a time when it will be too late, and judgment will fall. However, obedience comes easily when our hearts are set on pleasing God. We can do that, beginning today. Tomorrow may be too late. Right now, God is our loving Father, but if we disregard His love, tomorrow He may be our Judge.

### BACKGROUND

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The first three verses of chapter 2 cover the judgment pronounced on Moab as well as upon Judah and

Israel. The Moabites were enemies of God’s people, and had succeeded in getting Israel to worship Baal. A people known for their atrocities, they descended from an incestuous relationship between Lot and his oldest daughter (Genesis 19:30-38). God was angry with Moab because they “burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime.” Although the Bible did not tell all the details of this particular event, it illustrated how intensely wicked the Moabites were. Apparently, the kings of Judah and Israel joined together with the king of Idumea to destroy Moab. In an effort to save his city, the king of Moab took several hundred men in an attempt to capture the king of Edom. In an effort to gain favor with his god, the Moabite king sacrificed his own son as a burnt offering. (See 2 Kings 3:27). God was displeased with such a display of rage and abuse of the human body, and He promised to devour the palaces of Kirioth, which was one of the main cities of Moab.

Next, God pronounced judgment on Judah, the Southern Kingdom, which was made up of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Judah despised the Law of the Lord. Its punishment was not for barbarous abuse of a dead body, but for idolatry. The people of Judah gave honor to idols rather than to God, and they believed their own lies. This caused them to err and depart from God’s ways, as their fathers had done. Instead of learning from the mistakes of their fathers, they followed in the same pattern. Therefore, God promised to send fire on Judah and destroy Jerusalem.

Beginning with verse 6, the prophet proclaimed that God was also angry with Israel for dealing unjustly with those who came to them for justice. They took bribes and sold the righteous men for silver. The scale of justice was tipped by the weight of the bribes taken. They made prey of the poor people who suffered sorrow, and they continued to do injury to others. They served other gods and mocked God by offering sacrifices of the bribes they received. Incest was also prevalent.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

Hannah’s Bible Outlines  
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- II. The announcement of judgment upon the nations
  - A. Judgment upon the surrounding nations
    - 6. The judgment of Moab (2:1-3)
      - a. The reason (2:1)
      - b. The judgment (2:2-3)
  - B. Judgment upon God’s people (2:4-16)
    - 1. The judgment of Judah (2:4-5)
      - a. The reason (2:4)
      - b. The judgment (2:5)

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?”  
(Amos 3:8)**

During the spring, in the area where we live, it is not uncommon to hear wild turkeys gobbling. Their gobble is often out of fear—the male turkey will gobble at anything that startles him. Often, a car door slamming or the sound of a power tool from a job site is enough to elicit a gobble from his throat. Sometimes he responds so quickly that you wonder if he might even have surprised himself! It can be amusing to observe the variety of sounds that will cause him to react. Yet, that is how he is made; it is natural for him to respond in this manner.

Turkeys are not the only animals that have unique ways of reacting to surprise or alarm. Startled dogs will bark, startled birds will fly, and startled cats will hiss. These are all part of their natural responses. We also see this simple process in our own lives. For example, if something is humorous to us, we laugh. Think for a moment about our natural responses to grief, excitement, joy, or disappointment. We all have responses to these emotions, and we can't change them; that's simply how God made us.

In Amos 3:3-8, the prophet established his right and duty to prophesy through a series of natural processes of cause and effect. He said if the lion has a prey, he roars. If the bird falls to the earth in a snare, it was because the snare was set for him. In his climax, Amos pointed out that if people are afraid in a city, it is because a trumpet has sounded an alarm.

God would carry out His judgment after He had warned the people. That is why Amos reminded them that God spoke to them through prophets. Amos was only a farmer and shepherd, and perhaps there were those who wondered who this shepherd was, to prophesy to them. It appears that Amos had no aspirations of becoming a prophet, or of trying to achieve greatness. Yet, God had given him a very important message, and Israel needed to hear it. GOD had spoken! How, then, could Amos help but prophesy? How could Amos, a lowly shepherd, fail to speak the words the Lord had put in his heart? To Amos, it was a natural response to proclaim what God had spoken.

When we started out to follow God, we probably didn't have any grand ideas about all the wonderful things we were going to do for God. The overriding theme of our lives was God's great mercy and love that

had rescued us. It was natural for us to love the God who had redeemed us. It was natural for us to rejoice in our new relationship with our Lord. We were grateful for salvation and our newfound Friend!

As we kept our lives surrendered before Him, we found that it was surprisingly natural for us to keep saying yes to God's plan. And as we responded in that way, He opened up new opportunities and responsibilities for us—perhaps some we were not expecting. We may not feel important or loaded with talent, but we can be encouraged: God isn't so concerned with that. He needs someone who will respond to Him with a yes when He calls. What is our natural response to God?

### BACKGROUND

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The divided Kingdom of Israel, comprised of Israel and Judah, had ignored God's pleas to return to Him. Thus, Amos' message of impending judgment was directed at both Israel and Judah. God had had great plans for them, and had watched over them closely. In Amos 3:2, He reminded the people that, of all the families of the earth, He had only known them. The word *known* refers to an intimate relationship, as a husband is intimate with his wife. Yet, the people had taken up a hollow form of religion by bringing God sacrifices without repentance. They had forgotten to follow His laws and how to do right (Amos 3:10). It seemed they loved religious ceremony, but without any of the responsibility that accompanies righteousness.

The people of Israel and Judah had built their luxurious lifestyle mercilessly, on the blood of the poor. Their sin was so great that it even appalled the surrounding nations. They were concerned with their abundance, and seemed to have found security in it. Numerous times throughout chapter 4, we read of the horrible judgments God would send upon them for their rebellion. Famine, drought, destruction of crops, sickness, defeat in war, and catastrophe were all mentioned, with the final statement in Amos 4:12, “Prepare to meet thy God.” All of these judgments later came to pass. Tragically, it could have been avoided if the people had simply listened and responded when God had so patiently called.

Bethel, where Amos was speaking, was a religious center located twelve miles north of Jerusalem. It was a very important place to Israel because of its associations with Abraham and Jacob. In a nation full of hypocrisy and self-will, God found in Amos a man to do His work. This unlikely individual, perhaps unnoticed by man, simply responded positively to God and became His mouthpiece.





### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the LORD, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken.” (Amos 5:14)**

A Salvation Army officer told of an old Maori woman who, prior to her conversion, had won the name of “Warrior Brown” because of her propensity to fight when she was enraged or had been drinking. A week after she was converted, she gave her testimony at an open-air meeting. Someone in the crowd threw a potato at her, giving her a nasty blow. A week before, the cowardly insulter would have needed to make himself scarce, but without saying a word, Warrior Brown picked up the potato and put it into her pocket. No more was heard of the incident until the harvest festival, when Warrior brought a little sack of potatoes. She explained that she had cut up and planted the potato that had been thrown at her, and was now presenting the increase to the Lord.<sup>1</sup>

What an example of seeking good and not evil! Warrior Brown did not react as she would have reacted previously—she had been radically changed, and instead used the “weapon” to bring about good. She chose to seek good.

There are numerous ways in which we can seek good. First, we should seek God for salvation and cleansing from sin, which causes a radical heart change—good abides *in* us. Next, we should do good for others, exercise ourselves in profitable activities, and think on good things. Seeking good will keep us so busy that there will be little time left to even glance at evil. Then, we should engage in activities that bring about positive results. Examples would be teaching Sunday school, helping on the church cleaning team, and being ready to give our testimonies.

Some ways to seek good for others include: lend a hand; pray with and for another; have a conversation with someone or be a good listener; write an encouraging note to a sick friend; offer someone a ride to church; be a willing set of hands for a church project; or help a single lady with her car maintenance. If there is a quiet or timid person around us, we can do our best to include him or her in our activities. Let us allow God’s love to shine through us!

In part, it is simply our focus that must change. Like Warrior, we did not just get hit with a “root” weapon: we received a “potato” to plant! The glass is half full, not half empty, and the bad day may, in reality, be merely a rough five minutes. Pondering the true,

honest, just, pure, lovely, virtuous, and praiseworthy details of life will not only inspire us, it could also encourage those around us.

Perhaps, like Warrior Brown, we can take a bad situation that is thrown at us, work with it, and present the increase to the Lord.

### BACKGROUND

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This chapter was a cry from God to His people to return unto Himself. The prophet Amos, a farmer and shepherd from Judah who prophesied around 760 B.C., was an unlikely person to proclaim the Word of the Lord. He did not use pretense as a tool, but was straightforward in his speech.

God desired true, righteous worship, rather than sacrifice. Although Amos’ listeners believed themselves to be safe because of their accumulated wealth and form of godliness, they hoarded more than they needed, neglected their poor, took bribes, and afflicted the just. They defied God’s laws, which said the poor were not meant to be helped only if they could repay the kindness served them: they were to be helped regardless of their ability to repay or how much they deserved it.

Amos came with a message of almost certain destruction. As God told Israel in verses 21 to 24, He would not smell the savor of their sacrifices nor listen to their melodies because of their lack of judgment and righteousness. Amos’ prophecy was, in effect, a funeral dirge before the actual event—which would be the decimation of the population of Israel (reducing it to only one tenth of its original size) at the hand of Assyria (Amos 5:3).

God was about to punish Israel by bringing about total military disaster. There would not be sufficient people to mourn the dead—even the professional mourners would be too busy to keep up with the deaths of ninety percent of the population. Failure to appropriately mourn the dead with loud wailing was seen as dishonoring the dead.

In verse 8, the admonition to “Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion” was a reminder to seek the Creator, rather than His creation, as was the case in the heathen religions.

In spite of their evil ways, God still desired a close relationship with His people. Three times God told them, “Seek ye me, and ye shall live.” The reason God gave this message to Amos to proclaim was that He urgently wanted His people to seek Him. His desire was not to punish them. Instead, He urged them to follow Him so they could live.

## AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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### III. The reasons for the judgment of Israel

#### C. Future judgment sure

1. Judgment deserved (5:1-15)
  - a. The lament over Israel (5:1-3)
  - b. The invitation to Israel (5:4-15)
    - (1) The offer of grace (5:4-9)
    - (2) The rejection of grace (5:10-13)
    - (3) The re-offer of grace (5:14-15)
2. Judgment delineated
  - a. The wailing (5:16-17)
  - b. The first woe (5:18-27)
    - (1) Warning concerning the Day of the Lord (5:18-20)
    - (2) Warning concerning false worship (5:21-27)
      - (a) Unacceptable and unheard (5:21-24)
      - (b) Results in captivity (5:25-27)

## A CLOSER LOOK

1. Why did God despise the feast days of the house of Israel?

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2. How did God feel about the people's impending captivity?

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3. The Israelites were punished for oppressing the poor. What are some ways to help the poor in our day?

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## CONCLUSION

God is merciful, and the source of goodness, but He is a jealous God who requires that we worship only Him, have our heart cleansed in the Blood of the Lamb, and live righteously.

## NOTES

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“Thus he shewed me: and, behold, the LORD stood upon a wall made by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand. And the LORD said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumbline. Then said the LORD, Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more.” (Amos 7:7-8)**

Have you ever seen a plumbline used? It is a common tool on a construction project. Basically, it is a weight on the end of a string. When that weight is suspended and hangs free, it becomes an accurate vertical reference and will indicate whether or not a wall is perpendicular (plumb).

Our church in Portland, Oregon, is octagon shaped, with eight concrete columns supporting the massive wooden beams that form the roof framework. When construction began, the project superintendent spent days surveying the building site. It was vital to locate the exact point for the center of the building. Later a scaffold was erected to support a plumbline. The point on the weight of that plumbline was aimed directly at what would be the center of the church. Every measurement was in reference to that point, and those measurements were checked and rechecked.

God told Amos that He was going to set a plumbline in Israel. He was going to give them a point of reference so they would understand how far they had gone from His righteousness. That plumbline would establish why judgment would come.

Today, God’s Word can be a plumbline for our lives. We can look in the Bible and see how our spiritual structures measure up. Are the walls plumb? Are we building according to His design? If we have honest, open hearts, the Bible is the reference point: it will show us where we stand in God’s sight. God wants people to be right with Him. He wants any sin or any behavior that is “crooked” to be removed immediately. He wants us to live so our lives glorify Him.

God applies His plumbline to our hearts in many ways. Maybe you have had the experience of reading a Bible passage that spoke to your heart, helping you to understand that God wanted deeper consecrations from you. That’s the plumbline. Perhaps you have sat in a church service and felt that the sermon was meant for you. Maybe through what was said you understood that God wanted you to make an apology to someone. That’s the plumbline. As we pay attention to

God’s plumbline, and make corrections that He points out to us, we can be assured of a plumb spiritual structure that will endure.

### BACKGROUND

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At the beginning of chapter 6, God condemned both Judah (Zion) and Israel (Samaria); however, Israel was the primary target. The people thought they were secure, but God pointed to other cities that had been destroyed because of their wickedness. God wanted Israel to understand that they would not escape His judgment.

Amos 6:4-6 showed the extent of Israel’s extravagance and self-indulgence. Ivory was a symbol of wealth because of its rarity and high cost, and they used it in their beds. They also ate tender and costly meat (lambs and calves), drank large amounts of wine, and lived in luxurious houses (Amos 6:8, 11). God knew their wealth had been obtained at the expense of the poor and needy.

The people’s worship was insincere. They wanted to believe that their meaningless sacrifices pleased God. However, God preferred right living and wanted them to abandon the empty rituals in which He took no pleasure. Through Amos, God expressed His anger at their lifestyle and disregard for His laws. He prophesied that they would one day be afraid to even mention His name for fear of incurring further punishment (Amos 6:10).

God unveiled the future to Amos through five visions: grasshoppers, fire, a plumbline, a basket of summer fruit, and finally, God Himself. The first vision of impending judgment (Amos 7:1-3) was of grasshoppers and the second was of fire (which may have meant extreme drought). Both times, Amos prayed for Israel to be spared, and God agreed.

The third vision, the plumbline, depicted the accuracy of God’s judgment. God was indicating that He would see if the people were crooked and, if they were, He would punish them. The people were not true and straight because they worshiped false gods, and had gone far from God’s righteous standards. This revelation showed that Israel’s hope was exhausted and judgment would come, so Amos did not intercede after the third vision.

Amos 7:10-15 records a conflict between Amos and the priest Amaziah. Amaziah was concerned about his position, not about God’s message. He accused Amos of conspiring against Jeroboam II, Israel’s king, and suggested that he return to Judah to prophesy. Amaziah did not mind if the truth was

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- 3.** What should our attitude be toward the material things that we have? How might we prove our attitude by our actions?

God's Word is the plumbline by which we can measure our lives according to His standards. His measurement is always accurate. It is better for us to remove any crooked way immediately, than to receive God's judgment.

[illegible]

**1. What did Amos prophesy would happen to the priest Amaziah and his family?**

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it.” (Amos 8:11-12)**

When I was about twelve years old, a friend and I bicycled over twenty miles to a place called Pigeon Springs. We packed light for the long ride, even though we planned to camp for three days before someone picked us up. Our peddling worked up quite an appetite, and we dipped freely into our food supplies. Consequently, by the end of the first night, all of our food was gone!

My mother had tucked a lone can of tuna fish down in the bottom of my bag. I do not care much for tuna fish, but by the next morning, I was getting pretty hungry. We ate the tuna, though we did not have bread or anything else to go with it. Pigeon Springs had some crawdads and a few minnows, and I looked at them longingly. I caught a crawdad and thought for a while about eating it, but I just could not do it.

We decided to buy something at the nearest town, nine miles away. Pooling our resources, however, revealed that we only had a few coins. Talk about lack of planning! We were able to buy a loaf of bread and some peanut butter, and we subsisted on that until the third day. Were we ever glad to have a good meal once we got home!

It is one thing to be physically hungry, and it is another to be spiritually hungry. In our focus verse, Amos foretold a time when the Word of God would be gone from Israel because they had not cherished and obeyed it. The people would want God’s direction, comfort, and instruction, but they would not be able to find it, even though they would search diligently.

We want to learn a lesson from this text. God’s Word is readily available to us today. Let us be certain that we treasure it and follow God’s instructions that are found in it. Each moment is an opportunity to live for God and glorify Him with our lives.

### BACKGROUND

This chapter began with an analogy based on a basket of summer fruit that God showed Amos, which is described in verses 1 and 2. God was telling Amos

that, like a basket of summer fruit ripe for eating, the people of Israel were ripe for judgment.

Verse 3 painted a gruesome picture. The point was that the songs of the people would be changed to wailing because of the number that would be dead. The grief would be so strong that people would work silently.

In verse 5, Amos directed his words to the merchants. They observed the new moons and Sabbaths, but were anxious for those days to be over. Their attitudes indicated that they were only keeping the requirement of not buying or selling on holy days because they had no choice. Their preference would have been “business as usual.” In addition, the merchants were dishonest, measuring incorrectly. They even sold the “refuse of the wheat,” which should have been thrown away or given to the poor. Thus they cheated their customers and pushed the poor further and further into poverty, or even slavery.

This oppression resulted in the promise of God’s judgment. God, as always, spoke in a way the people could understand. Earthquakes, darkness, mourning, and famine were symbolic of the punishment to come. The people’s mourning would be bitter.

Amos predicted that in their sorrow the people would seek for the Word of God, but not find it. They had disregarded God’s instructions by mixing idolatry with their worship. They had not heeded the prophets He sent. So His Word would not be available to them, though they would search the land for it. Even the young and strong would be unsuccessful. What a sad pronouncement against a self-indulgent people!

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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#### IV. The visions of judgment upon Israel

- E. The vision of the basket of summer fruit (8:1-14)
  - 1. The revelation of Jehovah (8:1)
  - 2. The declaration of Jehovah (8:2-3)
  - 3. The explanation of Jehovah (8:4-14)
    - a. The cause of judgment (8:4-6)
    - b. The course of judgment (8:7-14)
      - (1) The land (8:7-10)
      - (2) The people (8:11-14)

### A CLOSER LOOK

**1. Why did God show Amos the basket of summer fruit?**

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[illegible][illegible]





### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down: And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them.”  
(Amos 9:2-3)**

In my role as a school bus driver, my first priority is to safely transport the students to and from school. Also important, however, is the enforcement of some level of law and order on the bus. I need to ensure that students do not harass one another, that they do not endanger their own or someone else’s safety, that they do not damage the vehicle, and finally, that they do not litter the bus excessively.

The catch is that with my back turned toward them, it is hard to monitor the behavior of more than fifty lively students. They know, of course, that I can see some of what goes on through the inside mirror. But the more-experienced riders also know that I will not be looking in the mirror when making turns or when driving on narrow, curvy sections of rural roads.

When they think the coast is clear, they have been known to unleash barrages of various types of missiles. For example, at the end of one run, I picked up over 110 paper balls. Another time we retrieved some \$1.50 worth of pennies. Then there was the day when little plastic beads from cheap necklaces in the school colors were found everywhere. Sometimes I cannot identify the instigator, so there is nothing I can do to initiate a discipline process.

Many people act as if God were no more perceptive or knowledgeable than a bus driver. They could not, however, be further from the truth. As we see in the focus verse, no matter how “hidden” a person might seem to be, God knows his or her whereabouts—and that is just talking about the physical. God also sees what is going on inside the hearts and minds of every individual.

Before I was saved, I thought that serving a God who is aware of everything we do and why we do it would be a life of bondage. Then I discovered the wonderful secret that when we are forgiven of our sins, we have begun a life not of bondage, but of glorious freedom! No longer do we have to worry if someone sees what we are doing, because we are not doing anything for which to feel guilty. No longer do

we have to remember our exact words, because we have told nothing but the truth. No longer do we have to behave better at certain times than at others, because we are committed to living for God every hour of every day.

As a familiar song points out, “There’s no hiding place down here.” That is a scary thought to those who are guilty in God’s sight. To those who are living for Him, however, it is a great consolation. We know that God knows all about us, and nothing will ever happen to us but what He allows. Even if we go through some times of testing down here, in the end, He will bring us through victoriously.

### BACKGROUND

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Bible scholars are divided over whether the altar mentioned in verse 1 of this chapter is the one at Bethel or the one in the Temple at Jerusalem. It is clear, however, that although God hates all sin, He especially hates the sin and hypocrisy of those who think that being “religious” will somehow make up for their misdeeds.

Amos saw that God Himself would destroy the Temple. Verse 1 says, “Smite the lintel of the door, that the posts may shake.” His blow would cause the building to collapse and those inside would be killed. Any who escaped would be killed with the sword.

Verses 2-4 let the people of Israel know that God knew where they were all the time. Although they might try to hide, their efforts would be futile. Places such as Mount Carmel (which had caverns where people hid, dense forests, and rough terrain) or even the bottom of the sea would offer no protection.

God’s omnipotence is mentioned in verses 5-6. He controls all of creation, while man is finite.

Verses 7-10 restate the judgments that God would pour out upon the people of Israel for their sin. Despite the fact that they were His chosen people, they would be punished for their sins as severely as the heathen nations of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Caphtor (Crete). Nevertheless, God offered them a ray of hope. Although He would judge them severely, He would not totally erase them from the face of the earth. God said, “Yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth,” indicating that He would keep track of each person.

The last part of the chapter refers to happenings in the distant future. James, one of the leaders of the early Christian church, quoted Amos 9:11-12 (Acts 15:16-17). He showed that this passage was a prophecy of the coming of Jesus, whose death and

Verses 13-15 speak of the last days. Some of this prophecy has already been fulfilled; Israel has been restored as a nation and has become fruitful and productive, for example. But the complete fulfillment of this prophecy will occur when the Jews finally accept Christ as their Lord and Savior.

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- ## A CLOSER LOOK

- 2. Why do you suppose God was so angry with the people of Israel?**

- ## NOTES



## Overview for Hosea

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**Purpose:** To proclaim and give an example of God's love for selfish and sinful people.

**Author:** Hosea, son of Beeri. Hosea means "God is help," or "salvation." He was the last great prophet of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

**To Whom Written:** Israel (the Northern Kingdom) and as a lesson for all God's people.

**Date Written:** Covers a span from about 760 B.C. to 715 B.C.; possibly compiled about 715 B.C.

**Setting:** About two hundred years had passed since ten tribes had seceded and set up a Northern Kingdom separate from the Southern Kingdom. God had sent Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, Amos, and now Hosea to proclaim His message of warning. The events likely took place during the last forty years of the Northern Kingdom. Hosea began his ministry during the end of the prosperous but morally declining reign of Jeroboam II of Israel. The rich and prosperous were doing well, but they were oppressing the poor. He continued to prophesy until the Assyrians conquered and put the people into exile.

**Key People:** Hosea, Gomer, their children, and the Northern Kingdom

**Summary:** The true and living God had been forsaken and in His place the people worshiped the Baals (the nature gods and goddesses). The Baal religion was one of the most depraved religions in the world. Its pagan temple rites involved sexual immorality and the people participated, believing that their evil practices would influence the reproductive forces of nature. Young girls were expected to give themselves to the temple leaders for sexual purposes before they

were given in marriage, and homosexual activity was also included in their rituals.

Approximately forty years before Hosea's ministry, Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, King of Israel, was an enthusiastic promoter of the Baal religion. The moral and religious degeneration that resulted brought about a total disregard for social and ethical values in Israel. Corruption had affected every segment of society.

Against this background of degeneracy, Hosea was called to a special mission by God. He was to share the Lord's anguish over the people's unfaithfulness, and urge them to return to God. Hosea was commanded by God to marry Gomer, a woman who would be unfaithful to her marriage vows. His relationship with Gomer, her adultery, and his subsequent restoration of her became a living and prophetic example to Israel. Like God's continuing love for Israel, Hosea continued to love Gomer and finally brought her home. The book is largely composed of sermons that Hosea must have spoken at various times in many different places.

The story of Hosea and Gomer dramatically portrays God's constant and persistent love, and reveals that God can use the evil experiences of men for His glory. There is an allegorical link to God's love for His bride, which emphasizes that even those who have committed spiritual adultery are still loved by God, and He calls them to return to Him. He is willing to pay the price owed for their freedom. The intent of the story is to show that in spite of the actions of sin, which are so repulsive and sickening, God wants the backslider to return. If the backslidden will understand that God still loves them in longing compassion, and if they will repent, He will have mercy and restore them.

# Timeline

*Some dates are approximate, as reference materials differ.*



# Outline

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*A complete amplified outline of this book is available on our website at [www.apostolicfaith.org](http://www.apostolicfaith.org).*

- I. Prologue: the prophet's marriage (1:1 — 3:5)
  - A. Hosea's commission (1:1 — 2:1)
  - B. Jehovah's chastening (2:2-23)
  - C. Hosea's care (3:1-5)
- II. The prophet's message (4:1 — 14:8)
  - A. Jehovah's rejection of Israel (4:1 — 7:16)
  - B. Jehovah's retribution upon Israel (8:1 — 13:16)
  - C. Jehovah's restoration of Israel (14:1-8)
- III. Conclusion (14:9)



### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“Then said God, Call his name Lo-ammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God.”  
(Hosea 1:9)**

Before our first son was born, my wife and I searched through baby name books and held lengthy discussions about the perfect name for our boy. We had a hard time agreeing on what to call him, because we wanted it to be unique. If we thought of anyone that had the same name as one we were considering, it was rejected. Finally, we came up with a unique name that no one else we knew had used: Justin. Imagine our surprise and chagrin when we took our new baby to our annual church camp meeting and found out that four other unique Justins had been born that same year!

Hosea did not face the challenge of coming up with unique names for his children, because God told him what their names should be. God gave them prophetic names that indicated the judgments to come upon Israel. God had a reason for this. He intended to use Hosea’s family as a living object lesson for the nation of Israel.

Like my wife and me, many parents are extremely concerned about what to name their children, and they spend a great deal of time and thoughtful consideration on the matter. We know that beside the names we choose for them, they will also have our last name. Bearing that name will identify them with us, and they will become representatives of our family.

As Christians, we bear Christ’s name and are identified with Him. We represent Him to the world. Does that identification bring Him honor? The people of Israel were not obeying or honoring God, and He told Hosea that they would not be His people, and He would not be their God. The name “Lo-ammi,” noted in our focus verse, indicated that horrifying indictment.

This very day, people will be watching us. We may be the only representative of the Lord that they know. Are we living up to the name of Christian? God can give us the help and grace to do so.

### BACKGROUND

After the death of Solomon, Israel was divided into the Northern Kingdom of Israel (whose capital city was Samaria) and the Southern Kingdom of Judah (whose capital city was Jerusalem). Hosea was a contemporary of Amos, and they both ministered in the

Northern Kingdom of Israel. Around the same time, Isaiah and Micah ministered in the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

Hosea prophesied during the reign of Israel’s King Jeroboam II, so his work likely started about 760 B.C. His preaching must have extended through the reigns of Israel’s last four kings — Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, Hoshea — and ended shortly after the fall of Samaria to the Assyrian King Sargon II in 722 B.C.

God instructed Hosea to marry Gomer, an unfaithful woman who represented the unfaithful and idolatrous nation of Israel. Hosea’s firstborn son was named Jezreel, to indicate that God would send judgment upon the lineage of Jehu, the Israelite King who had slaughtered many in the valley of Jezreel. Hosea’s daughter was named Lo-ruhamah, meaning “no mercy,” to reveal that God’s judgment would fall upon Israel and the nation would be taken into captivity. Hosea’s second son was named Lo-ammi, meaning “not my people,” to indicate that rebellious Israel had been rejected by God because they broke His covenant.

Although Hosea had a difficult message of judgment to deliver to the nation of Israel, this message was mixed with the hope of restoration. God must punish sin, yet He is faithful to offer mercy, so the first chapter of Hosea ends with a prophecy that God would restore Israel at a future time. The prophetic names of Hosea’s children are referenced one more time, but with a positive connotation added. The name Jezreel means “to sow,” and God promised to sow a new nation of Israelites. This new nation would have a restored fellowship with God, and would be able to say “Ammi” (my people) and “Ruhamma” (mercy).

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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- I. Prologue: the prophet’s marriage
  - A. Hosea’s commission (1:1 — 2:1)
    1. His marriage (1:1-2)
    2. His children (1:3-9)
      - a. Jezreel (1:3-5)
      - b. Lo-ruhamah (1:6-7)
      - c. Lo-ammi (1:8-9)
    3. His promise (1:10 — 2:1)

### A CLOSER LOOK

**1.** Even while passing judgment on Israel, God made a promise of restoration to the Israelites. What were the specifics of this restoration promise?

[illegible]

## This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.





### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal.” (Hosea 2:8)**

Have you ever been the recipient of a gift from an unidentified giver?

Occasionally groups of women will choose to have “secret pals.” They draw names, and challenge themselves to give each other gifts without their “pals” finding out who gave them. At times, even handwriting is disguised or gifts are delivered by uninvolved persons in order to keep the secret.

Some years ago when a young woman was ill with cancer, a family chose to surprise her with small gifts of tiny angels of every shape and description for the twelve days before Christmas. Daily, they secretly left the presents, and the woman was extremely curious as to who was responsible for these delights.

One of the challenges of receiving anonymous gifts is knowing who to thank. Secret pal groups generally last for a designated time, and then the names are revealed. At that point, proper thanks can be given. The sick woman eventually discovered the family who was giving her the angels and warmly expressed what pleasure they had brought her.

In our focus verse, Hosea expressed frustration that Gomer was not recognizing how her needs were being met. Even beyond her needs perhaps, Hosea had given her gold and silver. Yet, instead of a heart of thankfulness toward him, she continued to worship idols, thinking they were the source of her material possessions. Not only was she not thanking the real giver, but she was praising the wrong giver!

God was also sending a message to Israel. They had bountiful material wealth—they were a very wealthy nation at this point—and yet they were worshipping Baal and thanking him for their success.

We may not be worshipping Baal today, but it is certainly possible to misdirect our praise and thankfulness. We, like Gomer, should know Who sends our blessings. And yet, our culture has become caught up in the concept that we can do anything if we put our minds to it. If that were true, it would mean that if we succeed, we would deserve the glory.

Let’s regularly remind ourselves that God is the source of our blessings. If we are consistent in worshipping and thanking Him, we will be much more likely to stay close to Him. We must give Him the praise He deserves!

### BACKGROUND

This passage of Scripture details both the personal lives of Hosea and Gomer, and the trespasses of Israel toward God. Gomer went whole-heartedly into a life of adultery. Although some of her desires were not wrong (bread, water, oil, wool, flax), she sought them in the wrong manner and from the wrong source. She did not realize that Hosea was the source of her blessings. Similarly, Israel, who was spiritually unfaithful, sought to worship idols rather than the one true God, mistaking the source of their blessings.

“The valley of Achor” is where Achan’s sin was discovered when Israel was defeated in their first battle with Ai. This reference indicated that just as God forgave Israel once the sin was dealt with, Gomer would also be forgiven if she dealt with her sin and put it away from her.

The term *Ishi* in verse 16 is a loving term of affection, while the term *Baali* is similar to one that servants would use toward their masters, or worshipers toward their idols. God was pointing out that his relationship with Israel would be a deep, loving, close relationship, not a distant masterful one.

The flagons of wine mentioned in verse 1 were cakes made of grapes.

While living on her own for at least some of her absence from Hosea’s household, Gomer must have sold herself into slavery. Hosea bought Gomer back for a pitifully small amount. This amount illustrated the depths to which she had stooped. A common price for a slave was thirty pieces of silver; yet Hosea paid only fifteen pieces and some barley, a food which was only suitable for animals.

God commanded Hosea to purchase back his wife, indicating that even adultery cannot dissolve the bond of marriage.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

Hannah’s Bible Outlines  
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- I. Prologue: the prophet’s marriage
  - B. Jehovah’s chastening (2:2-23)
    1. His rejection of Israel (2:2-5)
    2. His retribution upon Israel (2:6-13)
    3. His restoration of Israel (2:14-23)
      - a. Conversion promised (2:14-17)
      - b. Covenant blessings renewed (2:18-23)
  - C. Hosea’s care (3:1-5)
    1. The Lord’s instruction (3:1)
    2. The prophet’s action (3:2-3)
    3. The prophetic significance (3:4-5)

## A CLOSER LOOK

**1. What provisions did Hosea give to Gomer?**

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**2.** How does God's commandment to Hosea in 3:1 relate to God's view of life-long marriage?

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**3. Name five blessings that you especially want to thank God for today.**

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## CONCLUSION

Let's be sure to remember where our blessings come from and express our thankfulness to God alone.

## NOTES

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.” (Hosea 4:1)**

From the early decades of time, God has used preachers as His messengers. Under God’s anointing, these people have urged sinners to change their ways. Hosea was one of these messengers.

The famous evangelist D.L. Moody was another. Moody was practical and direct in his preaching. One night toward the end of his life, he stood before a crowd and paused. There was such silence that a clock’s ticking could be heard. He asked anyone who would say he would trust Christ to state, “I will.” No one responded to his challenge. He asked the question again, “Who will say he will trust Christ?” More silence, but then a low voice from the back said, “I will.” Mr. Moody quickly went to the platform’s edge and looked at his audience. Soon more and more responses came, and in a matter of minutes fifty people had said, “I will.” The people who responded were just a few of the thousands whose lives were impacted by the preaching of D.L. Moody.<sup>1</sup>

In today’s passage, Hosea preached to the people of Israel. He said, “Hear the word of the LORD,” and then went on to list their sins. No doubt, Hosea would have been thrilled to see people turn to God as Moody did! The God who sent Hosea to seek and buy back his wayward wife desperately wanted to heal, forgive, and bless the nation of Israel. He wanted to pour out His richest blessings on His chosen people. He wanted to show His love for them. But His people did not seek Him. They ran from Him, and ran straight to the idolatrous worship of pagan gods. They sinned against God and offended His holiness by committing the grossest sins possible.

God still uses preachers as His messengers today, and like in Israel, sometimes the message is ignored. Someday God will pour out His punishment upon the people who have not turned to Him and worshipped Him in spirit and in truth. However, today, God is merciful and will pour out his love, forgiveness, and blessing in a marvelous way upon the souls that will seek Him in earnest. Let us seek Him today!

### BACKGROUND

Chapter 4 begins a new section of the book of Hosea, in which Israel’s sins were listed and God’s

punishment was foretold. God had a “controversy” (a complaint, a charge) against the Children of Israel. He was disappointed and angered at their backsliding. They had been warned many times about the penalty of sin, yet they continued in their stubborn ways.

God had made a covenant with Israel at Mt. Sinai. Just as Gomer had not taken her wedding vows seriously and had violated her marriage covenant with Hosea, the people of Israel had not taken their vows to God seriously. They had broken God’s original covenant with them, and their love for Him had departed.

It appears God was “holding court” against Israel. He was the Righteous Judge, and He announced His complaint against them. Hosea, acting as an agent for God, told Israel of their sins. He listed them one by one, trying to convince them of the error of their ways. He pled with them to return to God and seek His forgiveness, yet they continued in their sins. Their primary sin was the rejection of knowledge of God (Hosea 4:6): not a head knowledge (many probably still knew *about* God), but a personal relationship with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

In the beginning of chapter 5, God condemned the civil and religious leaders of Israel. They were supposed to lead the nation and instruct them in righteousness, but they had failed to do this. Instead they had led hypocritical and corrupt lives. How could they possibly lead Israel in righteousness when they themselves were unrighteous? There was no justice in the land, and Israel’s sins had paralyzed them.

Through the text, God told how His judgment would take place. He foretold how the Assyrians would overrun Israel. The nation would be laid waste and made desolate. The Assyrians would attack them suddenly, as a young lion, and there would be no escaping the judgment to come.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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#### II. The prophet’s message

##### A. Jehovah’s rejection of Israel

1. The faithlessness of Israel (4:1-19)
  - a. The fact of apostasy (4:1-3)
  - b. The reason for apostasy (4:4-10)
  - c. The course of apostasy (4:11-19)
    - (1) The idolatry of Israel (4:11-13)
    - (2) The instruction of Judah (4:14-19)
2. The repudiation of Israel
  - a. The rebuke of Israel (5:1-7)
  - b. The judgment upon Israel (5:8-15)

## A CLOSER LOOK

**1.** What did God say would be destroyed as a result of Israel's sins?

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**2.** Why do you think God listed all the individual sins of Israel, rather than just generalizing them as “the sins of Israel”?

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**3.** Israel was faulted for its empty worship of God. Today, how can our worship evidence sincere, whole-hearted love and devotion to the Lord?

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## CONCLUSION

God has used His Word and His messengers to tell us that He wants us to serve Him. Will we follow His instructions that come to us through those who preach to us?

## NOTES

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“They return, but not to the most High: they are like a deceitful bow: their princes shall fall by the sword for the rage of their tongue: this shall be their derision in the land of Egypt.” (Hosea 7:16)**

My brother-in-law is an archer. One year he went to Alaska to hunt bear, and he made every possible preparation to ensure success. His preparation included visits to donut shops where he could get discarded pastries to use as bait. Then he brought these delicacies to our house and compressed them in our trash compactor until he had enough in a container to check on the airplane as baggage!

While the donuts were a somewhat intriguing part of my brother-in-law's preparation, we can be certain that he paid special attention to his equipment, particularly to his bow. It would have been examined and re-examined, tested and then tested again. Think how disappointing it would have been to get to Alaska and find that the bow was damaged or out of alignment for some reason!

A “deceitful bow” may, to the casual observer, have the appearance of being a good weapon, but it will not shoot an arrow to its target. In a similar way, the people of Israel sometimes looked as though they were serving God, but He indicated that they were not honest and true in their hearts. In fact, their spiritual condition was despicable!

We want to be certain that nothing in our lives is “warped” or out of line in God's sight. Our prayers need to be sincere and from our hearts. We need to fully submit our wills to God. This means more than just saying, “I give You my life, Lord.” It means following through wherever He may lead us and whatever He may ask us to do.

We also want to be sure that our worship of God is more than just a routine that looks good to the casual observer. Good habits can be a great help to our Christian walk, but our praise and prayers to God need to be more than a habit. They need to be sincere and heartfelt communication!

We must let go of ourselves and let God have His way with us. If we do, He will make sure that we are straight and true in His eyes.

### BACKGROUND

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There are two schools of thought regarding the time frame of Hosea 6:1-3. The first is that Hosea was referring to the time of the Millennial Reign, when

Israel will truly repent and receive the blessings God intended for them. The second is that Israel was making an attempt at repentance, but was not sincere. The people were sorry for the consequences of their sin, but they were not willing to change their ways. They thought that if they made a show of repentance, God would “heal” their land quickly and change their dire circumstances into prosperity and blessings. They said they would “follow on to know the LORD,” when they actually wanted to put Him on the same level as the nature god, Baal.

Israel's devotion was like the early morning dew that appears for a short time and then disappears quickly when the sun comes up. The people's repentance was short-lived and sporadic. They had broken the covenant they made with God at Mt. Sinai and were reaping the consequences. Gilead, which was once a sacred city, was full of corruption and wickedness. The priests, who should have been leading the people to righteousness, were actually encouraging the people to sin.

In the context of this book, Ephraim is representative of all Israel. Although Hosea apparently lived in the Northern Kingdom of Israel and most of his prophecies related to it, he also spoke against the Southern Kingdom of Judah and told the people they would fare no better than Israel when it came to God's judgment.

In chapter 7, Hosea reminded Israel of God's desire to heal their land, but the people continued in their wickedness and refused to turn to God for help. Instead, they trusted political leaders and kings to give victory over their enemies. There was much political unrest in Israel during Hosea's lifetime, and four of the last six kings of Israel were assassinated as the struggle for power escalated.

Israel's sin and corruption were compared to an overheated oven that was ignored. Even though the people's passion for sin was burning out of control, there was no one to call the nation back to repentance. They were also like a “cake not turned.” Cakes were cooked on hot stones and it was easy for them to be burned on one side and completely raw on the other side if they were not turned properly. Israel was trying to mix with other nations by intermarrying and taking on the pagan ways of these nations, but because of its compromise it was “burned” by Assyria on the one hand and left raw and vulnerable on the other side.

God's covenant with Israel stated that it could trade with other nations, but it was not to enter into

any type of political alliance that would cause disobedience to the Lord (Numbers 23:9). In the end, Israel would be derided in Egypt, the very nation it had turned to for help.

**AMPLIFIED OUTLINE**

*Hannah's Bible Outlines*  
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- II. The prophet's message
  - A. Jehovah's rejection of Israel
    - 2. The repudiation of Israel
      - c. The invitation to Israel (6:1-3)
    - 3. The fickleness of Israel (6:4-11)
    - 4. The foolishness of Israel (7:1-16)
      - a. The wickedness of Israel (7:1-7)
      - b. The silliness of Israel (7:8-16)

**A CLOSER LOOK**

1. What did Hosea say God would do if the people would return to the Lord?

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2. In what ways would the outcome for Israel have been different if they had truly repented and turned to God instead of other nations for their help?

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3. How can the analogies Hosea used, such as a neglected oven, a half-baked cake, and a deceitful bow, relate to people today?

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**CONCLUSION**

If we want complete victory in our daily walk with the Lord, we must allow Him to have control over every area of our lives. If we only turn to the Lord when we are in trouble, we will suffer defeat as Israel did. God wants us to be victorious overcomers, but we must depend on Him and follow His will for our lives.

**NOTES**

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“For Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples; and Judah hath multiplied fenced cities: but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour the palaces thereof.” (Hosea 8:14)**

As a mother of young children, I am often faced with the task of trying to locate something for them. They have forgotten where they put a special piece of clothing, a homework assignment, or a shoe, and they come to me whining that they will never find it! I like to give suggestions before I get involved: “Did you check in the living room?” “Did you look in the laundry room?” It is always fun to add, “Did you check that disaster area you call your bedroom?” They always give definite answers: “It isn’t there!” While they may be in a panic, I am not usually overly concerned. I know that the item is around somewhere; they just have forgotten where they put it.

Now, the next step in finding things at our house is to follow specific directions given by Mom or Dad. “Check under your bed.” “Look in the bottom of your closet.” Of course, in most situations this does not work. They aren’t really looking, and they certainly did not put it where it belongs. The last resort is for me to help them look. Almost every time, the item is found within a few minutes. Sometimes, I almost trip over it walking into their room, and I wonder how they possibly could have missed it!

All of us occasionally forget where we have put something. At the time of today’s text, however, Israel had forgotten the most vital One in their lives! They had forgotten their Maker! If they had kept God where He should have been—first and foremost in their lives—this never would have happened. God warned them of impending judgments, and He sent prophets to deliver His message, “Come back to Me.” There were consequences for forgetting God and not heeding the warnings.

Whether we are young or old, and whatever else we may forget, it is imperative that we remember God! Let’s be sure we are keeping Him in His rightful place in our lives. We want to honor Him and obey His commandments. Then we will escape His judgment.

### BACKGROUND

Throughout these two chapters, Hosea referred to Assyria and Egypt. In verse 13 of chapter 8, the people of Israel were told they would return to Egypt. The allusion was more figurative than literal. The point was

that Egypt had been their previous master, and they were soon to fall into the hands of Assyria, who would also be their master.

In chapter 8 verse 5, Hosea let the people know that their idol worship was in vain. Samaria was the capital of Israel and sometimes was used to reference the entire nation.

Gilgal was where Israel’s political and religious rebellion originated. In addition to the idolatry that had swept through the nation, alliances had been sought and obtained with many neighboring countries, against God’s orders.

These chapters were written at harvest, a time when it was the custom to celebrate. Yet, for several reasons, God ordered the people not to rejoice. First, punishment was on the way. They were giving credit to their idols for the harvest rather than to God, who actually provided it. Because of this, Hosea told them that their crops would fail.

Besides being headed toward captivity to Assyria, the people would no longer be able to worship God in the ways that He had appointed. Their religious activities would not please Him. They had become insensitive spiritually, and thought God’s prophets and followers to be fools or insane (Hosea 9:7).

Verse 8 indicates that God wanted Israel to have fellowship with Him and to act as a watchman to other nations. Instead, they despised Him, did not follow His ways, and became a hindrance to the nations about them.

The reference to Gibeah in Hosea 9:9 was to remind Israel of her depraved condition in an earlier generation (see Judges 19). A man and his concubine had stopped in the city for a night. A gang of men looking for sexual gratification surrounded the place where the two were staying. The husband refused to come out, sending his concubine out to them instead. She was raped and then left dead on the doorstep. In those days, “every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25). In Hosea’s day, Israel had similarly corrupted herself.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

Hannah’s Bible Outlines  
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- II. The prophet’s message
  - B. Jehovah’s retribution upon Israel
    - 1. The call to judgment (8:1 — 9:9)
      - a. For transgression of the covenant (8:1-3)
      - b. For unapproved kings and idolatry (8:4-7)

- c. For ungodly alliances (8:8-10)
- d. For forgetting Jehovah (8:11-14)
- e. For false security (9:1-9)
- 2. The cause of judgment
  - a. False worship (9:10 — 10:2)
    - (1) The cause: unfaithfulness (9:10)
    - (2) The result: unfruitfulness (9:11 — 10:2)

## A CLOSER LOOK

1. Which of Israel's two enemies are mentioned throughout today's reading?

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2. The people of Israel performed many rituals of worship. Why didn't their actions bring God's blessings upon them?

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3. If something has taken priority above God in your life, what steps can you take to reverse that situation?

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## CONCLUSION

If we keep God in his rightful place as King of our lives, we will find He is there when we need Him, day or night.

## NOTES

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.” (Hosea 10:12)**

I enjoy driving through farmland in the spring-time and viewing the fields plowed in perfect rows. Seeing the green blades shooting up through the ground always makes me comment on their beauty, and I love to look across fields of grain that are nearly ready for harvest. We subscribe to a magazine designed especially “for those who long for the country.” Obviously, I love the country . . . driving through the country, that is. Being a farmer has never been one of my desires. Why? Because every drive in the country spells one word to me—WORK!

Have you considered what farmers do? They are up early and toil until late. The ground must be tilled and fertilized before anything can be planted, and specific nutrients need to be added to the soil from time to time. Seeds must be planted, and faithful watering is a necessity. Land that has been left uncultivated for a long period of time becomes fallow—hard and full of weeds—and has to be broken up. Machinery must be maintained. The to-do list must be endless!

Keeping our hearts right before God can be much like farming. Hosea urged the people of Israel to break up the fallow ground of their hearts and repent. He said that if they would prepare their hearts and sow seeds of righteousness, they would reap God’s mercy and He would teach them His righteousness. Even though God had abundantly blessed Israel and planted the people in the land of Canaan, they chose instead to follow the false gods of their neighbors, and they no longer bore the fruit of righteousness that God desired from them. Their hearts had become hardened to the point where God’s threat of judgment did not cause them to change their idolatrous ways.

If we desire to be fruit-bearing Christians, we must keep our hearts pliable and open to God’s Word. It takes a daily examining of our souls to make sure there is no hardness that needs to be broken up or “weeds” that need to be removed. We must also add such necessary nutrients as prayer, Bible reading, church attendance, love, forgiveness, willingness, and obedience. It takes work to produce a plentiful harvest in our spiritual lives, but God will make it worth every effort.

### BACKGROUND

This chapter reiterates Hosea’s two burdens: Israel’s sin and its punishment. Israel had prospered in Canaan, and the more the people prospered the more altars they built to honor their idols instead of giving God the credit for the many blessings He had bestowed on them. They could not decide whether to serve God or their idols, and God said He would destroy their altars and idols.

In verses 3 and 4, Hosea referred to the day when the Assyrian army would take away Israel’s king, and the people would realize that even a king could not save them from God’s judgment. Even though Israel had entered into covenants with other nations, those agreements would prove to be false. Hosea compared God’s judgment to hemlock, a bitter, poisonous plant.

The “calves of Beth-aven” referred to the calf-gods that Israel had worshiped since the days of King Jeroboam, when the Northern Kingdom had split from the Southern Kingdom. Hosea said the people would mourn because these idols would be unable to save them from the Assyrian army that would carry them away. Samaria, where the king resided, was the chief city in the Northern Kingdom, but the king would be cut off and taken captive along with the rest of Israel. The people would call for the mountains to fall on them rather than repent and turn back to God.

In verse 9, Hosea referred to the battle of Gibeah (recorded in Judges 19 and 20), when God used Israel to punish the tribe of Benjamin for its dreadful sin. God protected Israel at that time because they were right, but by this point they had committed their own sin of idolatry and would face God’s judgment.

Treading out the corn was the most pleasant task an animal could do because it was allowed to eat all it wanted while working. Hosea referred to the fact that Israel had it easy up until this time and had enjoyed the blessings and prosperity that God had given to them. However, the time was coming when Ephraim (Israel) would be taken into captivity to serve its Assyrian taskmaster. Judah would also suffer the same fate, although not for another 130 to 150 years.

The only thing that would save Israel from the judgment of Assyrian captivity was repentance. Hosea reminded the people that they were about to reap what they had sown. Israel continued to sow wickedness, and God’s judgment came just as He said it would. Nothing is known about either Shalman or Beth-arbel, but this reference was apparently to a battle that was well known to Israel in the days of Hosea.



*Hannah's Bible Outlines*  
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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.” (Hosea 12:10)**

Growing up in our church, I have many memories of object lessons that were presented in the primary and junior departments during Sunday school time. The teacher giving the lesson would often display a common item and then explain how the item revealed something important about our spiritual lives or our relationship with God.

As a child, I enjoyed these object lessons, but as I grew up I began to feel that object lessons were just for kids with short attention spans, or for young minds that could not grasp abstract ideas. After all, teachers of the adult classes rarely incorporated object lessons into their Sunday school sessions.

However, I’ve learned that we should not dismiss object lessons as juvenile. God himself uses common human experiences to speak His truth to human hearts. In Hosea 12:10, God revealed to His chosen people that He spoke to them in “similitudes” through the prophets. The Book of Hosea is full of metaphors and similes, and the prophet himself became a living object lesson to the nation of Israel.

The metaphors and similes used by Hosea and the other prophets were not primitive symbolic language reserved for Old Testament times. When Jesus taught, as recorded in the New Testament gospels, He spoke in parables and said, “The Kingdom of Heaven is like . . .” Christ compared His kingdom to a seed, a net, a pearl, etc. When trying to communicate deep spiritual truths, Jesus used object lessons!

Do you wish that God would speak to you? God speaks through His marvelous Word, the Holy Bible, but He also speaks to us through our common, everyday experiences. As you open your heart and mind to God’s messages contained in your life experiences, it may become difficult to find a time when God is not speaking to you!

### BACKGROUND

In the last four chapters of the book, Hosea’s theme is the intense love God had for Israel. From the nation’s beginning, God’s love for Israel was like that of a parent for a willful child. Consequently, He sent discipline when the people turned away from Him. His prophets tried to instruct them, but they rejected the message and served Baalim. God treated them with

love, provided for them, healed them, and lifted their burdens, but they would not see or acknowledge this.

Because of Israel’s stubbornness, judgment was impending. Two hundred years after the Northern Kingdom broke off from Jerusalem, it was conquered by the Assyrian leader, Shalmaneser. Yet God, through Hosea, expressed His reluctance and sadness at punishing His child. Admah and Zeboim had been cities of the plain which were destroyed with Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 14:8; Genesis 19; Deuteronomy 29:23). There had been no covenant between God and those cities, but there was a covenant between God and Israel. God’s heart was torn, and verses 9-11 of chapter 11 give a promise that there would eventually be restoration.

Hosea 11:12 contrasts the evil kings of the Northern Kingdom with the good kings of the Southern Kingdom (Judah). Hezekiah and Josiah were the most notable of Judah’s good kings, but Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Amaziah, Azariah, and Jotham also did right in God’s sight. The result was that the nation of Judah survived between 130 to 150 years longer than the Northern Kingdom, and a remnant of them eventually returned from captivity and rebuilt the Temple.

All twelve tribes of Israel were descendants of Jacob. Hosea reminded them of Jacob’s birth and his wrestling with the angel. Although Jacob had many weaknesses, he sought God. In contrast, Israel sought false gods.

Israel took on the Canaanite methods of doing business, which were deceitful and oppressive. Yet, the people of Israel were proud and thought their dishonesty and corruption would not be discovered. They thought their prosperity was a result of their own abilities and efforts.

Verse 9 of chapter 12 refers to the Feast of Tabernacles. At this annual occasion, the people of Israel lived in tents for a week to remind them of the time their forefathers spent in the wilderness. The message was that continuing in their own ways could result in them living in tents again, rather than in comfortable homes. God had sent many prophets to warn His people of how to escape the predicted doom and judgment. He wanted Israel to show gratitude, but instead the people were rebellious. Punishment was the impending consequence.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

Hannah’s Bible Outlines  
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- II. The prophet’s message
  - B. Jehovah’s retribution upon Israel

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## NOTES

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This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.” (Hosea 14:9)**

When my mother was a young girl, her family moved often. As she grew up she would be in a school just long enough to make friends, and then it was time to move again. Sometimes the moves were to different parts of the country.

The family finally located in Oregon and began “church shopping.” They would visit one church and then move on to the next. My mother was sixteen when she came to the Apostolic Faith Church with her family. In the very first service, something registered in her heart that this was the truth. The rest of the family went on seeking, but my mother began to attend services regularly and eventually was saved. As a result, I had the privilege of being raised in this wonderful Gospel.

Our focus verse refers to those who are wise and prudent as being those who will walk in the ways of the Lord. Some individuals will hear the truth and it will register down in their hearts, as it did for my mother. Others will hear the truth and will ignore or reject it.

There are many things we can do to keep a wise heart—one that is open to the truth. First of all, we must be honest with ourselves. Many people make excuses for their behavior, but if we are quick to take responsibility for our actions, we have taken a giant step toward having wise hearts.

The concepts of honesty and integrity apply here. We need to always be honest in what we say, and to keep our promises to others. Our business practices should be without reproach and our morals impeccable. Also, we need to commune with the Lord in order to know and understand His ways. We can do this through reading and meditating on His Word, and by communicating with Him in prayer. This will keep strong the love-covenant which was the focus of Hosea’s writing.

The Lord says if we are wise and prudent, we will know His ways. In this age of deceit, it is imperative that we do all we can to keep a love for Truth. Remember—the transgressors will fall, but the just will walk in His way, and the end of His way is Glory!

### BACKGROUND

The final chapters of Hosea are thought to have been written around 715 B.C. Following the death of Jeroboam II, there came a time of chaos and anarchy in Israel. The political system disintegrated and social and moral values crumbled. Crime and poverty were rampant, with the rich oppressing the poor. Marriage had lost its sacred value, and family life and the home had collapsed. In a short time, Israel would be invaded and many of her inhabitants would be taken away captive.

The Book of Hosea revolves around God’s Covenant with His people. In spite of God’s great love for them, His people were unfaithful to Him. Throughout the book, Hosea warned the people to turn back to the Lord to avoid punishment. Again and again they refused. At this point, they were beginning to reap the fruits of their sin.

In chapter 13, Hosea recounted God’s anger toward Israel. He told of judgment for the sins of the people and for their rejection of Him. God inspired Hosea to illustrate how fleeting Israel’s status was by comparing it to a morning cloud, the early dew, chaff in the wind, and smoke from a chimney.

Verse 11 references Israel’s insistence to have a king, and how God eventually appointed King Saul. The Kingdom of Israel became strong under David and Solomon’s reigns. However, once it was divided, there was never another good king in the Northern Kingdom, and the kings were eventually all cut off (2 Kings 17:1-6).

Hosea 14:1-3 calls again for Israel’s repentance, with the promise of renewal if the people would return to God. He promised healing for the backslider and blessings upon those who would repent (verses 4-8).

God concluded His message through Hosea by showing He is a God of great mercy, if only people would repent and walk in His ways. Hosea’s message is summarized in the book’s last verse. The wise and prudent were those who had a correct relationship, and therefore fellowship, with God. The transgressors were those who were not in fellowship with God. Some would heed the warnings and succeed; some would ignore the warnings and perish.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

Hannah’s Bible Outlines  
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- II. The prophet’s message
  - B. Jehovah’s retribution upon Israel
    - 4. The crimes against Jehovah

- f. The idolatry of Israel (13:1-3)
- 5. The catastrophe upon Israel (13:4-16)
  - a. The decree (13:4-8)
  - b. The desolation (13:9-11)
  - c. The deliverance (13:12-14)
  - d. The destruction (13:15-16)
- C. Jehovah's restoration of Israel (14:1-8)
  - 1. The invitation (14:1-3)
  - 2. The blessing (14:4-8)

### III. Conclusion (14:9)

## A CLOSER LOOK

1. What could the people of Israel have done to avoid God's judgment?

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2. Why did God refer to Himself as a lion, a leopard, and a bear?

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3. How can we be wise and prudent today?

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## CONCLUSION

Let us renew our commitment to commune often with the Lord Who loves us so much. We want to be open to His Voice and to walk in His way.

## NOTES

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## Overview for Micah

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**Purpose:** To express disdain for the corruption and pretension of the religious and political leaders in Jerusalem; to confront the people with their sins and warn of impending judgment; and to foretell God's redemption of a chastened people, the coming of the Messiah, and the eventual reign of Christ on earth.

**Author:** Micah the Morasthite

**Time Period Covered:** Approximately 742 B.C. to 687 B.C., during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah

**History:** Micah, along with Hosea and Amos, was a contemporary of Isaiah. Micah condemned religious practices that were not backed up by ethical performance. He predicted the destruction of Jerusalem as punishment for widespread social injustice and corruption among the religious and political leadership, and lived to see Israel carried into Assyrian exile (722 B.C.). The prophet Jeremiah credited the ministry of Micah with encouraging the great reformation in Judah under King Hezekiah (see Jeremiah 26:18). Micah probably died during the reign of Hezekiah.

**Setting:** Micah was a native of Moresheth-gath in Judah, a small town located about twenty to twenty-five miles southwest of Jerusalem. He ministered both in Israel (Samaria) and the border areas of Judah, and was the only eighth-century prophet who addressed both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. He was a country preacher from a poor background, so he

spoke often to the poverty-stricken people of his region, and always on their behalf.

**Key Passages:** Micah 5:2, which predicted in precise detail that the Savior would be born in Bethlehem Ephratah, is one of the most outstanding single prophecies related to the birth of Jesus, the Messiah of Israel.

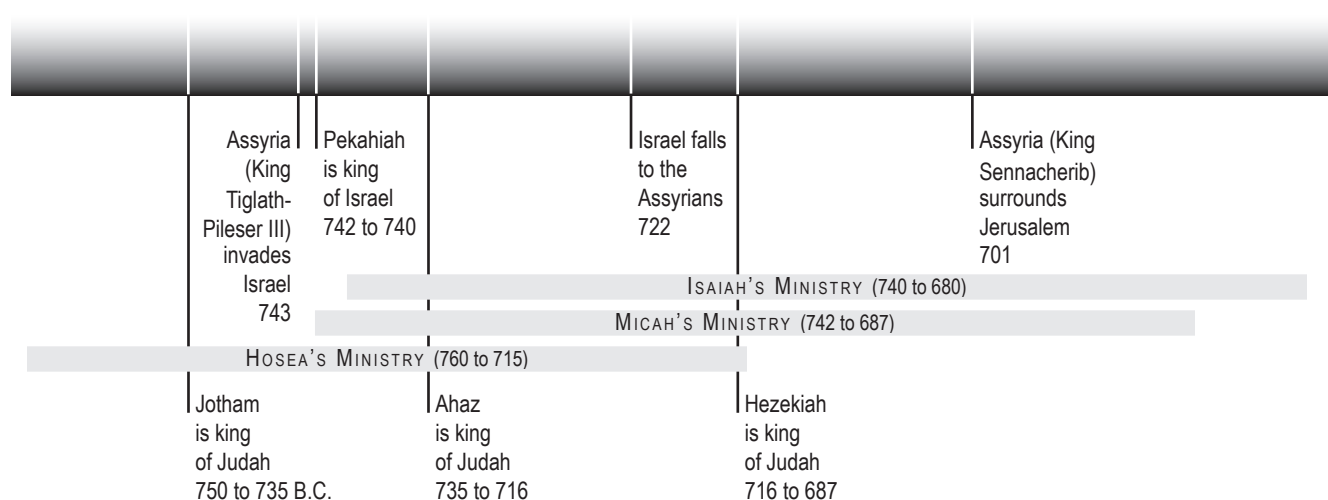
Micah 6:8 contains a concise description of what is required to please God: "to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

**Summary:** The Book of Micah is a collection of prophetic speeches. It can be roughly divided into three sections, each with a particular theme: a warning of divine judgment and prophecies of punishment (1:1 – 2:13), the promise of salvation and a coming Deliverer (3:1 – 5:15), and the message of forgiveness and a challenge to Israel to trust God as their only hope (6:1 – 7:20). Micah delivered these messages from God in hopes that the people would forsake their idolatry and return to sincere faith in the Lord.

Much of Micah's prophecy is severe in tone. In seven short chapters, the prophet depicted God in compelling words, revealing that He not only hates sin, but also loves the sinner. Fervently, yet concisely, Micah spoke to the issues of his day in terms of Israel's covenant obligations. In spite of Israel's rebellion and failure to meet their obligations, the prophet revealed that God would yet lead His people to future glory.

# Timeline

*Some dates are approximate, as reference materials differ.*



# Outline

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*A complete amplified outline of this book is available on our website at [www.apostolicfaith.org](http://www.apostolicfaith.org).*

- I. Introduction (1:1)
- II. The message of judgment (1:2 — 2:13)
  - A. The description of judgment (1:2-7)
  - B. The lamentation over judgment (1:8-16)
  - C. The causes of judgment (2:1-11)
  - D. The encouragement in judgment (2:12-13)
- III. The message of promise (3:1 — 5:15)
  - A. The future judgment (3:1-12)
  - B. The future kingdom (4:1 — 5:15)
- IV. The message of forgiveness (6:1 — 7:20)
  - A. The controversy of Jehovah (6:1-16)
  - B. The message of Micah (7:1-20)





### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“If a man walking in the spirit and falsehood do lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people.” (Micah 2:11)**

A few years ago, I read a story about a politician who had been caught lying. Our local newspaper did a “man in the street” poll to see how people reacted to this news. I will never forget how I felt as I read the reaction of one young man. He said, in so many words, “Yeah, it’s really too bad that he lied. But you can’t really blame the guy. If he had told the truth he’d have gotten into real trouble.”

It did not occur to that young man that the politician’s actions were what got him in trouble; he felt that telling the truth would have caused the man even worse problems. My heart sank when I read his statement. It struck me how our nation as a whole accepts lying as a legitimate course of action.

People often prefer to say what they want to say and hear what they want to hear, even if it is not true. The focus verse points out that the people of Micah’s time were willing to listen to false prophets as long as those prophets said what the people desired to hear. They wanted prophets who did not condemn them in their sins.

How easily, in Micah’s time or today, truth can become a tool to be used, rather than a principle by which we govern our lives. Truth really is the essence of God. Jesus referred to Himself literally as *the Truth*. If we turn away from Him, we turn away from the truth. Therefore, we need to ask God to help us love the truth, and to make sure that everything we say and do honors the truth.

That is not to say, of course, that we must be crass and disrespectful in the name of being honest. It is possible to be completely honest and still be sensitive and respectful. As we submit ourselves to God and let Him work through us, He will be glorified in our lives, and we will love the truth.

### BACKGROUND

Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah. His ministry occurred during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. He was a native of Moresheth-gath in Judah, and prophesied there, as indicated by dating his prophecy by Judahite kings.

The prophecy was mainly against the sins of Israel, but Judah was not exempt: “[Israel’s] wound is incurable; for it is come unto Judah.” In other words,

the sinful culture of Israel was impacting Judah. The sinful trends which started in Israel were spreading south, contaminating Judah like a disease.

There are a number of plays on words in this book, two of which are found in the first chapter. In verse 10, the Lord said, “In the house of Aphrah roll thyself in the dust”; *aphrah* is the Hebrew word for dust. In verse 14, He said, “The houses of Achzib shall be a lie to the kings of Israel”; *achzib* is the Hebrew word for lie or deceitful. These plays on words (basically personifications) were not simply a use of literary technique; they showed the extent of Israel’s degradation.

Israel was not a good nation that had merely made some poor decisions. The people did not just find themselves in an uncomfortable place where they occasionally had to cover themselves with dust in penance. The very house itself was “dust.” Every square inch, every nook and cranny of their lives and surroundings were a constant sorrow and humiliation to them. This nation was not one that had merely told some unfortunate lies. Seemingly, the very essence of each household was deceit, to the extent that God gave their houses the name “Lie.”

This pronouncement of judgment is the main theme of the first chapter, even including the prophet’s own hometown of Moresheth-gath. However, the chapter ends with a glimmer of hope of God’s ultimate mercy, the first of many in this short and powerful book. Indeed, God told Judah not to let the Philistines in Gath know about this judgment, lest the enemies of God’s people would rejoice prematurely. The end had not yet come.

While the first chapter mentions the idolatry of Israel, chapter 2 primarily deals with the sins of oppression. The reference to working evil on their beds (verse 1) meant simply that the average person in Israel did not commit wickedness spontaneously, but with cunning and planning that began as soon as they woke each morning. They shopped around for real estate that looked good to them, and then stole it violently from the owners. They cheated widows out of their houses after their husbands died, and even literally took the clothes off the backs of the poor, who, of course, had no voice in a society where the judges were bought with bribes, and judgment was in favor of the highest bidder. The reason given for these crimes was as simple as it was accurate: they did it because they could.

Naturally, because the people were full of lying, theft, and violence, they did not want prophets telling

**3.** Consider how you felt when God showed you mercy. How do you feel when God shows mercy to someone else who is wicked?

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- [illegible]

We need to be certain today that our hearts are sensitive to God's truth. It is vital to heed His words and the words of His messengers, even if it seems painful. His truth will bring us to eternal life.

[illegible]

**1. What were the sins that Micah denounced in these chapters?**

2. Why is lying especially abominable to God?



### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“But truly I am full of power by the spirit of the LORD, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.” (Micah 3:8)**

During World War II, the prayers of a Spirit-filled woman for her son-in-law, Harry, changed the course of his life. Harry was on a ship in the South Pacific and unsaved. She sent him a letter one June that said, “I *know* you are going to be here for camp meeting.” When Harry received the letter, he told his fellow sailors, “That mother-in-law of mine is really cracking up. She thinks I’m going to be back in Portland the middle of July.” Harry had been at sea for only eleven months, and others had been there longer.

The next day, Harry’s name was called, and he was told that he was going home. He said, “That evening a little patrol boat seemingly came out of nowhere. I had never seen a patrol boat out there in the middle of the ocean before. It pulled up alongside our ship, and the officer of the deck said to me, ‘There’s your boat.’ I went down the rope ladder—the only man who went to this little boat.”

When Harry inquired of the boat’s coxswain where they were going, the coxswain said he did not know, but they were supposed to meet a big ship out there someplace. About 1:00 a.m., the shadow of a seaplane tender loomed up against the stars. As it slowed down, they bumped alongside. Harry put his hand out, feeling the side of the ship for the ladder. When he felt it, he stepped on and climbed to the rail. The patrol craft pulled into the darkness.

Later, Harry said there really was no reason for him to come home—that it was only through the prayers of his mother-in-law that he reached Portland the second week in July. That camp meeting, he repented, and God saved his soul.

Harry’s mother-in-law never claimed to be a prophetess. She, and others with her, just obeyed God’s Word by praying and then daring to believe. Although much of Micah chapter 3 condemns the leaders of Israel because of their wickedness, Micah said of himself, “I am full of power by the spirit of the LORD.” Why did Micah have that confidence? He was obeying God and declaring “unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.” God can use people who are obedient, like Micah and the mother-in-law in this story. Today, we need to challenge ourselves to obey God’s Word, and then let Him work through us.

### BACKGROUND

Micah is a book of stern rebuke in a day of desperate delusion. Continuing the prophesies of judgment begun in the first two chapters, Micah 3 begins by stating simply that judgment was completely alien to Israel and Judah. Their spirit was the opposite of what God had taught them through His law. They hated good and loved evil.

Judah and Israel did not simply oppress foreigners, but they destroyed their own people. God compared the oppression going on in Israel to cannibalism. Comparing their deeds with the worst of abominations showed how repugnant their injustice was to God. How ironic, then, that in the midst of all this, the people still prayed fervently to God. Not only did God say that He would not answer, but He would go out of His way to prevent them from getting any message or insight from Him at all. Micah, by contrast, was “full of power by the spirit of the LORD” (verse 8) because he had remained faithful to God.

As a city founded by God, Jerusalem could not continue unless it turned to God. The people there continued to do the opposite of God’s will, yet the city appeared to prosper. But God, through Micah, revealed the reason for this: the prosperity was a false one, built on oppression and corruption. Nearly everyone was driven by greed, especially those whose motives should have been the purest: the judges, priests, and prophets. All were bought with bribes, while rulers made their wealth and built their bustling cities on the backs of laborers who worked like slaves, were penalized for crimes they did not commit, and were disposed of when they were no longer useful to the wealthy and powerful. All the while, they looked on their ill-gotten prosperity as a sign that God was with them and they were invincible. Because they credited God with the prosperity that came from abomination, He promised to destroy them utterly.

In the fourth chapter, a bright light of hope shines in all this gloom. God revealed to Micah a time far beyond the current time, when His people would be as they should always have been. In the future, Micah saw an Israel that would prosper because she would walk in the name of the Lord, an Israel that would be the example of holiness to the whole world, that would spread peace to the world instead of fear and sin. The prosperity of God is not worldly prosperity, resting in the hands of a few oppressors, but everyone will share in it, “every man under his vine and under his fig tree.” It is this expression of Israel’s godly

prosperity that makes the fig tree a recurring symbol of Israel throughout the Bible.

Here, God revealed His awesome plan: He would not send Israel into captivity just to punish the people, but to purge them. The unrealized potential of Israel was compared to an unborn baby; in Babylon, God said, Israel would be able to give birth to this baby. The experience of captivity would transform Israel into the nation she was called to be from the very beginning.

## AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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### III. The message of promise

- A. The future judgment (3:1-12)
  - 1. Of the rulers (3:1-4)
    - a. Their wickedness (3:1-3)
    - b. Their judgment (3:4)
  - 2. Of the prophets (3:5-8)
    - a. Their deception (3:5)
    - b. Their judgment (3:6-7)
    - c. Their contrast (3:8)
  - 3. Of the leaders (3:9-12)
    - a. Their wickedness (3:9-11)
    - b. Their judgment (3:12)
- B. The future kingdom
  - 1. The character of the kingdom (4:1-5)
    - a. The establishment of the kingdom (4:1)
    - b. The instruction in the kingdom (4:2)
    - c. The peace of the kingdom (4:3-5)
  - 2. The restoration of the remnant (4:6-8)
    - a. The regathering of the remnant and reign of the Lord (4:6-7)
    - b. The restored dominion of Jerusalem (4:8)
  - 3. The distress of Jerusalem before the kingdom
    - a. The description of captivity (4:9-10)
    - b. The description of the siege (4:11)
    - c. The description of victory (4:12-13)

## A CLOSER LOOK

1. Name three sins condemned by God in the third chapter of Micah.

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2. Why did God compare Israel's sins to cannibalism?

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3. How can we know when our success is God's doing and when it is our own?

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## CONCLUSION

Will we obey God today? Who knows how God might use us if we do!

## NOTES

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” (Micah 5:2)**

To be “little” or “small” is not necessarily a bad thing. Even though Bethlehem was a small town in Israel, it was to play a major role in the plan of God to redeem mankind.

Years ago, I majored in science at a small college. I still remember what my physics professor told us about the size of our school. While noting that our laboratory facilities were inferior to those of the large, tax-supported colleges, he encouraged us by telling about a recent graduate of our school who had gone on to great things. This individual had not let the lack of facilities hinder him. My professor’s point was that it is not the facilities that make a person successful, but rather what that person does with the opportunities he is given. Several years later, while working at a large, multi-national corporation, I learned that the director of one of our installations, who was a vice president within the corporation, was also a graduate of my small college. This man, too, had illustrated my professor’s point that outstanding people can come from seemingly insignificant backgrounds.

In many ways, the ultimate in “smallness” is the isolated individual. Although all Christians are strongly encouraged to unite with other believers in worship, sometimes this is not possible. Perhaps you are a shut-in—not able to get out to church. Maybe you are serving in the military and find yourself in some far-off station, protecting freedoms. It may be that you worship at a good-sized church, but at school or your place of employment, you seem to be the only one who is trying to live for God. Take heart! If you believe sound doctrine and are living your faith, God knows all about you and wants you to continue serving Him, even though you feel alone.

Finally, looking at “small” in a different way, perhaps you feel that you cannot do much for the Lord because your talents and abilities are small. Do not give in to this negative thought! After all, it is God who distributes talents and abilities. God is not so much looking for the one with great talents, but rather, He is looking for the one who is “small” in his own eyes and thus fully yielded to Him. God can

work through that individual! Let us personally yield our all to Him, and then see what He will do.

### BACKGROUND

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Verse 1 foretold how an enemy would lay siege to Israel and smite its ruler. This probably referred to King Zedekiah, who would reign in Jerusalem at the time Nebuchadnezzar would conquer the city. Zedekiah would be the last of the kings in David’s line to sit on the throne in Jerusalem until the day that the Messiah assumes this position. When the Messiah takes control, He will establish a kingdom that will never end.

Verse 2 stated the very site of the promised Messiah’s birth, an event that would take place about seven centuries later. “Bethlehem” was the name for the city in Micah’s time, whereas “Ephratah” (or “Ephrath”) was its name in former times. For example, Genesis 48:7 indicates that “Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem” is where Jacob’s wife Rachel died and was buried.

At the time of Jesus’ birth, Wise Men, or Magi, started a journey from the east to worship Him, because they saw His star. They traveled for many days, but upon nearing the city of Jerusalem, which was about seven miles from Bethlehem, they could not see the star. When they inquired of King Herod for the location of the nativity site, he checked with his counselors. These men were familiar with the Scriptures, and by referring to Micah 5:2, they knew the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.

The last part of verse 2 indicated that although the Messiah would be born into human frailty, in actuality, His existence is eternal, both before and after his physical life on earth. He was co-creator of the world with God the Father and the Holy Spirit.

As many of the prophets often did, Micah covered a large span of time in a few verses. After predicting the Messiah’s birth in verse 2, many scholars believe verse 3 referred to Israel’s rejection of the Messiah during His earthly ministry. Verse 4 looked ahead to the Millennial Reign, when He will be “great unto the ends of the earth.”

From verse 5 on, the prophet described some of the characteristics of the time when the Messiah will rule. Assyria, also referred to as the land of Nimrod (the empire’s founder), was one of Israel’s major enemies at the time of Micah. The nation was possibly used to typify all God’s adversaries. God promised victory over Israel’s enemies, saying that the Messiah will be “peace.”

In a measure, the Jews would fulfill verse 7 as they spread the knowledge of the true God during their captivity, thus paving the way for the Gospel. However, the complete fulfillment will be when the Messiah rules the earth. The remaining verses in this chapter contain a prophecy of the final overthrow of all the enemies of pure and undefiled religion.

## AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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- III. The message of promise
  - B. The future kingdom
    - 3. The distress of Jerusalem before the kingdom
      - d. The description of Israel's humiliation (5:1)
    - 4. The ruler of the kingdom (5:2-15)
      - a. His human and divine origin (5:2)
      - b. His work (5:3-9)
        - (1) To regather his brethren (5:3)
        - (2) To protect his brethren (5:4-6)
        - (3) To exalt his brethren (5:7-9)
      - c. His destruction (5:10-15)
        - (1) Of military might (5:10-11)
        - (2) Of idolatry (5:12-14)
        - (3) Of ungodly nations (5:15)

## A CLOSER LOOK

1. To what animal did Micah compare the remnant of Jacob? Why?

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2. Why should Micah's words in this chapter have encouraged the people?

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3. The Millennial Reign of which Micah prophesied has not yet come. What steps can we take to be prepared for that day?

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## CONCLUSION

Your part in God's plan may seem small, but do not think it is insignificant. Each effort made for God is noticed by Him, and He can use what appears to be little.

## NOTES

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Micah 6:8)**

At my work, we needed to expand our work force. However, hiring a new employee can be a very laborious process. After a supervisor writes up the job description, it must pass through three or four different offices for review and approval. At any one point, the job description may (and often does) get lost in a pile of papers and stay on someone’s desk for weeks before passing on to the next step. After the job has been posted and applications have been received, interviews must be arranged—usually a total of three or four sessions of interviews for each short-list candidate. A selection committee steers the process and the final decision on the new hire is made in joint meetings with the director and his superiors in the office.

Attempts have been made to simplify this procedure, for obvious reasons. Applicants have to wait for a very long time to find out whether they are going to get the job or not, and some qualified candidates bow out, preferring to go with another job prospect that they heard from sooner. The office also has to work short-staffed for a long time as they wait for a new staff member to join the team.

One may well ask why it is so hard to simplify the hiring process, and why did it ever get so complicated in the first place? The qualifications for the position were straightforward. Finding a qualified person who wants to work for our office should be a relatively simple task. Too often seemingly simple goals become terribly complicated in office life.

Yet it doesn’t always take an office to complicate things. We often complicate our relationship with God and what it means to live for Him, when God always intended it to be simple. “What doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” God’s ways are simple and easy to understand. Let us not be guilty of complicating His perfect plan and missing the blessing. We need to ask God to remind us that we are His children, and we should endeavor to love God with all our hearts, as a child loves his father. If each day we ask Him to help us live according to this focus verse, and then we listen and obey His instructions, He will give us the grace to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with Him. Keep it simple.

### BACKGROUND

God inspired Micah to use a courtroom setting for this admonition to the Children of Israel. God asked them to “testify against me.” Then God listed what He required and how they had done wrong.

The people were complaining against God. They had no peace because of their own sins, but they blamed God for that lack of peace. God recounted all that He had done for them from the time of the Exodus, and it was all good. He used a particular example, the case of Balaam. When a wicked king (Balak) was out to destroy Israel, he enlisted a corrupt prophet (Balaam) to curse them. God not only kept Balaam from cursing them, but forced Balaam to pronounce a great blessing on Israel, and judgment to the king he was working for! (See Numbers 22-24.) This alone should have been enough to convince the people that God was not unfair and that He wanted only the best for them.

At this time, people were going through the motions of worshiping God while they complained about Him and sinned against Him. They came with their sacrifices, followed the letter of the law on sacred rituals, and then were angry with God for not making things better in response to their sacrifices. Micah pointed out that all the sacrifices in the world would not please God without love for God in the heart. Sacrificing one’s own children (as some Israelites undoubtedly had done, mixing the practices of Baal worship with worship of God) was not pleasing to God. Ironically, what God really wanted was much simpler. He wanted the people to surrender their lives to Him and live His way; doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with Him. Yet, they found it difficult because they wanted their own ways.

In contrast to the pure life God wanted them to have, the people in the cities oppressed the poor and lived by lies. Micah said the punishment would be what Moses had foretold: “Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied; and thy casting down shall be in the midst of thee; and thou shalt take hold, but shalt not deliver; and that which thou deliverest will I give up to the sword. Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap; thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil; and sweet wine, but shalt not drink wine” (Micah 6:14-15).

This would be the opposite of what God had given the Children of Israel when He brought them into Canaan, where they received houses and fields, orchards and vineyards that others had built and planted.



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### 3. What does God require from us today?

*Hannah's Bible Outlines*  
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- ## CONCLUSION

## NOTES

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.” (Micah 7:18)**

President Calvin Coolidge was in a hotel room one night when he awoke to discover that a burglar was pilfering the pockets of his clothing. President Coolidge requested that the thief leave his watch chain, because it had an engraved charm that he especially cherished. Then the President began talking quietly with the burglar and found out that the young man was a student who had no money for his hotel or a ticket back to college. After persuading the student to give back his wallet, the President gave him \$32, telling the young man that it was a loan. He suggested that the student leave quietly, in the same way that he had come in, so the Secret Service would not discover him. The young man did so, and eventually paid back the loan. Calvin Coolidge chose to show mercy because he hoped to change the direction a young man was headed, and evidently he succeeded in his purpose.

Today’s focus verse says that God delights in mercy! He does not delight in the actions which cause the need for mercy any more than President Coolidge delighted in a young man becoming a thief. However, God delights in extending mercy to the repentant heart, and in changing people’s sinful ways.

God also delights in showing mercy to His children day by day. This may be evidenced in many ways, such as protection, shortening of a trial, or preventing a disaster. If we stop and think for a few moments, we will find that God has been merciful to us more times than we can count.

If we are Christians, God showed mercy in extending our lives until we prayed, in drawing us to Himself, and then in forgiving us. Perhaps we can look back to a time when God was merciful and healed us, delivering us from intense pain or extending our lives. We may hear of highway accidents and realize that under normal circumstances we would have been at that exact place at that time. Yet, God in mercy allowed us to be delayed that day.

How amazing that God delights in showing the human family mercy! He delights in showing mercy to those who walk with Him. Why not encourage yourself by considering the ways God has been merciful to you recently?

### BACKGROUND

Micah observed the evil that abounded in the society around him. The rulers wanted gifts, the judges took bribes, and no one seemed to be honest. It seemed that every trace of righteousness was gone, like when there was no fruit or grapes to glean in an orchard or vineyard (verse 1). The people of Micah’s time understood farming, so they knew what he was referring to. Even friends and family could not be trusted and were at odds with each other (verses 5-6).

The result of this departure from God would be the judgment that Israel’s prophets (watchmen) had predicted. The visitation mentioned in verse 4 referred to the time when God would come to punish the people for the wrongs they had done.

Micah and those who were godly maintained their confidence in God, in spite of those around them who were unfaithful. Micah knew that if they waited upon God and looked to Him, He would hear and bring them through the difficult times. Even when discipline was necessary for the nation, God would bring through those who trusted Him, and their enemies eventually would be punished.

In verses 11 and 12, Micah looked ahead to the time when Israel would be restored, but in verse 13 he referred back to the current situation. He knew Israel would have to be cleansed of its sin before the nation could be a blessing to those about them.

Micah prayed for the people in verse 14. He wanted God to protect and provide for them. God promised He would work for them and defeat their enemies until Israel’s foes surrendered unconditionally and were fearful of God.

Although this chapter began with Micah painting a dismal picture of the spiritual condition of the Children of Israel, by the chapter’s end, he was reflecting on the goodness and mercy of God which had been extended to Jacob and Abraham in “days of old.” Micah convincingly extolled the benevolence of God, who was willing to pardon the people’s transgressions if they would turn from wickedness and ask for forgiveness.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

Hannah’s Bible Outlines  
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- IV. The message of forgiveness
  - B. The message of Micah (7:1-20)
    - 1. The corruptness of Israel (7:1-6)
      - a. The prophet’s lament (7:1)
      - b. The people’s treachery (7:2-5)
      - c. The people’s untrustfulness (7:6)

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1. What examples did Micah give of corruption?

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## NOTES

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## Overview for Isaiah

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**Purpose:** To call the people back to God, to warn of the judgment for sin, and to foretell of the coming Messiah.

**Author:** Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. The name *Isaiah* means “the eternal God is salvation.”

**Date Written:** 740 to 680 B.C.

**Key People:** Isaiah and his sons Shear-jashub and Maher-shalal-hash-baz; Hezekiah; Israel’s deliverer, the Messiah

**Setting:** During the latter half of the eighth century B.C., Judah was following the example of the apostasy of the ten northern tribes of Israel. Isaiah was born sometime between 760 and 770 B.C. and lived in the capital, Jerusalem. He had access to the palace during the reigns of five kings: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, and Manasseh (who tradition says killed Isaiah by “sawing him asunder”). His status and influence in the court varied with the royal succession, but he continued to call the nation back to their covenant relationship with God. This was a time of international upheaval, when first one power and then another threatened Judah. Isaiah denounced these Gentile nations for their sins, and warned of God’s impending judgment. He also warned of the destruction of Judah and the coming Babylonian captivity. Even though judgment was coming, Isaiah prophesied of the restoration of the nation and of God’s chosen people.

**Summary:** It is commonly agreed among Biblical scholars that the 66 chapters of Isaiah can be divided into three sections: chapters 1 – 35 (words of judgment), chapters 36 – 39 (historical interlude), and chapters 40 – 66 (words of consolation.) In some ways the Book of Isaiah is like the Bible in miniature. This division stresses the general themes of judgment and salvation, which correspond to the overall themes of the Old Testament and the New Testament. In both

Isaiah and the Bible as a whole, the thread that brings the three divisions together is the redemptive work of Christ.

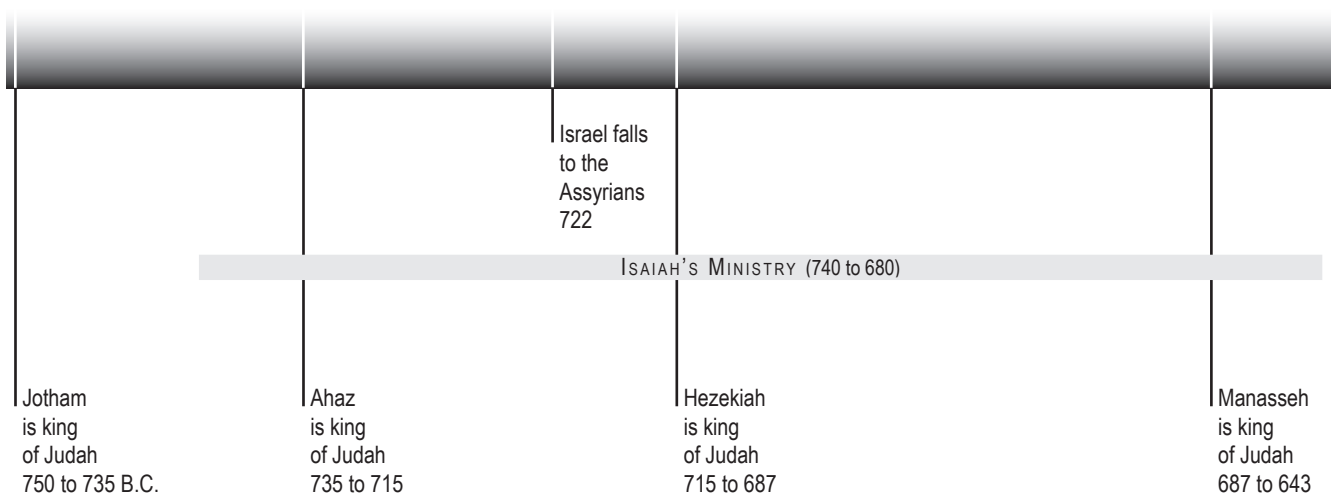
There are eight significant aspects of this book:

- It is written in poetic form and is distinctive in its literary style, beauty, and power.
- It contains the most clear and complete declaration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament books. Isaiah has been called the “evangelical prophet.”
- Isaiah’s description in chapter 53 gives the most specific and detailed Old Testament account of Jesus’ atoning death for sinners.
- It is the most comprehensive of all books of the Bible in that it reaches back in time to the creation and stretches forward to the end of time when there will be a new heaven and new earth.
- It records more revelation about the nature, majesty, and holiness of God than all other Old Testament prophetic books. Isaiah’s repeated description of God is “the Holy One of Israel.”
- The word *salvation* is used three times more frequently in the Book of Isaiah than in all other prophetic Old Testament books combined. Isaiah is called the prophet of salvation, as his name means, “the eternal God is salvation.”
- The Book of Isaiah records historic events when God demonstrated His redemptive plan. For example, it refers to the exodus of Israel from Egypt, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and Gideon’s victory over the Midianites.
- The Book of Isaiah is one of the three books most often quoted or referred to in the New Testament. (The other two are Deuteronomy and the Psalms.)

The last 27 chapters are filled with hope, consolation, and redemption as Isaiah explains God’s promise of the future blessings through the coming Messiah.

# Timeline

*Some dates are approximate, as reference materials differ.*



# Outline

*Hannah's Bible Outlines used by permission per WORDsearch.  
A complete amplified outline of this book is available on our website at [www.apostolicfaith.org](http://www.apostolicfaith.org).*

- I. Introduction (1:1)
- II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging (1:2—35:10)
  - A. Prophecies related to Judah (1:2—6:13)
  - B. Prophecies related to Israel (7:1—12:6)
  - C. Prophecies related to the foreign nations (13:1—23:18)
  - D. Prophecies related to the world (24:1—27:13)
  - E. Prophecies related to unbeliever's in Israel (28:1—33:24)
  - F. Prophecies relating to world destruction and blessing (34:1—35:10)
- III. The historical interlude: The Holy One of Israel delivering from Assyria (36:1—39:8)
  - A. The invasion of Sennacherib (36:1—37:38)
  - B. The extension of Hezekiah's life (38:1-22)
  - C. The thoughtlessness of Hezekiah (39:1-8)
- IV. The message of consolation: The Holy One of Israel comforting, redeeming and enriching (40:1—66:24)
  - A. The promise of deliverance (comfort) (40:1—48:22)
  - B. The person of the deliverer (redemption) (49:1—57:21)
  - C. The provision for deliverance (future glory) (58:1—66:24)



## Isaiah 1:1-15

### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.” (Isaiah 1:1)**

When my dad was a young man and seeking the infilling of the Holy Spirit, he had a dream. He saw a maze of trees and bushes that went about in a winding path and came to a fork. One path led to safety. The other path was shrouded by trees, and beyond what could be seen there was an abrupt drop-off into a treacherous canyon. He stood at the fork and watched as person after person walked by, warning and pleading with them to choose the safe path. However, one by one they turned toward the destructive path and fell to their doom. He woke from his dream alarmed and staring at life and eternity with a greater vision than ever before. Soon after, he received the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

Isaiah had a vision of a nation that was spiritually blind, much like those in my father's dream. The Israelites had no love for truth. They could not see that other nations were infiltrating their society and contaminating them with idolatry. They could not see that their lives were as corrupt as those of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, and that their religious rituals were repulsive to God. They needed to be awakened to their state of moral and spiritual decline.

There were a few people left in Judah with a love for the truth who believed and obeyed God. They no doubt saw and tried to warn the nation of Israel of the destruction that lay ahead on the wicked path the nation had chosen. They had a vision. One person in that righteous remnant was Isaiah. Since Israel as a whole seemed to have rejected previous warnings, how would they listen now to the Lord speaking through Isaiah?

Sin is as rampant in our society today as it was in Isaiah's time, and people need to know there is a way of salvation. Like Isaiah, let us do our part to declare the vision of the Lord to a dying world. We must also boldly stand for righteousness in a sinful world whose inhabitants are steadily streaming down the road to destruction. God can use us if we will let Him.

### BACKGROUND

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Isaiah began this book of prophecy by expressing the burden of his heart and declaring the Lord's

thoughts toward the nation of Judah. His writings began before he truly started his ministry. While it is possible that he prophesied during the last of Uzziah's reign, his commission and anointing from the Lord came the year that Uzziah died. This experience was recorded in Isaiah 6:8 when Isaiah responded, “Here am I; send me.”

The northern and southern kingdoms had divided, with Israel in the north and Judah in the south. Although Isaiah was speaking to the people where he was residing in Jerusalem, which belonged to Judah, he no doubt meant his message for all of Israel who had begun to sin greatly, and would soon be conquered by Assyria.

Isaiah means “Jehovah is salvation,” and his account proclaimed the Gospel message of salvation, comparable to the gospels in the New Testament. Isaiah had a deep love for the people of Israel, referring to the nation as “my people” twenty-six times through the book, but he hated sin and hypocrisy. Judah was following in the footsteps of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and continued to sink deeper into idolatry and sin. Still, they continued to worship God, as though they were as righteous as their fathers who had first established the covenant with God.

Isaiah saw this hypocrisy from God's perspective; regardless of how rich the nation appeared to human eyes, it looked like a diseased body, decaying in its corruption. The people had perverted justice, oppressed the poor, practiced idolatry, and sought military aid from heathen nations rather than from God. Yet, they continued going through the motions of worship.

The nation, entrenched in sin, still held to traditions of old, but the people were insincere and faithless. God hated sacrifice without a perfect heart. The words *vain oblations* literally mean “worthless offerings.” The “appointed feasts” referred to the three major religious events of the Jewish year: Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. In spite of their outward righteousness, God saw them as a corrupted nation. They were at war and losing. Their cities were burned as they had been attacked. The inhabitants were contributing to their own defeat by their rebellion against God.

Yet, in all this degradation, there was still a “very small remnant” of true believers. Though small, this group of people made enough difference to keep the punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah from destroying Israel. It was a severe insult for the self-righteous Israel to be compared to Sodom and Gomorrah, and

the nation’s leaders were denounced by the comparison. Still, Isaiah was not afraid to say it because he knew the solution would bring man together with God and restore the nation again.

**AMPLIFIED OUTLINE**

*Hannah's Bible Outlines*  
Used by permission per WORDsearch

- I. Introduction (1:1)
- II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging
  - A. Prophecies related to Judah
    - 1. God’s arraignment of Judah
      - a. Judah’s rejection of God (1:2-15)
        - (1) The complaint against Judah (1:2-6)
        - (2) The desolation in Judah (1:7-9)
        - (3) The condemnation of Judah (1:10-15)

**A CLOSER LOOK**

1. What king was reigning at the time Isaiah saw the vision for Judah and Jerusalem?

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2. Why was God angry with the Israelites while they were offering sacrifices and burnt offerings to Him?

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3. Name three specific ways you can reach people who are on the wrong path.

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**CONCLUSION**

Simply going through religious motions will not save us. Let us ask God to give us a sincere love for the truth and a vision for the Gospel.

**NOTES**

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” (Isaiah 1:18)**

Lionel B. Fletcher, an Australian evangelist who preached during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, exhorted on the treasures found in Isaiah’s writing. He said this of verse 18: “We have an interesting thought here of wool that has been scoured. There is nothing lovelier in the world than scoured wool. I have shorn many hundreds of sheep. I know what it looks like, clotted together with grease. When you buy a tube of lanolin at the chemists, you will see then what it is that is contained in sheep’s wool. At first the wool is dirty and matted together; you can almost squeeze the oil out of it. But look at the wool when it has been purified; when it has gone through the scouring process. Take it up in your hand, and it will run through your fingers like feathers, so beautiful and snowy in its whiteness. That is the picture here in Isaiah. The sinner’s heart is made like scoured wool.”

Those who have used fine woolen yarn for knitting and crocheting know the satisfaction of seeing, touching, or wearing an item cast from their hook or needle. The final product is not just a credit to the maker’s workmanship, but also to the caliber of the material used. The results would be much different if made of “unscoured” wool. In fact, there would be no results at all if the wool had not been scoured, for in its natural state, sheep’s wool is unusable for crafting a garment.

We too need to be restored before we can be used. God has no wish to abandon us as unusable, and so He says that though our sins are as scarlet, we can be transformed. What a wonder that we can come penitently to Him, deserving judgment, and instead receive pardon and cleansing (scouring)! Only in God’s economy can a sin-stained life be exchanged for an untainted one.

However, some action is necessary to accomplish this change. We must come to God requesting forgiveness and be willing to follow God’s instructions. God is faithful to save any who respond this way to His call.

Has God applied His “scouring” action to your life? If not, He invites you to come to Him today. If He has cleansed you, perhaps you know someone else who needs to come and become like scoured wool. Pray that God will draw that person toward His life-saving cleansing experience.

### BACKGROUND

In Isaiah’s day, wool was often colored crimson using the dye of the scarlet worm, rather than chemically as is done today. Before giving birth, the female scarlet worm permanently attaches herself to a tree trunk, providing protection to the eggs she deposits under herself. Crimson fluid stains the female’s body as she dies. The dye from that fluid is absolutely colorfast and indelible.

The meaning of the word translated *reason* (verse 18) is “to decide a matter in court.” It was a legal term and indicated a call to judgment. Yet instead of judgment, verse 19 presented a conditional promise to the Children of Israel: “If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land.”

Isaiah effectively used comparisons and imagery. In verses 21 and 22, he compared God’s relationship to His people to the marriage relationship. Isaiah, a married man himself, was one of many messengers (prophets) in both the Old and New Testaments who were inspired to use this analogy. In verse 25, he used the imagery of dross or impurities being removed from molten silver, and in verse 30 compared Israel to a garden which had withered for want of water.

The oak tree mentioned in verse 29 has been used as a symbol of strength not only in the Bible but all through history. However, verse 30 pointed out that the oak’s leaf would fade. Israel made idols of wood and sacrificed to them in groves of trees. God wanted them to see this was a futile endeavor. In verse 31, “tow” is the term for the highly flammable flax fibers used as tinder to start fires. The point was that if the people continued in their wicked ways, they would be destroyed.

God inspired His prophet to use examples of everyday activities so that people could easily understand His message. He wanted them to see that they had committed evils worthy of judgment, and He wanted them to repent. Verses 16-19 clearly laid out the steps God wanted these people to take.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

Hannah’s Bible Outlines  
Used by permission per WORDsearch

- II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging
  - A. Prophecies related to Judah
    - 1. God’s arraignment of Judah
      - b. Jehovah’s invitation to Judah (1:16-31)
        - (1) The plea for repentance (1:16-20)

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## NOTES

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty.” (Isaiah 2:10)**

In a time of storm, it is natural to seek a place of refuge. A World War II veteran used to testify of being on the island of Okinawa when it was hit by a hurricane with winds above 115 miles per hour. The wind was so strong that the rain traveled horizontally. At the time, this man was deathly ill, and he and his fellow-soldiers were camped in tents. Part way through the storm, the tent ripped right through the middle. His comrades pulled one part of the tent over him and anchored it with rocks. As the wind howled and he thought his life might be coming to an end, God gave him a promise in his heart. For many years afterward, he told of God’s faithfulness in his time of need.

Today we may face spiritual storms, because following the Lord will not always be easy. However, God wants to provide a safe refuge for us in our times of need, and when we lean upon Him, He will preserve us. He will hide us in the shelter of His arms, and keep us safe from the storms that swirl around us.

When the focus verse was written, the people of Judah were accustomed to seeking refuge in the rocks and caves of their country. For example, if enemy warriors came into their territory, they fled to these caves as hiding places. However, Isaiah was prophesying of a time when God would come upon them in wrath and judgment. Hiding in the rocks would not suffice when God poured out His punishments.

A time of judgment is also predicted for today’s inhabitants of this world. Those who have given their lives to God will be in a place of spiritual safety. We need to prepare now by first asking God to forgive our sins, and then being certain we are totally yielded to Him and to His will. If we continue to obey God, then He will keep us safe during the storms of life and also in His final judgment when He pours out His wrath upon those who have refused His offer of salvation.

### BACKGROUND

In this chapter, the prophet contrasts the current conditions of Jerusalem with the future day of peace and the future day of God’s judgment. “The word” in verse 1 indicates the start of a specific message or speech to Judah and Jerusalem.

The “mountain of the LORD’s house” referenced Mount Zion, which was also called Mount Moriah. Israel’s temples were located on this mountain, and Solomon’s Temple was still present in Isaiah’s time. During the Millennial Reign, Jerusalem will have a Temple again and the worship and rule of Christ will center there. All nations will come to Jerusalem to learn about God. Micah 4:1-4 contains a passage quite similar.

A time of peace and safety will ensue, safer and more peaceful than any time known in the world’s history. The Lord Himself will “judge,” or direct, the nations. The instruments of war will be turned into agricultural tools. Isaiah gave this prophecy during the reign of Uzziah, under whose leadership new weaponry was invented (see 2 Chronicles 26:14-15). What a contrast to the picture of a calm and whole-some life which God inspired Isaiah to describe!

Verse 6 begins the detailing of Israel’s sinful state at the time of Isaiah. Israel was full of pagan people, customs, and influences. “They please themselves” indicates they made treaties with ungodly neighbors.

Idols filled the land. The “mean man” (verse 9) meant the common people or society’s lower class; the “great man” meant those from society’s upper class. All were worshipping the pagan idols.

Israel had many caves, and these were used as hiding places when an army invaded. Isaiah’s prophecy indicated that God’s judgment would be so severe that people would need to seek a refuge. The people would be brought low. The symbols of strength and sufficiency—cedars, oaks, mountains, hills, high towers (military fortresses), walls, and ships of Tarshish (commercial trade fleet)—would be insufficient to deliver them. Through Isaiah, God told Judah the destruction would be widespread and cataclysmic.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

Hannah’s Bible Outlines  
Used by permission per WORDsearch

- II. The prophetic condemnation
  - A. Prophecies related to Judah
    - 2. God’s promise of glory after judgment
      - a. Jerusalem’s future position (2:1-4)
      - b. Jerusalem’s prior judgment (2:5-4:1)
        - (1) The judgment upon the people (2:5-22)
          - (a) Their rebuke (2:5-11)
          - (b) Their reckoning (2:12-22)

## A CLOSER LOOK

1. What did Isaiah prophesy the people would do with their idols?

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2. If those in Judah had chosen to “walk in the light of the LORD,” what actions might they have needed to take? What actions will we need to take to have God with us?

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3. How can we guard against “idols” in our lives?

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## CONCLUSION

What refuge do you have for the storms of life today? You can be secure in God’s love if you give yourself to Him.

## NOTES

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# DAYBREAK

## Isaiah 3:1 through 4:1



### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves.” (Isaiah 3:9)**

Some twenty years ago, I was a leader of a boys’ club. One particular summer we took a camping trip. There was a great deal of fun and excitement as twenty-five boys (ages ten to sixteen) explored all the camp site had to offer. The area had much potential for adventure—lots of hills to climb, and a brook with many rocks large enough to jump from one to the other.

Since the brook was not rapid, we decided to go upstream by climbing from rock to rock. Before we started out, I told the boys how far we would go. Because I knew the area, I understood that it was more dangerous beyond the designated point. The boys agreed and we took off. I soon observed that some boys were moving faster than others, so I decided to stay behind with the younger ones, and assumed the others would wait for us further up the creek.

However, four of the older boys had decided to go beyond the designated point. After the rest of us reached that point and made a roll call, it was discovered that they were missing. The others reported the four had gone farther, but because of a turn in the brook, we could not see them. After waiting for a while for them to return, I decided to go and find them. By then, I had concerns about their safety.

Going much further, I met them coming back. I’ll never forget their expressions. All the fun and laughter was gone. Instead, they looked frightened and panicked. Their countenances told me that their decision to disobey had resulted in a rough time. Apparently they had taken a different route back but found it very steep, making their return extremely difficult. With sweat running down their faces, they were quick to apologize.

Their faces told the story—their disobedience had cost them a price. Isaiah said that the story of the people of Judah was written on their faces also. It was clear they were sinning against God, and judgment would be coming if they did not change their ways.

Today disobedience still has a price. It is much better to do right and receive the benefits of righteousness. We have a choice. Will we obey God? If we do, we will be glad we did.

### BACKGROUND

Chapter 3, along with the first verse of the next chapter, is a prophecy regarding the consequences to Judah for their profanity and guilt. God warned that He would take away their leadership. The phrase “the stay and the staff” referred to everything on which they were dependent for survival as a nation, and it would be taken from them.

The prosperity of the nation had made the leaders proud, covetous, and idolatrous. Rather than trusting God, they trusted in their weaponry and wealth, and they did not understand that neither would give deliverance when judgment came. God would not allow His people to be proud and self-important, but would take measures to humble them. In the place of the mighty man, God told them that He would give babies as their rulers. The male leadership in Judah’s society had failed completely, and Isaiah prophesied that children would become their oppressors and women would rule over them. By taking away everything they trusted in, the infrastructure of their nation would disintegrate. Only women and children would want to hold office. Since the society of Judah was dominated by males, this situation would bring great humiliation and be considered a disaster. Disobedience had brought great affliction and destruction.

God, through Isaiah, also addressed the proud women of Judah. They had placed their emphasis on clothing, hairstyles, and jewelry rather than on God or the spiritual well-being of the nation. They were haughty (proud) and wanton (suggestive). Their attire and behavior indicated more than just a desire to look nice, but rather demonstrated a lewd and provocative attitude. The prophet warned the daughters of Zion who walked with heads held high, seductive eyes, and mincing steps, that the Lord would take away all of their adornments. Instead of delighting in their female attire, they would wear sackcloth and ashes. They would be in mourning and deep distress, as the men would fall by the sword of the enemy. This would reduce the male population so that there would be seven women for every surviving man in the nation.

Isaiah’s message was picturesque and graphic. God was trying to motivate these people to change their ways.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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- II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.” (Isaiah 4:6)**

When I was five years old, I slept in a bed that had a large space underneath it. Often I pulled a soft blanket down over the sides, making a tent-like playhouse, and I found refuge there when things bothered me. It was what I loved most about my little room. My mother knew about my special hideaway and kept the area spotless and spider-free. My bedroom was close to the kitchen, so I could peek out and watch my mother sew, cook, or bake. When she was cooking, wonderful smells filled the air around me. My brother and sister could not see me in my hideaway, so peace surrounded me and happiness reigned. This area was like a fortress to me. If I ever felt sad, afraid, or scared, I would find comfort in this warm, secluded spot.

When the Columbus Day storm hit Portland on October 12, 1962, I stood by the kitchen window looking out at the trees that were bending in the wind. My mom took my hand and gently pulled me back from the window, afraid that something might blow through it and I would be hurt. In my mind, I can still hear her telling me to pray that the Lord would protect us. Suddenly we heard a huge bang and the whole house shook. The wind had blown over our towering cherry tree, causing it to crash onto the back of our house. My heart started to pound, and I ran to my place of refuge under the bed and began to pray for our safety. When my mom in a trembling voice told me that part of our roof had blown off, I did not worry, for I felt safe and protected. At five years old, I believed that nothing could harm me once I was in my fortress.

Although this childhood haven caused me to feel secure, it really can never be compared to what the Lord promises to His people. When we give our lives to God and follow Him, we have personal peace and safety even when there are physical or circumstantial storms raging about us. We have the peace of knowing that God controls and permits every situation, and that He will be with us every moment.

Then after Jesus returns to earth and sets up His kingdom during the Millennial Reign, those who have been faithful to Him will enjoy God's paradise restored on earth. Joy and peace will flow in abundance.

As Christians, we may run into storms during our lives. Some may rip at us and try to destroy us. Yet, we can find rest and shelter in God's promises now, and then we will be even more blessed when the Lord returns and the Millennial Reign begins.

### BACKGROUND

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This portion of text describes the time when the Lord will come again and establish His throne in Jerusalem. During the Millennial Reign, He will share the glories of His kingdom with those who love Him.

The “branch of the LORD” in verse 2 refers to the Messiah: Jesus Christ Himself. Isaiah had prophesied of harsh judgments that would come to Israel, but this promise of a branch offered hope. (Additional verses about the “branch of the LORD” are found in Isaiah 11:1 and Jeremiah 33:15.)

Isaiah had cried out against the wealthy and prestigious lifestyle of the people of Judah. He had spoken severely against the worldly beauty the women of their society prized. By contrast, Isaiah said that when the Lord rules the earth, holiness will be the distinctive characteristic of those who remain (“he that is left in Zion”) because judgment will have purged them.

In the Millennium, the Lord will restore the fruitfulness of the land and draw close to His people. Isaiah compared it to when God led the Children of Israel through the wilderness. Every dwelling place will be blessed with the very real presence of God, symbolized by Isaiah's reference to a cloud of glory by day and a pillar of fire by night. “For upon all the glory shall be a defense,” means that God's protection will cover His people like a canopy.

At the close of this chapter, the prophet Isaiah mentioned “a tabernacle” and “a place of refuge.” The word *tabernacle* means “a sheltering pavilion”—a place of peace and rest that will be surrounded by the glory of God. In countries that often experience violent storms as well as intolerable heat, such as the areas near Jerusalem, a portable tent or tabernacle is a necessary part of a traveler's baggage. It helps to shelter and protect. This protection can be compared to the Lord, who is our ever-present shelter and bulwark.

During the Millennial Reign, the Lord's children will be safe and secure, abiding always in the presence of the Lord without fear or harm.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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- II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging



- A. Prophecies related to Judah
  - 2. God's promise of glory after judgment
    - c. Jerusalem's future cleansing (4:2-6)

## A CLOSER LOOK

1. Describe the characteristics of the "fruit of the earth" during the Millennium.

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2. What steps could the people of Israel have taken to show that they believed these prophetic words of Isaiah?

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3. What must we do to be participants in Christ's Millennial Reign?

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## CONCLUSION

Maybe you are facing a storm today, and you need God's help and protection. He wants to shelter you and give you security in His promises.

## NOTES

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?” (Isaiah 5:4)**

My husband and I are from opposite sides of the continent. We come from different countries; we were raised in different cultures, but we live for the same God! After we were married, I moved with him back to his hometown. In his culture, one tradition that has been passed down for many generations is that of baking bread. Skill in this area was a sign of a good housewife. Prior to this, the only breads I had ever made were quick breads like banana or zucchini bread. Baking multiple loaves of yeast bread was a whole different technique.

About a week after we arrived, I spent a day with my mother-in-law learning how to produce perfect loaves of bread. It obviously was important, as my new husband felt he needed to take pictures of the event! The directions weren't written down; you just had to remember. Certain amounts of water, butter, salt, flour, and sugar—my mother-in-law didn't use measuring cups, just little handfuls and overflowing handfuls. I started to panic. My handful certainly would be different from hers!

However, by carefully following all of the directions she gave, my yield was successful. My husband pronounced the bread good, and for the next few years, I continued to bake bread for our household consumption.

Today's verse presents an opposite outcome to my bread-making experience. God, through Isaiah, was asking a question regarding the unsuccessful results of His working with Israel. Isaiah used a word picture of a husband working with a vineyard to make his point. The master of the vineyard had done everything right—the hill was very fruitful, he fenced it in, took out the stones, used the finest of vines when he planted it, built a tower so he could watch over the vineyard, and a winepress. He followed a recipe for success, but the results were not good. In fact, they were horrible! The vineyard brought forth wild grapes, and the question was posed, “What else could have been done?”

God gave Isaiah this illustration to express His frustration and anger at the sinfulness of Israel. They were God's chosen nation, and He had done everything He could to nurture them. However, instead of bearing spiritual fruit, they were a wild and sinful

people. The problem certainly was not on the part of God. It was a problem with the nation itself.

God has invested time and effort into our lives as well. He nurtures us and helps us grow, desiring that we bear good fruit. Let's examine our own lives today and be sure we are yielding a crop that is pleasing to God.

### BACKGROUND

Despite the fact that Isaiah was a newcomer in the field of prophesy and warnings, with God's help, his message had an impact on the people of his day. First, he captured the attention of his listeners by giving them a parable. Then he delivered his stirring message with conviction. This chapter starts with a clear picture of a vineyard whose master had taken great care to ensure that it would bring forth good fruit. Despite all of his efforts, it produced wild grapes. The parallel was drawn between the care the master of the vineyard took and the care that God took over Israel. However, the people of Israel turned their backs on Him and chose a way of sin.

In verses eight through twenty-five, six particular sins are highlighted. Each topic on the list brought to light wrongdoings on the part of Israel. The word “woe” preceded each statement. Greedy landowners, those who spent their days drinking, those who flagrantly flaunted their sin, those who were vain and self-absorbed, and those who were calling good evil and evil good, would all be judged.

Verse 10 gives several measurements. A *bath* was a liquid measure equal to the dry measure of an *ephah*—about eight gallons. A *homer* was approximately eighty-three gallons. The judgment being pronounced included crops that would not produce the expected yield. A crop bearing one tenth of what was planted would certainly be considered a failure.

In verse 26, Isaiah explained that God would summon Israel's enemies to seal their punishments, raising an ensign (banner) and hissing (whistling) to bring them from near and far.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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- II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging
  - A. Prophecies related to Judah
    - 3. God's illustrative pronouncement of doom (5:1-30)
      - a. The parable (5:1-7)
      - b. The pronouncement of woes (5:8-23)

- (1) For greed (5:8-10)
- (2) For intemperance (5:11-17)
- (3) For presumption (5:18-19)
- (4) For moral insensibility (5:20)
- (5) For self-conceit (5:21)
- (6) For injustice (5:22-23)
- c. The penalty of judgment (5:24-30)
  - (1) The anger of God (5:24-25)
  - (2) The promise of invasion (5:26-30)

## **A CLOSER LOOK**

**1.** List some of the physical features of the vineyard mentioned in verses 1-2.

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**2.** In what ways are today's society and that of Isaiah's time similar?

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**3.** How can we be sure our lives bring forth sweet and not wild or sour fruit?

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## **CONCLUSION**

What type of "grapes" are growing in the vineyard of your life? Pray that God will help the fruit you bear to be sweet.

## **NOTES**

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.” (Isaiah 6:1)**

One summer during my teen years, the King Tut exhibit came to a city only five hours’ drive away from our farming community, and a group of us took the challenge of trying to get in to view it. Since the exhibit was highly advertised, it drew people from hundreds of miles around. We left home in the middle of the night to make the journey, arriving early in the morning. Even so, we waited in an extremely slow line for many, many hours before entering the front doors of the museum.

Once we were inside, we were quite thrilled at what we saw! The magnificence of those displays was beyond anything my little country girl’s heart could imagine. There was more gold in one place than I will probably ever see again in my lifetime. King Tutankhamen’s burial mask was shaped of smooth gold, and painted with the youthful, elegant features we have come to associate with these rulers of long ago. Aside from the sheer value of the gold, there was the priceless significance of these centuries-old treasures. My opportunity to view this amazing collection was certainly the chance of a lifetime.

Yet, viewing these awesome artifacts in no way gave me a feeling that I had been in the presence of a superior being. Although King Tut had indeed been a ruler in Egypt at one time, he had still been just flesh and blood. He faced the ordinary problems of life that everyone encounters—he likely experienced sickness, stubbed his toes, and even argued with another child. In spite of all I saw that day, his life and the artifacts on display did not alter me in a profound way.

However, when we come before God and truly get a vision of His majesty, our response is far different. A common impression people have is a sense of inadequacy before a Holy God, the One who created the universe and everything in it. We are mere mortals, privileged to have an audience with the King of the Ages! As we enter into His divine presence and perceive His awesome righteousness and holiness, we feel highly privileged to enter there, bowed down low in humility at His feet, His to command. It is a place that cannot adequately be depicted with words.

Each of us is invited to an audience with the King of Kings! Into this holy place we are blessed to bring our praise and our petitions. Enter in!

### BACKGROUND

Chapter 6 of Isaiah gives a taste of the splendor, magnificence, and grandeur Isaiah experienced in his vision of the Almighty. We note the triune nature of God in this passage: when God spoke, He used the plural pronoun, “us,” and the seraphim uttered the threefold declaration, “Holy, Holy, Holy.” Smoke—radiant glory—filled the Temple. The title, “LORD of Hosts” appears sixty-two times in the book of Isaiah, also illustrating the absolute reverence Isaiah had toward God.

Isaiah’s life was to be different from this point on. Uzziah had once been a good king, but was struck with leprosy because he intruded into the priests’ office, dying ten years later. So although King Uzziah would no longer be on his throne, the vision proved to Isaiah that God was still on His Throne in His Royal robes. His train filled the Temple, and the whole earth was “full of His glory.” This powerful vision had a lifelong impact on Isaiah’s ministry. In fact, a person cannot properly appreciate the sinfulness of mankind or the need for God’s righteous judgment until he gains a biblical perspective of God’s majesty and holiness. This vision of the Lord’s holiness gave Isaiah boldness to denounce the nation for their sins.

The seraphim (singular: seraph) are celestial beings perpetually around the Throne of God. Literally translated, *seraphim* means “burning ones”: they seem to be continually aglow with the presence of the Glory of God. They are thought to generally resemble humans with six wings. In Isaiah’s vision, their posture implied humility; they employed two wings to cover their eyes and two covered their feet.

At the vision of this magnificence, Isaiah declared, “I am undone” (ruined, dead). He felt fit only to be destroyed; an unregenerate man before a thrice-Holy God with no legitimate excuse. Speechless and unclean, he confessed his sinful nature. Then the angel applied burning coals from off the altar to his lips, representing God’s provision for purging man’s sin.

Isaiah’s task was to remind a forgetful nation of God’s character. God told Isaiah that the people would not listen—they would be carried away captive—but gave some hope in the message that a tenth would return. God told Isaiah to proclaim the message until the cities were devastated.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD. And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?” (Isaiah 7:11-13)**

Students are sometimes told, “There’s no such thing as a dumb question.” This comment is used to encourage students to ask questions. While the statement may not strictly be true, it is true that a thoughtful question asked of a knowledgeable individual can open new vistas of understanding. When we ask a question, we are hoping to obtain information.

The word “ask” can also mean “to make a request.” That was the case in today’s focus verse. Through the prophet Isaiah, King Ahaz was directed to request a sign of the Lord. Ahaz, who had not been following God, decided against doing so. Ahaz and the house of David didn’t have a problem making requests of men, but as they drifted from God, they no longer brought their petitions before Him.

How often do we forget to simply ask God for help as the cares of life come our way? God does not get agitated nor does He grow weary of our petitions. God is willing and waiting to answer our questions. He cares about the problems we face each day. While God already knows what we have need of before we ask, He still wants to hear it from us.

Perhaps there has been a specific problem at work or school that you have been struggling with. Have you asked God for His intervention in the matter? Maybe you’ve put off seeking a deeper experience from the Lord. Try asking God for a deep spiritual hunger today. Or maybe you’ve been dealing with a physical ailment recently. Have you asked God to heal you while being obedient to his Word? Remember, whatever the petition may be, we must ask according to God’s will, in faith.

### BACKGROUND

This portion of Scripture probably took place around 745 to 730 B.C. Ahaz, King of Judah, was one of the many ungodly rulers of Judah. When Ahaz and his kingdom (Judah) were notified that Syria and Ephraim were creating an alliance against him, he became very frightened. The name Ephraim (one of Joseph’s sons, as noted in Genesis 46:20) was sometimes used to identify the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

The Northern Kingdom of Israel was bordered on the north by Syria. Located north of Syria was the great Kingdom of Assyria. Syria had created an alliance with Israel for help in withstanding an invasion by the Assyrian Empire. Syria and Israel’s plan was to overrun Judah to bring them into the alliance by force, and included setting up their own king identified as “the son of Tabeal.”

The location of the “conduit of the upper pool” (verse 3), was east of Jerusalem. This was the primary water source for Jerusalem and known as the Gihon Spring. From this location, Isaiah prophesied that the plan to overrun Judah would not come to pass.

After Isaiah delivered his prophecy, he invited Ahaz to ask a sign of the Lord, as verification that God would protect Judah. When Ahaz refused to ask for a sign, Isaiah prophetically delivered a sign for the House of David. This sign came to pass when Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary.

Finally, Isaiah prophesied of the destruction of Judah that would take place some years later after the reign of Hezekiah. This destruction would come to pass at the hands of the Assyrian Empire. The reference of Judah being shaven denotes utter humiliation.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging

B. Prophecies related to Israel

1. The destruction of Israel by Assyria

a. Judah’s promise of deliverance from Israel

(1) Isaiah’s promise to Ahaz (7:1-25)

(a) The setting (7:1-2)

(b) The message to Ahaz (7:3-9)

(c) The sign to Ahaz (7:10-16)

(d) The chastisement of Ahaz’s unbelief (7:17-25)

[1] The means (7:17-19)

[2] The result (7:20-25)

### A CLOSER LOOK

1. How did Ahaz respond to the news of Ephraim and Syria creating an alliance?

**2. What may have motivated Ahaz to refuse God's request of asking for a sign?**

[illegible]

**3.** What should be our attitude when we approach God with a question?

[illegible]

## CONCLUSION

God never grows weary of hearing about our daily cares. Bring your petitions to God today with a thankful heart.

## NOTES

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” (Isaiah 8:14)**

It is a joke in our family that I can stumble over almost anything. Even a little irregularity in the pavement can be sufficient to cause me to become quite a spectacle! Almost invariably there is one cause for the problem—I did not lift up my toes quite enough. Spiritually speaking, the irregularities in our lives can be stumbling blocks or stepping-stones. Often, the decisive factor is how much we lift our focus toward God and His plan for us.

With a little consideration, we can probably think of numerous people who have turned what seemed to be immense stumbling blocks into stepping-stones. Lowell Montgomery is a name that comes to my mind. Through many years of his life, he had debilitating physical problems, yet it would have been hard to meet a more positive man. He could see the good in everyone and every situation, and it was always an encouragement to be around him. He had turned stumbling blocks into stepping-stones.

In the focus verse, God indicated through Isaiah that He wanted to be a sanctuary—a safe and secure place—for the Children of Israel, but that was only possible if they trusted in Him. For those who disobeyed, He was a stumbling block (rock of offense) and trap (gin). Both Paul and Peter referred to this verse, indicating that Jesus was a stumbling block to the Jewish people when they rejected Him as their Messiah.

Today, all of us may choose either to stumble or to step up. First, we must make a decision about the Lord and whether we will take His offer of safety and eternal life, or stumble along in disobedience. Then, if we decide to follow the Lord, we can make a choice about the daily circumstances that face us. We can lift our focus to God and rejoice in His plan for us, or we can stumble along with complaints, anger, or self-pity. Let's step up!

### BACKGROUND

This chapter in the Book of Isaiah begins with a specific and severe judgment against Israel and Syria: Assyria would invade and overrun them because of their sins. The chapter opens with God commanding Isaiah to name his child Maher-shalal-hashbaz. The

translation of this name means “plundering and spoiling will come quickly.” God commanded that name to be given because Israel would fall by Assyria before the child was old enough to talk.

The passage in verses 5-9 is a picture. The waters of Shiloah flowed peacefully and were to be compared to depending upon and trusting in God. In contrast, Assyria was like a mighty river that would invade Israel and destroy it, overflowing to the Southern Kingdom of Judah and nearly wiping it out also.

Yet, in the midst of this prophesy of doom, God gave a glimmer of hope in His warning to invading nations: “Give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces” (verse 9). God promised to stand with Judah to help them. However, there were instructions that they needed to follow to make this victory a reality: they were not to rely on human help in the form of alliances.

The prophesied invasion, while apparently a military threat, stemmed from a problem that was neither military nor political, but spiritual. Therefore the solution had to be spiritual also. The people who wanted to serve God were to sanctify Him in their hearts, even while the multitude in Israel and Judah fell before Assyria.

God's instructions in this passage were to Isaiah personally, as well as to the people of Israel and Judah. God wanted Isaiah himself not to go along with the people who were disobedient. Those who were faithful were to regard and revere the Lord (verse 13). God placed a “strong hand” (verse 11) on Isaiah, and some Bible commentators believe Isaiah's response is shown in verse 17, “I will wait upon the LORD.”

Furthermore, God warned the people not to fall prey to the occult influence of their fellow countrymen, reminding the faithful of the misery and defeat that such practices lead to.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging

B. Prophecies related to Israel

1. The destruction of Israel by Assyria

a. Judah's promise of deliverance from Israel

(2) Isaiah's message of the time of Israel's demise (8:1-4)

(a) The sign to Judah (8:1-3)

(b) The significance for Israel (8:4)

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6)**

My brother has been fascinated by United States history, particularly our presidents, since he was a child. In a recent family discussion, we debated who is the most powerful person on the planet. One proposition was the U.S. president. Certainly the man governing the greatest superpower in military strength and economic resources in the world is powerful.

There is a certain awe that people often feel toward a person of power and authority. Have you ever heard someone excitedly telling about a time when they actually saw the president, maybe even shook his hand? My brother claims one of his greatest desires is to meet a U.S. president while he is in office. What a thrill it would be to meet such a mighty man!

Far greater than a president of a country, however, is the One who will govern the earth for one thousand years during the reign of peace. Can you comprehend being in the physical presence of such a King? The entire government will rest on His shoulders. He will be the One every person will look to for answers, for wisdom, for security. He will hold and maintain absolute peace—something that has never been seen since sin entered the world.

I recently asked several people who they considered to be their greatest hero. The answers were similar, usually pinpointing one person who had made a difference globally, or had personally impacted that individual's life. Several people responded that their grandparent was a hero. For another it was a teacher. Then one Christian exclaimed, “Jesus, because He saved me!”

Our Hero dispelled darkness when He came as a gift from Heaven and gave us hope. He took our punishment and stretched out His hand to us when we deserved His wrath. Someday He will come to earth as a Ruler, and He will be the greatest Ruler of all time. He will be called Wonderful by all who dwell on the earth. He will perform these things for us with zeal!

I read that in Washington D.C. a visitor called the church where the President of the United States often attended and asked the secretary, “Is the President going to be in church this Sunday?” The reply was, “No, but God will.”

“The mighty God, The everlasting Father” has stretched out His hand to us and offered us hope. Someday He will be the Ruler of the earth, but more importantly, He can be the Prince of Peace in our hearts today. Respond to Him and He will be your source of hope and your Hero!

### BACKGROUND

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In this text, the word “nevertheless” is the turning point of the prophecy begun in chapter 7; at this point, hope is offered. During a time of darkness and gloom would come a Source of eternal light that would pierce the darkness permanently. The text is composed with a contrasting theme of hope and warning. The Messiah was promised, One who would suddenly light up the darkened world, destroy the enemies, and rule the world. His anger would not be turned away at the sin of the world, yet there was hope for the righteous.

Zebulun and Naphtali represent the Northern Kingdom, and it is notable that Jesus' upbringing and early ministry was in this area, which is near the Sea of Galilee. The prophecy predicted a time of oppression. This prophecy was fulfilled when Syria fell to Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria in 732 B.C. and Israel followed in 722 B.C. Later the area was called Galilee of the Gentiles.

In a style typical of Hebrew writings, Isaiah used parallelism, which comes through several times poetically in this text. Verse two is an example of this style: The people were in darkness and have seen a great light; the land sees the shadow of death but on it the light has shined.

The “day of Midian” refers to Gideon's small army defeating the large host of Midianites. Similarly, the Messiah will conquer the mighty hosts of the Antichrist. Furthermore, the next verse states that the destruction of the wicked one will be complete when it says, “This shall be with burning and fuel of fire.”

The crux of hope comes from the promised Messiah. He was to be born a child, unto “us,” meaning the covenant people. Using parallelism again, the writer restated that a Son would be given to the nation of Israel. He would rule over God's people and finally the world during the Millennial Reign. The figurative language “the government shall be upon his shoulder” refers to His kingly office and the fact that He will govern the nations.

Four descriptive names define His character. The words “Wonderful” and “Counsellor” could be linked together in translation as being “The Wonderful

Counselor” or a “Wonder of a Counselor.” “Wonderful” is indicative of that which is miraculously accomplished by God Himself. “Counselor” indicates that He will be the Authority, and the people will gladly listen to Him. He will have the wisdom to rule justly.

The term “mighty God” is the strongest of titles with reference to deity. Part of the translation literally means “hero.” This child was to be God Himself! “The everlasting Father” is still referring to the Son to be given. Though He was to be a child, yet He will be the Father of all eternity. We can see that the throne of David will indeed be forever because the Ruler Himself is eternal.

“The Prince of Peace” represents the One who will bring and maintain order through the Millennial Reign. This thousand years is to be much later than the first coming of the Son. His rule will manifest peace because He is the embodiment of peace itself.

The second section of this chapter contrasts the first in that it warns the people of their sin and God’s wrath toward it. Israel had the arrogance to say that though they might be destroyed, they would rebuild their cities and make them greater than before. They would use hewn stones, as the bricks in the East usually were sun-dried and dissolved easily by rain. They would use cedar instead of sycamore, which were not as valuable or durable as cedar.

However, the prophet foretold that their former allies (the Syrians and Philistines) would turn against them and devour Israel. The punishment on the land would be dark and oppressive. The nation would seek fulfillment and find themselves unsatisfied. The bricks would fall, as they did by Tiglath-Pileser in 722 B.C. The people would be as the fuel for more suffering.

Nevertheless, the Light was still promised to provide hope in the darkness. Though Israel would still not repent after the punishment, and God would still be angry, His hand would still reach out to give the gift of the promised Messiah.

## AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging

B. Prophecies related to Israel

1. The destruction of Israel by Assyria

a. Judah’s promise of deliverance from Israel

(3) Isaiah’s message of Assyria’s invasion

(e) The promise of ultimate Messianic deliverance (9:1-7)

b. Israel’s promised destruction by Assyria (9:8 — 10:4)

(1) Israel’s pride (9:8-12)

(2) Israel’s destruction (9:13 — 10:4)

(a) Because of idolatry

(9:13-17)

(b) Because of internal strife

(9:18-21)

(c) Because of oppression

(10:1-4)

## A CLOSER LOOK

1. When God judged Israel, what arrogant thinking prevailed among the people?

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2. Why do you think God inspired Isaiah to use the adjectives in the focus verse to describe the coming Messiah?

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3. Name two ways that Jesus is a Light to people today.

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## CONCLUSION

We can have a personal relationship with the mighty God Himself. What a wonder that is! Take advantage of the hope He has provided.

## NOTES

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.” (Isaiah 10:20).**

When I was a young person, I had absolutely no interest in religion or anything spiritual. For a while, I thought I was in control of my life. Gradually, however, things started to deteriorate. Still, I refused to consider God or look to Him for help. Finally, when circumstances in my life were so bad that I didn’t think they could get worse, I turned to God. I was saved, and found the love God had for me so amazing that it was beyond description.

The contrast, once I began relying on the Lord, was incredible. Even though my circumstances before I was saved were miserable, they were beneficial to me because the Lord used them to help me come to know and trust in Him. Without the difficulties I experienced, it is possible that I might not have found the best thing in life—a relationship with God.

Isaiah prophesied that Israel would have a similar experience, only in a much greater sense. By the sovereign will of God, the Assyrians were to serve as His “rod . . . of anger”—His means of retribution upon disobedient Israel. The remnant who escaped the Assyrians would begin to rely (“stay,” in the focus verse) on God. Undoubtedly, their miserable circumstances while under Assyrian domination would prompt this change of heart. Isaiah said they would be imprisoned, enslaved, plundered, and trampled like dirt beneath the enemy’s feet. As dreadful as it was, to a significant degree, this terrible oppression would be responsible for their returning to God. Once they enjoyed the comfort, peace, and joy of being right with Him, perhaps they would look back to the Assyrian oppression with a different perspective. Those hard times would have helped motivate them to rely on God.

This perspective can be applied to our own lives. Unfavorable circumstances can cause us to grow spiritually. When life is not going right or easy, maybe we are a little more likely to move nearer to God and to rely on Him for help and guidance. Let us consider the potential good that could come from the difficulties that we face. No doubt, when we get to Heaven, we will look back at every adverse circumstance that helped us rely on God, and thank Him for it.

### BACKGROUND

At the time this chapter was written, the people of Judah were far from God. The Assyrians were their enemies, and a force to be reckoned with because God was going to use them as His disciplinary tool. Assyria was a mountainous region lying to the north of Babylonia, and extending along the Tigris River to the high mountain range of Armenia. The Assyrians were descendants of Shem (see Genesis 10:22), but in process of time these ancient tribesmen had mingled with the other inhabitants of the region. They were a military people, referred to as the “Romans of the East.”

Verse 9 lists cities that the Assyrians conquered. Those noted here were in a direct line from Assyria’s capital (Nineveh) to Judah’s capital (Jerusalem). Verses 28-32 list the smaller cities that the Assyrians would take. Soon, after a siege of three years, the Assyrians would capture Samaria and annihilate the kingdom of Israel. They would also overrun the land of Judah and surround the city of Jerusalem.

The Assyrians were proud of their conquests and boasted of their strength. However, Isaiah prophesied that God would punish them once He was done using them to discipline Israel. No tool can accomplish a task without a person using it, and every nation has power to accomplish only what God allows. This prophecy was fulfilled. In Hezekiah’s time (701 B.C.), the angel of the Lord slew 185,000 Assyrian soldiers (Isaiah 37:36-37). Then in 609 B.C., Babylon overcame Assyria, and they never became a world power again.

A few Israelites, a remnant, would be left when Assyria was destroyed, and these people would place their trust in God. Isaiah’s older son was named Shear-jashub, which means “a remnant shall return.”

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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- II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging
  - B. Prophecies related to Israel
    - 2. The destruction of Assyria (10:5-34)
      - a. The use of Assyria (10:5-11)
      - b. The arrogance of Assyria (10:12-15)
      - c. The demise of Assyria (10:16-19)
      - d. The promise to the remnant (10:20-23)
      - e. The repetition of Assyria’s demise and the remnant’s return (10:24-34)

## A CLOSER LOOK

**1.** By what power did the king of Assyria think he conquered?

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**2. What does Isaiah 10:15 indicate about human self-sufficiency and pride?**

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**3. Think of a time when you faced an unpleasant or difficult situation that worked for your good. How did you feel about it, especially after you recognized the value you gained through it?**

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## CONCLUSION

We want even uncomfortable circumstances to help us rely upon the Lord. He needs to be the focus of our trust.

## NOTES

[illegible]





### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.” (Isaiah 12:3)**

There was no running water on the farm where I grew up. For our drinking water, we had to walk about five blocks to a water pump to fill our buckets and then walk back home. My brother and I often complained about having to make that trip several times a day. We really did not understand why we could not drink from the well in our front yard. Our parents explained to us that when that well was dug, whoever had dug it did not dig down deep enough to reach a level where the water was pure. Although the water it produced was used to do the washing and also for livestock, we could not drink it.

As Christians, we have a “well of salvation” from which we can draw. The source is God and the water is pure. It can quench any thirst of the soul that you and I might have. In a world of instant gratification, we can hardly imagine having to take a ten-minute walk to get water to quench our thirst. Spiritually speaking, we do not need to! The well of salvation has water that we can access any time of the day or night. The drawing process brings us joy, for when we obtain water from this well, we are spiritually refreshed, energized, and satisfied.

We drew water out of the well in our yard by lowering a bucket into the unseen depths, letting it fill, and then pulling it back up. The well that was five blocks away had a pump, so we could not see the water when we pumped it, but we got the same results. It is similar to our spiritual well—though we may not see this water, it is there and we can draw from it by the bucketfuls!

Remember, the Lord is waiting for us to dip into this well of blessings and unspeakable depth and quench our spiritual thirst. His supply is unlimited and he offers it to each one of us!

### BACKGROUND

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Jesse, referred to in verse one, was David’s father. Even though the “family tree” of King David would appear to be cut down, leaving only a stump, Isaiah prophesied that a “stem” would grow out of the root and become the One who would judge with true righteousness. The power of Messiah would be absolute. He would “slay the wicked” with his breath. Righteousness and faithfulness would control His thoughts and actions.

Isaiah saw the Millennial Reign; the time when Jesus will sit on the Throne of David. Isaiah’s words held great promise for the people of Israel, and they still hold that promise for God’s people today. He described the Messiah’s Kingdom, which will be characterized by peace and harmony throughout all creation. The predatory animals such as the wolf, leopard, lion, and bear, will not harm the more defenseless lamb, kid, calf, cow, and ox. This peace will not only exist between animals but will also extend to relations between animals and man. Even the snake (cockatrice) will not harm a small child. This peace will be the result of the fact that “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD.” The creation will return to a state closer to God’s original creation.

In verse 10, the Messiah is again referred to as a root of Jesse; He will “stand for an ensign [banner] of the people.” The Hebrew word *amily*, translated *people*, normally referred to the Jewish people, but Isaiah said the Gentiles would seek the Messiah’s banner also. Messiah’s rest (or resting place) will be glorious!

A second time, God will bring the Jewish people back to the Promised Land from every direction—the northeast (Assyria), the southwest (Egypt and Pathros, which was Upper Egypt), Africa (Cush was Ethiopia), the Persian Gulf (Elam was near Shinar, or Babylon), and northern Syria (Hamath). The “islands of the sea” referred to any areas beyond the ones mentioned. The Lord will remove the physical barriers of the Red Sea and the Euphrates River so the Jews can return.

The divisions between the Jewish tribes that existed in Isaiah’s time will be wiped away, and there will be unity between the twelve tribes. The “shoulders of the Philistines” referred to a low range of foothills between Philista and the mountains west of Judah. This verse indicated that the reunited Jewish nation will expand its influence in all directions.

The six verses in Chapter 12 were Isaiah’s song of praise to God, exhorting the people who will witness these things to praise the Lord. These verses also act as a reminder today to those who witness God’s love, care and power in their lives to “Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted.”

God’s anger at Israel’s backsliding will be replaced by His comfort. Isaiah boldly claimed, “God is my salvation.” He amplified this truth in the next sentence, “The LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my



Isaiah concluded by noting how close God is, “Great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.” Isaiah had prophesied in chapter 7 verse 14 that the Son of the virgin would be called “Immanuel,” meaning “God with us.” In today’s chapters, he rejoiced because he saw ahead to the time when God will physically dwell on the earth.

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- ## A CLOSER LOOK

**2.** In Isaiah 11:2, what specific attributes of the Spirit are listed?

## CONCLUSION

God can give you a drink from His well of salvation today. We can trust Him to keep His promises for today and for the future also.

## NOTES



### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, *even* them that rejoice in my highness. The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the LORD of hosts mustereth the host of the battle” (Isaiah 13:3-4).**

It was a beautiful day! Families carried picnic baskets to find a cozy spot to watch the battle. It was the Battle of Manassas (Bull Run) during the American Civil War, and the Union Army was sure of victory. They were certain that their forces were far superior to the ragtag Southern Army.

The battle grew fierce, and the energized Southern Army forged ahead. The Union Army fled, as the Southern Army advanced with their famous rebel yell. Panicked picnickers grabbed their families and ran for safety. That day, after a hard-fought battle, with blood, sweat, and tears, the Southern Army claimed victory.

The people of the Union learned that they were facing a war, which could be difficult and costly, and that battles were not something to be viewed as picnic entertainment. As Isaiah prophesied of the destruction of Babylon, the battles he described were certainly not going to be something to see for pleasure. God Himself was going to bring the hosts to the battle, and His punishments would be severe.

Today, we are in a spiritual battle. Our enemy is Satan, and the warfare is not fun or entertaining. It may appear at times that our adversary is winning. But God is calling His sanctified ones to rally together under the banner of Truth, and shout for the battle! Most of our fight will be on our knees, and it will not be easy. A physical battle is arduous and wearisome, and so is spiritual battle. We may feel tired and maybe a bit discouraged at times. However, as we focus on our cause, we will be renewed in the Lord, and have energy to fight. Remember, our Captain never lost a battle! There is victory ahead. Just as the Lord led the hosts to overthrow Babylon, He will lead us to many victories as we prevail in prayer for the burdens of our hearts, and as we stand for truth and right in this wicked and godless world.

### BACKGROUND

Up to this point, Isaiah’s prophecies were directed to the Southern Kingdom of Judah (chapters 1-6) and then to the Northern Kingdom of Israel

(chapters 7-12). Beginning with the thirteenth chapter, the prophecies of judgment are directed toward other nations—those who oppressed God’s people. Chapter 13 deals with the judgments of Babylon.

The first verse refers to a burden or vision given to Isaiah concerning judgments to come. He prophesied about the destruction of Babylon long before it was a world power.

In time Babylon would become a noble, beautiful city. It was referred to as the “head of gold” in Daniel 2:37-38. One of the ancient world’s largest cities, and also among the Seven Wonders of the World, it was known for its massive walls and hanging gardens, which were built by Nebuchadnezzar II between 604-562 B.C. Beautiful palaces of the nobles were situated at the gates of the city, showing off the splendor and wealth there. Babylon was located about two hundred miles above where the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers joined, and the Euphrates divided the city almost equally in half. Today, Iraq is located where the glory of Babylon once stood. The ruins of this city are found about fifty miles south of Baghdad on the Euphrates’ west bank.

God called for a banner to be lifted up for the destruction of Babylon. There was a call for the sanctified ones to gather for this cause. Many of these warriors who would be set apart for this task would come from afar and join together to be instruments of the Lord for the destruction of Babylon.

The beauty and strength of Babylon would become rubble. Men would tremble from fear and their hearts would fail. The sun, moon, and stars would not be seen, possibly because of storms or overcast. The earth and heavens would appear to shake and hope would be gone. So many men would be killed in battle that there would be a scarcity of males in the population. Such was the fate of those who had oppressed God’s chosen people. In 539 B.C., the Medes would come in and perform atrocities, taking no bribes, and showing no pity for the lives of the people of Babylon. There would be total destruction.

There are many overtones in this prophecy concerning the final Day of the Lord. Just as this was a warning to the oppressive Babylonians, there was a poignant message, warning of the end times when God will once again pour out His wrath on a sinful world.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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- II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging
  - C. Prophecies related to the foreign nations

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## NOTES

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“And it shall come to pass in the day that the LORD shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve.” (Isaiah 14:3)**

Compassion can make a difference and be a motivator. The story of six-year-old Ryan Hreljac is an example. In January 1998, Ryan sat in a Canadian classroom and grew more and more distressed as his schoolteacher described the sad situation of children living in Africa with little access to medicine, food, or clean water. As the teacher detailed the sadness and fear that gripped the lives of those African children, Ryan decided he would do something about it.

He discovered that \$70 would pay for a well and he determined to raise the money. His parents agreed to pay him \$1 per hour for additional chores. He set about cleaning, washing windows, picking up pinecones, and more. Within three months he had raised enough for a well.

When Ryan presented the money to WaterCan, a nonprofit organization that funds well building in developing countries, he learned that although \$70 would buy a hand pump, it actually cost \$2000 to drill a well. Ryan’s response was, “I’ll just do more chores then.”

Because the Canadian International Development Agency matched WaterCan’s funds two for one, Ryan needed to raise \$700. Ryan’s parents wanted to encourage him, so they emailed all their family and friends about his project. An article was printed in the town paper. Donations came in and Ryan continued doing his chores. By August, Ryan had raised the required \$700.

In recognition of his achievement, Ryan, who by that time had turned seven, was invited to a WaterCan Board meeting to hear a Ugandan director of Aid and Development speak. The director hugged Ryan, thanking him for his well. He then went on to describe how much wells were needed; yet the process of digging was very slow. A portable motorized drill would make a great difference, but an additional \$8,000 would need to be raised.

“I want everyone in Africa to have clean water,” said Ryan. And so he, with some help from his parents, set about the task. Newspapers and TV spread the word, and donations started to flow in. Ryan responded to each with a thank-you note. He spent hours hand-printing letters and seeking donations from businesses while his schoolmates started a contribution

fund. By November 1999, the required amount had been received for the drill.

Ryan’s neighbor, impressed by his effort, donated his frequent flyer points so Ryan and his mother could travel to Uganda to see the well for which he had originally raised money. When he arrived, he was greeted by 5,000 cheering children and the village elders. For these people water was life, and they spent the day feasting and dancing in honor of Ryan.<sup>1</sup>

Ryan’s compassion for the people of Africa caused him to accomplish an amazing feat, especially considering his age. Today’s text provides another picture of compassion—the concern that comes directly from God Himself. Isaiah saw ahead to when the people of Judah would live long in bondage, and their days would be filled with many situations that would cause them fear, pain, and suffering. The focus verse lets us know that God would not be blind to the plight of His people, but would regard them with much compassion.

Perhaps you are facing painful circumstances. If so, God is aware, and He has compassion for you. Maybe God has placed a burden on your heart to make a difference in the life of someone else. As you show compassion, God will help your efforts and you and others will be blessed.

### BACKGROUND

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Isaiah 14 paints a picture of a mighty monarch whose pride brought him to destruction. In 539 B.C., Darius the Mede captured Babylon, and Belshazzar, King of Babylon was killed and his kingdom ruled by Darius. This chapter describes the king’s arrival in the world of the dead. All the wealth, prestige, and power that had belonged to Belshazzar were nothing, because death is the great leveler.

The phrase “son of the morning” in verse 12 refers to Satan and his fall from Heaven when he tried to usurp the power of God. Satan is an imitator, for even his name *Lucifer*, which means “morning star,” indicates that he tried to be like Jesus, who is “the bright and morning star” (see Revelation 22:16). Just as the destruction of the great Babylonian Empire would be completed, so Satan’s defeat will also one day be completed.

Verses 14-27 displayed God’s control over the affairs of man. God would use Assyria to accomplish His divine purpose in disciplining Israel but He would not allow the enemy to completely destroy His people. In 701 B.C. Assyria invaded Judah during Hezekiah’s reign, but God destroyed the army as it threatened to capture Jerusalem.

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*Hannah's Bible Outlines*  
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- God's compassion reaches out to us, and He wants us to reach out with His compassion to others.

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“The burden of Moab. Because in the night Ar of Moab is laid waste, and brought to silence; because in the night Kir of Moab is laid waste, and brought to silence.” (Isaiah 15:1)**

Large portions of the earth can be “laid waste” in a few moments. On December 26, 2004, at about 7:00 a.m., a tsunami caused great devastation from Thailand to Africa. The epicenter of the 9.3-magnitude earthquake was under the Indian Ocean near the west coast of Sumatra, an island of Indonesia. In a few seconds, trillions of tons of displaced water sent powerful shock waves in every direction. Silently, invisibly, the water pushed outward at the speed of a jet plane. As it neared the shore, the speed slowed, and large waves formed the tsunami, which caused more than 229,000 deaths. Millions of people were left homeless and whole villages were totally demolished.

The tsunami was sudden. Some people had no forewarning and others received only a brief alert—go to the highest ground. If there had been more warning, many more lives could have been saved.

In contrast, today’s text shows that the Moabites received a warning through Isaiah of impending destruction. He said that they would be suddenly cut off in the night. The seizing of them would lay the whole country open and make all the wealth of it an easy prey to the victorious army. In their case, they would be laid waste because they had rejected God and treated Israel harshly. If they would have heeded the warning given by Isaiah and repented, the story most likely would be different. Had they been broken *before* the Lord, they would not have been broken *by* the Lord.

Like Moab, we have been given many warnings. The Bible repeatedly exhorts us to turn from sin and prepare for eternity. We are told to watch because the Lord may come at any second to rapture His people, and we need to be ready. If we ignore God’s warnings, we could be “laid waste.” However, if we heed the instructions, we can anticipate the moment we will meet the Lord in the air.

### BACKGROUND

The Prophet Isaiah prophesied of the great desolation that was coming upon the country of Moab, which bordered the land of Israel. He described the woeful and piteous lamentations that would be heard just three years later throughout the country when it would become prey to the Assyrian army. The Moabites would

be so overwhelmed with grief that life itself would be a burden to them.

Moab was the son Lot fathered through incest with his oldest daughter. The country of Moab was one of the vilest of nations. During most of Israel’s history, the Moabites were Israel’s enemy and constantly fought against them.

Moab was a proud nation, and God condemned them for this. They did not honor the God of Israel but trusted in their own fortifications. They relied on a false god and trusted in material wealth; their god was captured and their wealth plundered. The true God would bring the people of Moab low. When they would be invaded by the Assyrians, the Moabites would change from boasting to weeping. They would no longer trust in their own fortifications.

Ar was the capital of the country, and their principle fortress was Kir. Bajith, Dibon (a center for pagan idol worship), Nebo (the mountain where God showed Moses the Promised Land, Deuteronomy 32:49), Medeba, Heshbon, Elealeh, and Jahaz were all cities or areas that Assyria would overrun. Zoar was a town bordering Moab. It was where Lot fled from Sodom when it was destroyed.

The phrase “in the night” (verse 1) may have indicated that Moab would be overthrown in one night either by an invading army or a natural disaster such as an earthquake. Nimrim (verse 6) was a well-watered valley near the Dead Sea. “No green thing” denoted a parched land as a result of war’s devastation.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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- II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging
  - C. Prophecies related to the foreign nations
    - 4. The judgment upon Moab
      - a. The desolation of Moab (15:1-9)

### A CLOSER LOOK

1. What prophecy was given against Moab?

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**2.** What actions could the Moabites have taken which might have changed what Isaiah foretold?

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**3.** What preparations can we make for the events the Bible says will yet come to pass in this world?

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**CONCLUSION**

We can learn from the Moabites. If we surrender to God and follow His will, we will not be “laid waste” or unprepared when Jesus Christ returns in the Rapture.

**NOTES**

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“We have heard of the pride of Moab; he is very proud: even of his haughtiness, and his pride, and his wrath: but his lies shall not be so.” (Isaiah 16:6)**

Probably one of the most well known shipwrecks in all of history is that of the Titanic, when over 1,500 people died. The declaration by the builders that the ship was “unsinkable” or “invincible,” contains a chilling tone of arrogance. Sadly, pride was one of the principle causes of the great loss of life.

In order to allow the first-class passengers ample deck space, the number of lifeboats was reduced to twenty—only half enough for the 2,228 passengers. The designers were overly confident that they had created an unsinkable ship.

On the day of the accident, other ships gave reports of ice floes in the area, and yet the officers of the Titanic ignored the reports and made no effort to slow the ship. They thought it was constructed so well that no amount of damage would cause it to sink. When it was clear that the ship would hit a huge iceberg, the crew members tried desperately to turn and miss it, but to no avail. The iceberg caused a massive parallel rip on the ship’s hull.

Perhaps there are more precious souls ruined and lost by pride than any other single sin. It makes one independent of God, and sometimes of others around him. The proud person will trust himself, his works, and his treasures, and will not seek after God. This attitude was seen in the Moabites. They were given counsel whereby they could have been forgiven and received, but they would not heed.

Proud people are much like the Moabites. Often they will not take good counsel when it is given to them. They think themselves too wise to be advised. They will not submit to God nor regard the warnings He gives them.

We can make our heavenly goal and also save ourselves a great deal of grief if we will heed God’s instructions to us. Let us make sure that we are not like the builders and officers of the Titanic or like the Moabites.

### BACKGROUND

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This chapter continues and concludes “the burden,” or prophecy, regarding Moab. The prophet gave good counsel to the Moabites, telling them to reform what was amiss among them, and particularly to be kind to God’s people, as the likeliest way to prevent

the threatened judgments. Moab’s only hope was to make peace with Judah. “Send ye the lamb” meant to pay tribute to the Davidic dynasty. “Sela” refers to Petra, the capital of Edom. This city was cut into the face of the rock at the end of a narrow gorge, which was a natural hiding place for the Moabites. Isaiah urged the Moabites to send a peace offering to the king of Judah. It would take more than an appeal to give them asylum from the enemy. They needed to submit to the king of Judah, which meant acknowledging the God of Judah. The Moabites wanted Judah’s help but they did not want Judah’s God. Isaiah called the Moabites extortioners, spoilers, and oppressors and announced that the nation was destined to be destroyed.

Moab’s pride kept them from submitting to Judah. This would lead to their defeat and bring dreadful devastation to their country. All the inhabitants would lament bitterly at the ruin of their country. Moab was famous for its fields and vineyards, which were planted with choice plants, but they would all be laid waste by the invading army. There was no mention of their praising God for their abundance, and giving Him the glory for it. If they would honor God, they might have retained their goods and used them for rejoicing, rather than being stripped of everything. The soldiers, called here “the lords of the heathen,” would break down all the plants. The shouting for the enjoyment of the summer fruits would turn into howling for the loss of them. The joy of harvest would cease.

The prophet Isaiah seemed to have looked upon the Moabites with a compassionate concern. He said, “I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer the vine of Sibmah: I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon.” It appears to be an inward grief and trembling. He went further to say, “My bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab.” The prophet acquainted himself with, and mourned over the coming afflictions of these people.

The chapter closes with a eulogy about Moab’s predicted fall. He would soon be weary of the high places, and praying to his idols would not help him. (Chemosh was the principal god of the Moabites and was known for his severe retribution.) The Lord spoke concerning Moab and the time of its destruction. The time fixed for execution of this sentence was three years. A hired servant (hireling) would keep accurate records of his time of service, and in the same way, God was recording the rebellion of Moab and tracking the time. Fair warning was given and with it space to repent. If they had done as Nineveh did, the judgments threatened would have been prevented.

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“Yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof, saith the LORD God of Israel.” (Isaiah 17:6).**

Have you ever felt alone or lonely? Such feelings can be prompted by many circumstances. A Christian woman recounts, “When my husband and I were married, we had a game of matching strides when we walked. He could usually out-step me but it was still fun to try. But one day, he went where I could not go with him—through the Valley of Death. Then I was a widow, and there were no footprints but my own. Yet the Lord never left me. In the midst of anguish, He gave me peace. In times of uncertainty, He gave me direction. He comforted me in the lonely hours of the night.

“Our children were still young: ten, twelve, and thirteen years old. The Lord kept His promises and supplied all of our needs. He provided not only spiritual strength but daily temporal needs. For example, one time when taxes were due and the car needed a new transmission, someone anonymously gave us enough money to take care of both.

“For a time, I felt I had to prove that I could make my own way in life. As a result, sometimes I denied my family and friends the opportunity to show the love and care they would gladly have shared. Yet, the Lord was faithful to reveal my need to communicate and to reach out to others.

“Now the children are grown and married. While at times no visible footprints have paralleled my own, through the eye of faith I have seen that God’s footsteps have been there with me every step of the way!” This woman proved that God can be there in the most challenging circumstances or when the feelings of loneliness are overwhelming.

Inspired by God, Isaiah foretold of a time when the people of Israel and Syria would be quite alone. Their countries were going to be destroyed so that the few people left would be like four or five olives on the outmost branches of a tree. Yet even in that extremity, if they would look to God, He would see their need and eventually send deliverance to their nation.

Whatever our situation, God wants to be with us. Perhaps we feel like we are at our extremity—a single “olive” on “the outmost branch.” Are we looking

to God? He knows exactly what is transpiring in our lives, and He will be with us.

### BACKGROUND

The statement, “The burden of Damascus,” begins the chapter. Damascus was (and still is) the capital of Syria. While this sad prophesy was aimed at Syria, it also included Israel because Syria and the Northern Kingdom were in an alliance against Assyria. Bible scholars believe that chapter 17 of Isaiah predicted the downfall of this coalition between Ephraim and Syria and was contemporaneous with Isaiah, chapter 7.

Because of their alliance, Syria and Israel would be reduced to the same pathetic state. That sad situation was described, beginning at verse 4. The “glory of Jacob” referred to the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom, also called “Israel” and “Ephraim.” Isaiah’s inspired comparisons were powerful. Their nation would be thin like a sick person. As the harvestmen gathered corn in their arms to be cut with a sickle, so Israel’s wealth and people would be gathered and removed by Assyria. Just as only a few grapes or olives were left after harvest, so only a few poor families would be left in the land of Israel.

These disastrous circumstances would cause the Israelites to look to God instead of their idols. They had forgotten God and served Baal and Phoenician gods in the groves and made images. While their “pleasant plants” (perhaps groves for their idolatrous worship) might have grown up quickly, the harvest would be a “day of grief and of desperate sorrow.”

Yet, as it often did, Isaiah’s prophecy held out some hope, when he predicted the destruction of the enemy, beginning in verse 12. God would rebuke Assyria. Though they would rush in like mighty waters, eventually they would be whirled about like dust or chaff on the threshing floor. This ultimate destruction would be a benefit to Israel because the Assyrian Empire was a threat to the world during the prophet Isaiah’s lifetime. They were known to inflict heinous, unspeakable atrocities upon their prisoners. However, Israel would see much sorrow before this deliverance came.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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- II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging
  - C. Prophecies related to the foreign nations
    - 5. The judgment upon Damascus and Israel (17:1-14)
      - a. The invasion of Damascus (17:1-3)

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye.” (Isaiah 18:3)**

Like other Christian parents, my wife and I have tried to point our children toward the concept of looking to God in times of stress and need. One blustery evening in late winter a number of years ago, I found they had been paying attention and had truly learned that lesson well.

Our two young sons and I were in our old green van, driving over the Coast Range in the dark on a twisty, winding road. A surprise snowfall had obscured the road, and the falling flakes—caught in the glare of the headlights—made visibility difficult. The worst part was that the steering of this full-sized van, despite significant expenditure, was very loose. I literally had to “steer” to drive a straight line.

As we continued to climb toward the pass, I could feel the tension in my neck and shoulders. At that point the younger of our sons looked up to me and asked, “Jesus will protect us, won’t He?” I looked back at him and said, “Yes, He will!” Immediately I felt a calm come over me. My son’s words reminded me that God had already made the promise to be with us in every situation. I did not need to rely on myself, but just watch for what He would do. The tension in my neck and shoulders left. The van was the same, the road still twisted, and the blustery weather continued, but I had put my burden upon God. Then I could relax and drive.

Today’s focus verse is thought by Bible scholars to be the call to the on-looking nations to watch and see what God would do in a time of great trouble. God had made many promises to His people, and He would not fail His word. On a smaller scale, we know that God steps into our lives and works for us—both in every-day situations and in times of crisis. He has already promised that nothing comes to us except what He allows, so while we might be tempted to worry, that is unnecessary. My little boy’s trust reminded me that God would not fail us.

Whatever we may be facing today, we can cling to God’s promises and then watch what God will do.

### BACKGROUND

Some Bible scholars believe that this chapter was written in the time of King Hezekiah. (See 2 Kings

chapters 19 and 20.) They think it concerned Ethiopia, because the original language referred to Cush, which was the area where Ethiopia, Somalia, the Sudan, and perhaps some of Egypt are today. “People scattered and peeled” could have been a description of the people of Ethiopia. Others say this may have described a nation that had been destroyed and scattered.

“Shadowing with wings” in verse 1 may have referred to swarms of insects, and also could have been a picture of the King of Ethiopia frantically trying to form alliances with various nations (including Judah) as protection from the strong Assyrian army who threatened them. The “vessels of bulrushes” (verse 2) referred to lightweight boats made from papyrus bark.

At Isaiah’s direction, Judah refused to join this alliance, and the messenger was sent home. Hezekiah, with Isaiah’s encouragement, chose instead to fully trust in God. This trust was well-placed. Verse 4 gives the indication that God was calmly considering the whole situation. He would allow men’s plans to develop as a vine that ripens, but then He would step in like a husbandman cutting down a vine. Assyria eventually was routed by God, with great destruction. And the faith of the people of Judah was thereby strengthened.

At the end of the chapter, Isaiah looked ahead to a time when the Ethiopians would be delivered and would worship God, bringing their tribute to Mount Zion.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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- II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging
  - C. Prophecies related to the foreign nations
    - 6. The judgment upon Ethiopia (18:1-7)
      - a. The destruction of Ethiopia (18:1-6)
      - b. The conversion of Ethiopia (18:7)

### A CLOSER LOOK

**1.** What did God say would happen to the plans that were compared to the ripening grapes?

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Are you facing a “worrisome” situation today? Ask God to help you remember that He has already given promises, and He will take you through.

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“Where are they? where are thy wise men? and let them tell thee now, and let them know what the LORD of hosts hath purposed upon Egypt.” (Isaiah 19:12)**

Have you ever found yourself wishing you had taken the advice of someone and applied it in a particular circumstance? My mother was famous for telling me to learn from other people’s mistakes rather than my own. To her that meant, “listen and learn.” She didn’t want me to suffer the consequences of my occasional poor decisions, so she offered me her advice. Unfortunately, I didn’t always take her words to heart. Sometimes I tried things on my own, only to find out that if I had heeded her counsel, I would have saved myself some regrets.

It’s funny how much wiser my mother seemed as I grew older! Now, as a mother myself, I find that I often tap into her wisdom and experience when I have to deal with things that come my way in life and into my children’s lives. I, too, try to give advice to my children in hopes that they will avoid some of the same pitfalls that I encountered.

In this chapter, Isaiah was prophesying against Egypt. Despite all of this country’s experiences with the God of Israel and His admonitions to repent, the people of Egypt continued to be hostile toward God’s people, and went on serving their idols and not God. Through His prophets, God warned them many times of His sure judgment and yet they repeatedly rejected His warnings. They did not apply God’s message to the way they lived, so Isaiah prophesied that sound counsel would be taken from their midst. Egypt’s reputation as a superior country due to their intellect would become worthless because they lacked the wisdom to apply it.

True wisdom is more than head knowledge. In this technologically advanced age where mega-information is at our fingertips, we need to know that spiritual wisdom is being able to properly apply God’s principles to our lives. We don’t want to make Egypt’s mistakes and not take God’s advice that He has revealed to us in His Word. We should pray daily that God would open our hearts to the wise counsel of His Word and help us to prayerfully apply it.

### BACKGROUND

The chapter begins with the statement, “The burden of Egypt.” The word *burden* is derived from the Hebrew word *massaw*, which refers to an utterance of

doom, a prophecy of calamitous or disastrous nature, which one dwells on. It is something that is borne with labor and difficulty, which is grievous, wearisome and oppressive.

Isaiah prophesied that God would come on a “swift cloud” to pronounce grievous judgment against Egypt. The people would melt with fear at His presence and their idols would be unable to save them from His anger. God delineated Egypt’s coming downfall by indicating that the people would self-destruct as they began fighting one against another. Good judgment would be removed from their midst and they would end up seeking counsel from charmers and wizards. He would also send a cruel lord and king to rule over them.

Egypt depended upon the Nile overflowing its banks each year. But God would no longer allow that to happen and their land would become dry and desolate. Their rivers would be polluted and their grass, corn, and trees dried up. They would be defenseless and vulnerable to their enemies. Because of the drought, their fishermen would not be able to maintain an existence, as they would have no fish for food or trading. There would be no flax for linen cloths, which they wore and sold to other nations. Their people would be downcast, their spirits terrorized by fear of their enemies.

But God in His mercy would not leave the nation of Egypt there. Through Isaiah, He promised them a time when things would be different, when they would know Him personally and become an “inheritance” to Him and a nation that would vow a vow and then perform it.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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- II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging
  - C. Prophecies related to the foreign nations
    - 7. The judgment upon Egypt (19:1 — 20:6)
      - a. The prediction of civil war (19:1-10)
        - (1) The war (19:1-4)
        - (2) The destruction (19:5-10)
      - b. The confusion of Egypt’s leaders (19:11-15)
      - c. The fearfulness of Egypt (19:16-18)
      - d. The restoration of Egypt (19:19-25)
      - e. The captivity of Egypt (20:1-6)
        - (1) The sign (20:1-2)
        - (2) The significance (20:3-6)



## A CLOSER LOOK

**1. What did God ride upon when He pronounced judgment on Egypt?**

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**2.** Why do you suppose God began destroying the nation of Egypt by turning Egyptian against Egyptian?

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**3.** What steps can we take today to make sure that God's judgment will not befall us when He returns?

[illegible]

## CONCLUSION

We have a wonderful God. Like a loving father, He will correct us when we need it, but He doesn't leave us there. He is quick to make promises of restoration and bring us unto Himself. We should rejoice in His infinite wisdom each day.

## NOTES

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“Prepare the table, watch in the watchtower, eat, drink: arise, ye princes, and anoint the shield.”  
(Isaiah 21:5)**

“Do you think the Lord will accept that excuse?” rang in my ears as I walked back to my cabin. I had been late for curfew, and the gate to the church campground was closed before my friends and I could make it back from our dinner. The plan had been simple: go out quickly, get a bite to eat, and be back before the appointed time. But the best laid plans fall short sometimes.

When the car had stopped, I ran to the gate, hoping that I would be excused because I wasn’t driving . . . because I wanted to get back in time . . . because I was running to show my earnestness . . . . However, the watchman’s words had said it all. I was late and nothing changed that.

I knew that the watchman at the gate had only been speaking in jest and that my being late for curfew did not exclude me from the Rapture, but his point was well taken. Back at my cabin, I thought long and hard about the Lord’s return, and the importance of being “on time” for that event. When the Lord comes back, I’m going to be ready! I’m looking forward to losing gravity and meeting my Lord in the air.

The focus verse can be broken down into three parts: prepare, watch, and arm oneself. We want to prepare for the day when the Lord will come back for us, daily striving to obey Him and to have our hearts in tune with His will. We must also watch for His coming with anticipation and eagerness. Our Lord is going to appear one day in the clouds to bring us to Heaven “and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:17). This is very exciting, indeed! And, finally, we must arm ourselves to fight against our spiritual enemy.

Nothing is important or valuable enough to make it worth missing the “gate.” Nothing is of more value than our eternal souls. Let’s make sure to keep our priorities straight and give due diligence to our walk with the Lord.

### BACKGROUND

Isaiah chapter 21 is a portion of a set of judgments proclaimed against the Gentile nations surrounding Judah at the time. The judgments of Babylon, Edom, and Arabia are covered in this chapter.

Verses 1-10 record the prophecy of the fall of Babylon to the Medes and Persians (539 B.C.). Babylon was on a plain, and violent winds from the desert of Arabia often hit it. The Medes were wild mountain warriors, and the onslaught of armies would hit Babylon like a hurricane. Verses 3-5 are a reference to Belshazzar’s feast and the handwriting on the wall as described in Daniel chapter 5, when the very thing that Isaiah saw came to pass. Belshazzar was killed and Darius the Median took the throne.

Verses 11-12 refer to Edom, whose people were the descendants of Esau. Historically, these people were Israel’s bitter enemies. Isaiah was the watchman and gave Edom warning of the coming day (light) if they repented, but also of the coming night if they did not heed this warning. They ignored their opportunity, and as foretold, their country was controlled by Babylon, later by the Persians, and eventually by the Romans. Edom was renamed Idumea, and King Herod of Jesus’ time was a descendant of this nation. Edom was not heard of after Jerusalem fell in 70 A.D.

Verses 13-17 refer to the Arabians who were nomads and traders, and controlled trade routes in the area. They had previously assisted the Philistines in an attack on Jerusalem during the reign of Jehoram and were defeated later by Uzziah. Isaiah prophesied here that judgment was coming. Even if they hid in the thickets and the people of Tema brought them bread and water, they would be overcome. On their camels, they could not outrun or defend themselves against Assyria’s cavalry and weaponry.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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- II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging
  - C. Prophecies related to the foreign nations
    - 8. The judgment of Babylon (21:1-10)
      - a. The destruction by Media (21:1-5)
      - b. The report of the watchmen (21:6-10)
    - 9. The judgment of Edom (21:11-12)
    - 10. The judgment of Arabia (21:13-17)

### A CLOSER LOOK

1. In verse 2, how did Isaiah describe his “vision”?

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Jesus might come back today. Let us be certain that we have prepared and are watching and living to be ready for that event.

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“Therefore said I, Look away from me; I will weep bitterly, labour not to comfort me, because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people. For it is a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity by the Lord GOD of hosts in the valley of vision, breaking down the walls, and of crying to the mountains.” (Isaiah 22:4-5)**

When Adolf Hitler became Germany’s chancellor in January of 1933, he began a campaign of terror and hate directed at Jews and others he felt were inferior and a detriment to German society. After suffering defeat in World War I, times were tough in Germany and many were eager to grasp Hitler’s philosophy of blame. There were also many outside of Germany who were attracted to his style of propaganda, and his number of followers began to spiral out of control. Some world leaders, such as Winston Churchill, tried to sound the warning, but they were largely ridiculed and ignored.

Even when Hitler began his deadly trek across Europe, America did not get involved. When America finally was forced into the war in 1941, it was almost too late. If the world had heeded the warnings issued by Churchill and others at the beginning of Hitler’s reign, as many as thirty million lives could have been saved, including six million innocent Jewish men, women, and children.

In our text today, Isaiah warned Jerusalem that the Assyrian army was going to invade their city. The Assyrian army had already defeated many of Judah’s neighbors, and now they had their sights set on Judah, and Jerusalem in particular. Isaiah mourned because the inhabitants of Jerusalem refused to repent and turn to God for help. Instead, they took matters into their own hands and fortified their walls, built up their arsenal of weapons, and secured their water supply. Even with all their preparedness, they were concerned for their safety, but instead of turning to God, they decided they would spend their time partying and enjoying what time they had left.

In our Christian walk, it is vital that we listen to the warnings and admonitions in God’s Word, as well as the instruction we receive from our spiritual leaders who watch for our souls. Ignoring God’s Word and those who are trying to encourage us to go in the right direction will bring painful consequences. If we are ignoring God’s Word, do we have a relationship with Him? Just as God, through Isaiah, tried to get

the inhabitants of Jerusalem to repent and turn back to Him, He may sometimes use a minister, Sunday School teacher, parent, friend or others to encourage us to draw closer to God in a certain area of our life.

Today, take a moment to evaluate. What spiritual warnings have you heard lately, either individually or as part of a group? Did you pay attention? Let us determine to learn a lesson from Judah and pay careful heed to the warnings God sends our way.

### BACKGROUND

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This chapter is generally considered to describe the siege of Judah and Jerusalem by Sennacherib of Assyria when Hezekiah was king of Judah. Some commentators believe it predicts the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians at a later time, but the historical facts concerning the diverting of the water supply, and the demotion of Shebna, fit the description of the Assyrian siege recorded in 2 Kings 18–20 and 2 Chronicles 32:1-33.

The “burden of the valley of vision” referred to Jerusalem, which was built on the top of two mountains, but was surrounded by mountains that were higher. Jerusalem was also the city where the Temple resided and where God had revealed Himself to the prophets through visions.

The houses in those days were built with flat roofs edged by a short parapet wall. The rooftops were used for many purposes, such as walking, sleeping, or conducting business. The windows of the houses that faced outside were covered with a lattice for privacy but the lattice also prevented the inhabitants from seeing outside. If there was any activity outside they wanted to see, they would go to their rooftops to look out. Isaiah described the inhabitants of Jerusalem as going to their housetops to watch the enemy advance on their city.

Apparently, a large number of the leaders of Jerusalem were frightened by the impending siege from the Assyrians and, ignoring their responsibilities to the people and their families, they fled from the city. This led to their disgrace and ultimate capture by the Assyrians.

Isaiah was grieved to see his people suffer the attack from the Assyrians, and in verse 12 he reminded Jerusalem of God’s call to repentance. Elam was a city belonging to the Medes and Kir belonged to the Persians. Both of these nations were subject to the Assyrians during Hezekiah’s time and were apparently assisting the Assyrian army in their conquests. In verse 8, Isaiah referred to the “covering” of Judah,

which was removed. The Assyrian army would conquer the surrounding fortress cities of Judah that were a “covering” or protection for Jerusalem, leaving it vulnerable to the enemy.

The people of Jerusalem did what they could to protect themselves. Hezekiah designed a system to reroute the water supply inside the walls so the enemy could not sabotage it. This engineering wonder can still be seen in Israel today. The people also built an extra wall around the city and broke down the houses between the two walls to fortify the two walls. They also depended on their arsenal, housed in a building built by Solomon and named “the house of the forest” because of the amount of cedar from Lebanon which was used to build it. But with all their preparation, most of the people neglected to do the most important thing: to call on God for help. Instead of heeding God’s call to repentance, the people were eating and drinking and living it up without any concern for what might happen when the Assyrians came.

God was angry with the people of Jerusalem (verse 14) and He declared that He would not forgive this sin of neglect and that they would ultimately be destroyed. Hezekiah eventually convinced the people to repent when the Assyrians came, and Jerusalem was spared from this particular siege. Still, Jerusalem was destroyed in the end when the Babylonians besieged it under King Nebuchadnezzar.

Shebna was the treasurer in charge of the king’s house and in a position of great authority. It was not uncommon for persons of high rank and their families to be buried in a sepulcher which was hewed out of a rock. But in Shebna’s case, he was preparing his sepulcher in a high place to make it more conspicuous. Isaiah informed him that he would be taken into captivity and never use the sepulcher he had created for himself. Shebna would be driven from his position and Eliakim would become the treasurer. In 2 Kings 18:37, it mentions that Eliakim was over the household and Shebna was the scribe, indicating that Shebna was demoted to a lower position. It appears that Shebna was one of the leaders who fled from Jerusalem because of fear of the Assyrian siege. He was captured by the Assyrians, bringing disgrace to himself and his household, and fulfilling Isaiah’s prophecy in verse 18.

- b. The rulers of the city (22:15-25)
  - (1) Shebna, the corrupt ruler (22:15-19)
  - (2) Eliakim, the choice ruler (22:20-25)

## A CLOSER LOOK

1. What did Isaiah prophesy would happen to Shebna because of his pride?

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2. All the chapters around Isaiah 22 deal with judgment against Jerusalem’s corrupt and pagan neighbors. Why do you think Jerusalem is included in these judgments even though it was a city that had been blessed by God’s presence in times past?

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3. What are some spiritual warnings that we hear in the present day?

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## CONCLUSION

Even though the inhabitants of Jerusalem heard Isaiah’s warnings, they chose to go their own way and try to handle their problems on their own. We, too, can hear the Word of God expounded time after time and still choose to ignore God’s divine plan for our lives. Ask God today to help you not to be just a hearer of the Word, but also a doer.

## NOTES

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## AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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- II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging
  - C. Prophecies related to the foreign nations
    - 11. The judgment of Jerusalem (22:1-25)
      - a. The destruction of the city (22:1-14)
        - (1) The siege of the city (22:1-11)
        - (2) The rejection by the city (22:12-14)



### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“And it shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king: after the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot. Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten; make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered.” (Isaiah 23:15-16)**

When I was a small child, my family would travel to the town where I presently live. I remember sitting in the back seat of the car and noticing the large brick building with the giant words, “Albers Mill,” across the top. This picturesque building was located near the train track on the waterfront. The area was busy day and night with incoming and outgoing shipments from the large port.

When we moved here about five years ago, that brick landmark was vacant, rundown, and the windows were either broken out or boarded up. It had been in that condition for many years. Just recently, there has been a push to restore the downtown area. A contractor purchased this old, trashy, boarded-up building and began to turn it into something usable. His desire was to maintain as much of the original look as possible. The building is now a restored, multipurpose facility, which has become a famous regional tourist attraction. What looked like a ruin that needed to be torn down is now a thriving group of stores on the first two floors and very expensive apartments on the upper floors.

The restoration of the old Albers Mill reminds me of how Isaiah described Tyre. The city during Isaiah’s time was rich and prosperous, but the prophet predicted that because of sin and pride, it would become desolate for seventy years. But God is in the restoration business, and He would eventually give new life to Tyre.

There are many people who, through sinful choices in life find themselves on a path of destruction. Often families are gone, jobs are lost, and health is broken. The world may look on and call them losers, but God offers hope. He is the God of restoration. He calls for the hopeless to repent and He will give new life. He can give beauty to even the most unloved of this world.

Never underestimate what God can do for a person who comes to Him with all his heart! He can mend what seems impossible to repair. He can restore what looks as though it should be torn down and disposed of. He can replace hate with love, and distrust with

trust. Whatever situation you may be facing today, give it to God and see what He will do with it.

### BACKGROUND

Chapter 23 records a collage or panorama of future events as seen by the prophet. It focuses on the coming judgment of Tyre, and the nations that traded with it. In the first verse, the prophet called on the seafarers of Tarshish to “howl” because their great gain through commerce with Tyre would stop. In the subsequent verses, Isaiah described where Tyre got its wealth and declared that this great luxury and splendor would be destroyed. In verse 13, Isaiah says that this destruction would be done by the Chaldeans, during the days of Nebuchadnezzar.

The 15th verse refers to Tyre as the song of the harlot, namely, a harlot that has been forgotten, but who seeks to attract notice again by her song. Large ports of merchant trading centers were often compared to harlots seeking many lovers, meaning they courted merchants of all nations. These merchant centers would accept anyone for the sake of financial gain. Isaiah’s prophecy indicated that Tyre would again attract commercial trade.

The message of this chapter was to foretell the destruction that would come upon a rich, proud, and prosperous city, and then goes on to show that God was King over the nations of the earth. Regardless of what Tyre and all other nations thought of their accomplishments, God was the One to set up and to put down.

Before its judgment, Tyre was a place of great strength. Josephus, the great Jewish historian, states that Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, made war against Tyre with a fleet of sixty ships, manned by eight hundred rowers. Tyre had but twelve ships, yet they obtained the victory, and scattered the Assyrian fleet, taking five hundred prisoners. Shalmaneser then besieged the city for five years, but was unable to take it. This was in the time of the prophet Hezekiah, about 717 B.C. History states that old Tyre was defended by a wall, which was believed to be impregnable. This city resisted the attacks of Nebuchadnezzar for thirteen years, from 586-573 B.C. The new Tyre, after the restoration, was inaccessible until 322 B.C. when Alexander the Great constructed the immense rock wall with which he connected the city to the mainland. Tyre also had control of the sea.

In verse 18, Isaiah looked ahead in time and referred to the Millennium. At that time, the people in Tyre will share some of the blessings that Israel will receive.

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If you are burdened for loved ones who have wrecked their lives by sin, don't lose hope. God is in the restoring business and can bring hope to the hopeless.

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the LORD hath spoken this word.”  
(Isaiah 24:3)**

Just a few weeks after the end of World War II, my father, as a soldier in the army of occupation, had the opportunity to visit the city of Hiroshima, Japan. On August 6, 1945, Hiroshima had been destroyed by the first atomic bomb used in warfare. In a split second of time, some 70,000 to 80,000 people stepped into eternity. By December of 1945, thousands more had died from their injuries and radiation poisoning, bringing the total killed in Hiroshima to perhaps 140,000. Many more died in later months and years.

As my father walked through the deserted streets of that terribly ravaged city, he saw that only the shells of a few reinforced concrete buildings were left standing. The wooden houses and places of business that had once made up the city were gone, incinerated in a flash. The streets were eerily quiet. “It was an unforgettable sight,” he wrote home. “I thought, This is hallowed ground. What right do I have to stand here?” Today, more than sixty years after that tragic day, my eighty-seven-year-old father’s voice still shows emotion when he speaks of the impression that scene left on him.

In reading this chapter of Isaiah, we realize that the devastation of Hiroshima, horrific as it was, is just a shadow of the terrible destruction that will encompass the whole world in the time of the Great Tribulation. The prophet predicted a universal judgment—the earth will be judged because the people created by God have rebelled against Him and violated His laws. However, by interweaving his descriptions of impending judgment with glimpses of the Kingdom that will follow the devastation, Isaiah revealed that God the Judge is also a God of mercy and righteousness.

Those who submit their lives to God in this life will live and reign with Him throughout eternity. What a hope we have as we focus our thoughts on the glorious time that will follow earth’s destruction!

### BACKGROUND

This section of the Book of Isaiah (chapters 24-27) is often called “Isaiah’s Apocalypse” because it looks beyond the immediate judgment of Israel’s Gentile neighbors to the final judgments of the Great Tribulation period. Chapter 24 begins Isaiah’s prophecy of a coming universal judgment upon all the earth,

which is to be followed by the universal blessing of the Messianic Kingdom.

Looking down through time, Isaiah saw an era when the entire world will come under the judgment and retribution of a righteous God. The Hebrew word *erets*, used nine times in the first thirteen verses of the chapter, has a meaning of “earth,” though it is also translated as “land” in some of the verses. It refers to the whole inhabited world, and does not restrict the judgment merely to Judah or Israel. The result of God’s judgment will be a world that is empty, laid waste, and destroyed. It will be left so devastated and distorted that it is unrecognizable.

Every class of society will be affected: priest, servant, master, farmer, etc. Mankind will be almost totally obliterated from the face of the earth. The inhabitants of the world are pictured as being desolate and burned (*haru*, meaning “charred”). In light of today’s sophisticated weaponry, this could be an allusion to the potential of nuclear warfare.

The *city of confusion* (verse 10) could be translated “city of chaos” or “emptiness.” This does not refer to Jerusalem or Babylon; it is used to describe desolation of cities in general. The cities of the earth will be wasted and empty as a result of this universal destruction.

Verses 6-13 vividly picture what it will be like on the Day of the Lord. There will be no joy at harvest, because there will be no harvest. The judgment of God will destroy the crops as well as those who till the soil. The only singing done during this time will be done by the remnant who will sing in recognition of God’s divine deliverance of them from this time of Great Tribulation.

Verses 19 and 20 foretell an earthquake-like disaster that will shake the entire earth, not just a localized earthquake in the land of Israel. The judgment of God upon the earth possibly throws it off its axis, as described by the phrase, “the earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard.” The Day of the Lord will affect not only the earth and its people but also Satan and his hosts. God will judge the evil powers of the spirit world as well as the kings on earth.

The chapter concludes with a ray of hope. In spite of all the judgments, the King, the Lord Himself, shall reign someday in Mount Zion.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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- II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging
  - D. Prophecies related to the world

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## NOTES

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.” (Isaiah 25:4)**

The other day I took my umbrella with me when I went out for my walk. It was raining and windy, and if you have ever used an umbrella in such circumstances you know that wind and umbrellas don't mix very well. It is a challenge just to keep it above you. Sure enough, along came a gust of wind and popped that thing inside out! I tried and tried to pop it back the way it should be, and then I thought, Maybe if I wait until the next gust of wind comes along and I aim it into the wind, it will pop it back for me. That is exactly what happened! I waited until the wind came and it blew the umbrella right back into the shape it was supposed to have.

Storms come into all our lives, no matter what our age. Young people in our school system endure being surrounded by drugs, foul language, guns, and immoral behavior. Middle-aged people may face issues at work: projects that are difficult, people who are abrasive, and possibly a family to support. Older people face still other problems. Loneliness can be a huge issue, while transportation, financial concerns, and need for medical care are other potential difficulties or storms. However, all of these difficulties put together are not too much for the Master of the storm.

Have you ever had a day when the “umbrella” of your life was blown inside out? If you hang on and turn to the help that is available in God, the storms you face today can become your strength to face the one that will blow in tomorrow or next week. Sometimes it is good to keep a list of your answered prayers, and refer to it whenever you are wondering, How will I get through this one? Cling to the Lord—our help in time of storm!

### BACKGROUND

Chapter 25 is a song of praise by the redeemed of the Lord. Their song is lifted up to the Lord, whose intervention on their behalf causes their hearts to overflow with thankfulness.

The cities of the enemies of Israel shall be reduced to ruin, never to be rebuilt. Those who previously oppressed God's people will acknowledge His might and pay Him homage. He alone will be a

“refuge from the storm” and a “shadow from the heat.”

Verse 6 is a prophecy of the Messianic banquet celebrating the overthrow of evil and the age when the Messiah will reign over all nations. The banquet described is a time of spiritual blessing and peace. Death will be swallowed up forever. Israel will enter into her glory, and all the nations of the earth will come to Mt. Zion to worship God. “All people” in verse 6 shows the intention that God's saving message should go out to the entire world and not just to the Jews.

In verse 10, Moab becomes a symbol of all those who have opposed God and are rebellious to the very end. Isaiah was quite graphic in his symbolism, referring to the Moabites as straw that has been so trampled into the manure that the only way out of the quagmire is by swimming through it. This image is repulsive, to be sure, but the imagery was strong to depict the outcome of men and women who reject God.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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- II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging
  - D. Prophecies related to the world
    - 2. The praise for deliverance and blessing (25:1 — 27:13)
      - a. The praise for God's deliverance (25:1-12)
        - (1) His past deliverance (25:1-5)
        - (2) His future deliverance (25:6-12)

### A CLOSER LOOK

1. What are the characteristics of God as set forth in verse 1?

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2. How does the imagery of the banquet scene in verses 6-8 affect the believer's understanding of death?

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This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.” (Isaiah 26:3)**

Catherine Marshall, a well-known Christian author, told of a king who had commissioned a contest inviting artists to paint a portrayal of peace. Many submissions were made, and out of the entries, two finalists were selected.

One artist pictured a tranquil lake, peacefully reflecting beautiful mountains and billowing white clouds. The other artist had painted a very different scene. Harsh, rugged mountains dominated his canvas. A fierce storm was brewing, the sky dark, the clouds filled with threatening rain. Lightning flashed, and nothing about the tempest appeared peaceful. How could this be a portrayal of peace? But as the king studied the painting more closely, he saw a tiny bush growing in the cleft of a rock, and in the bush sat a mother bird on her nest, serene and secure, in perfect peace. The second picture won the prize.

The storms of life may be swirling about us. Trouble may seem to be on every hand. Perhaps serious injury, illness, or other physical trauma has caused suffering. It may be that a rebellious child, a broken relationship, a loss by death, physical or emotional abuse, personal failure, or any of a myriad of other circumstances has brought pain our way. Whatever the cause, God can give peace in the midst of the storm.

Not long ago I heard someone talk about how, in the midst of distressing circumstances, God helped him to feel as though he were in the eye of the storm. Jesus gave peace! We cannot avoid distressing circumstances—at some point in life they will come to us all—but with God, we can know peace even in turmoil. Supported by God’s unchanging love and mighty power, we can remain unshaken by the chaos that surrounds us.

God wants to provide that peace for all of His children. As we “stay” our minds and hearts on Him, we will find His peace is ours.

### BACKGROUND

God used this psalm of trust, praise, and meditation to reveal the future to Israel, and it will be spoken by the remnant of Israel as the Millennial Reign begins. In verse two, the gates to be opened refer to the gates of the New Jerusalem. It looks forward to the

time when saved Israel will come to a place of honor in that city.

In the Hebrew text, the “perfect peace” referred to in verse three is emphasized by literally writing the word “shalom” (peace) twice, meaning the peace that God offers goes beyond what finite minds can comprehend.

Prior to having this peace, Isaiah foresaw that the Jewish people would be persecuted terribly, and he compared them to a woman giving birth who can barely utter a prayer. However, he told of a time when hope will break forth and their praises will glorify God as they are delivered.

Verse seven includes the phrase “weigh the path.” Weighing the path was a process of making the path smooth or level. This reference indicates that God will work to make the path of the righteous level.

The references to “other lords” in verses 13-14 point back to the idolatrous days of Israel’s past when they had put other gods before the one, true God. The people were telling God they had put these foolish notions aside and that He was the only true God—the others were dead. Praise would only be directed to God.

Verse 19 is one of the strongest teachings of the resurrection of the physical body found anywhere in the Old Testament.

The close of this chapter indicates that when God comes to judge the earth, the unrighteous will find no place to hide.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

Hannah’s Bible Outlines  
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- II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging
  - D. Prophecies related to the world
    - 2. The praise for deliverance and blessing
      - b. The praise for God’s blessing (26:1-21)
        - (1) His faithfulness (26:1-6)
        - (2) His righteousness (26:7-10)
        - (3) His deliverance (26:11-18)
        - (4) His resurrection (26:19)
        - (5) His protection (26:20-21)

### A CLOSER LOOK

1. To what is the nation of Israel compared in verses 17-18?

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Today, remember back to a time when God has given you peace in the midst of an emotional storm. Look to Him with thanksgiving in your heart for the deliverance He alone can give.

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“In that day sing ye unto her, a vineyard of red wine. I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.” (Isaiah 27: 2-3)**

A lot of care goes into growing a vineyard. As a child, I watched my father begin working with the vines as soon as the frost was off of the ground. It was a small vineyard that yielded enough grapes to eat, sell, and make grape juice.

My father loved growing grapes. I remember he would initially let the vines climb vertically, and then would train them to grow horizontally, like an arbor. This provided shade as well as a healthy snack in the summer. Sometimes he transplanted vines he already had, and at other times he would plant different varieties. One time he came home with some sweet, juicy, amber-green seedless grapes that he let us taste. Of course, we wanted him to plant that variety, and he did.

I can tell you that having a vineyard was a lot of work! I watched my dad dig large holes and plant those vines. Then he stretched two horizontal wires between the posts to support the vines. As the young vines grew, he tied them to the stakes and later to the two wires. He pruned all the shoots that grew below the first wire, except two, and all the shoots that grew in between the wires, except the two that were trained to go off on the top wire. He often told us that if he heavily pruned the shoots, we would have the best grapes in the fall.

My father also was very observant of the weather during the flowering period. Anything other than balmy, rain-free conditions had the potential of ruining the crop of grapes. He watered the vines on a daily basis, and was very careful to not over water or underwater his crop. These vines consumed many after-work hours, as my father tried to keep the vines healthy and free of disease.

Before long, we would see the small clusters form, and we could hardly wait until they were ready to pick. We watched the clusters carefully and sometimes placed a net over them so the birds would not eat them before we had a chance. As much as we enjoyed the green, juicy grapes, the vibrantly colored purple ones seemed to yield the best tasting grape juice.

The focus verse speaks of a vineyard of red wine. This is prophetic in nature and refers to God’s vineyard, the Children of Israel, yielding the very best

fruit. The color of the wine was directly correlated to its value—the redder, the better. In verse 3, God takes on the job of making that happen. He promises to water the vineyard and be the Keeper of it day and night, so no one would “hurt it.” This illustrates God’s special care in nurturing His chosen people. He took interest in their success and the results, desiring that they be the very best. There will be great reason to rejoice and sing in that day, for God’s vineyard will blossom and fill the earth with its fruit.

There is also great reason for us to rejoice today. If we have been born again, we have become part of God’s vineyard. He has taken interest in our spiritual growth and will cause just the right circumstances to happen in our lives to make us succeed. Though sometimes He may choose to “prune” us heavily through the trials that come our way, He does it with purpose and skill. We can be sure that we’ll have reason to rejoice at harvest time, if we have allowed the Master vinedresser full control of our lives.

### BACKGROUND

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Verse 1 speaks of God punishing the “leviathan.” The word *leviathan* is used five times in the Bible, and it refers to an aquatic animal. It is unclear whether the author refers to an animal from the crocodile, snake, or whale family. In this chapter, it is also referred to as “the piercing serpent,” “crooked serpent,” and the “dragon that is in the sea.”

In the same day that God will destroy the leviathan, there will be reason to sing. The singing refers to “responsive” singing, in the form of a dialogue. Ancient Hebrews commonly divided song into distinct portions—one choir sang one part of the song, while the other responded alternately.

The song was to be about the fact that God’s people were a “vineyard of red wine.” Vineyards are first talked about in Genesis 9:20, where the Bible mentions that Noah planted a vineyard. After that, they are mentioned frequently in both the Old and the New Testaments. Archeologists have uncovered evidence that the Jews cultivated grapes extensively. We know that other nations did as well, for when Moses sent out the spies, they came back with a cluster of grapes so large that they had to carry it on a rod.

It is common practice to plant a vineyard on a hill. Because nearby trees can produce shade, deplete the soil of the needed moisture, and attract birds, rodents, deer, and other animals, the vineyard location is usually separate from any flora and fauna. Vines also have extensive root systems that can reach more than thirty



feet, so the soil needs to be fairly fertile and also it needs to be able to drain thoroughly to produce the best grapes.

Another important factor is the climate. Slopes that face south extend the season, therefore yielding more fruit. North-facing slopes shorten the season. Therefore, sunlight is critical for fruit-bearing vines.

In verse four, God spoke of burning the briers and the thorns that are set against Him. Briars are very prickly, woody vines growing in tangled masses. They have round stems with shiny, leathery leaves and small greenish flowers followed by clusters of inedible shiny black berries. Most likely, this resembled a vineyard, but wild and in disarray.

**AMPLIFIED OUTLINE**

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- II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging
  - D. Prophecies related to the world
    - 2. The praise for deliverance and blessing
      - c. The praise for Israel's preservation (27:1-13)
        - (1) The judgment on Satan (27:1)
        - (2) The protection of Israel (27:2-6)
        - (3) The purging of Israel (27:7-11)
        - (4) The regathering of Israel (27:12-13)

**A CLOSER LOOK**

1. What color of wine does God say His vineyard will yield?

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2. In verse 6, God speaks of those that come out of Jacob "taking root." What do you suppose that means?

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3. How can you bear fruit each day for Jesus? Give an example.

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**CONCLUSION**

We are all branches of a great vineyard. We can all be fruit-bearing if we are connected to "the Vine," Christ Jesus.

**NOTES**

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.” (Isaiah 28:17)**

My brother is a carpenter. Occasionally as he frames a structure, he uses a plumb line—a cord attached at one end to a large weight known as a plummet or plumb bob. This device is used to create a vertical reference line.

Isaiah referred to a plummet in our focus verse. In this verse and the preceding one, God defines the proper foundation and measures by which He will judge between good and bad building of the nation. A secure nation is like a well-built wall—a wall built on a solid foundation and according to a true measuring line and plumb line. Through the prophet, God revealed that destruction would come upon Israel for their failure to build properly. Their strategies of war and treaties of peace were a false security. They were guilty of scoffing at Isaiah’s words (verse 14), of failing to trust the Lord (verse 16), and of lies (verse 17). Because they did not anchor to the cornerstone for a sure foundation, and did not build according to the measuring line and the plumb line, they would be swept away.

There is a lesson for us to learn from Israel’s tragic mistake. It is impossible to build a proper spiritual house without a sure foundation and an accurate plumb line. But those have been provided! Jesus Christ is our cornerstone—our point of reference for whatever we may encounter in life. Likewise, the Word of God acts as our plumb line as we make day-to-day decisions. While the world’s moral guidelines seem to change almost daily, the truth established by Scripture never changes. When we measure by it and align our lives to it, we will find true security.

If our lives are built on Christ the cornerstone and our choices line up with the Word of God, we have a certain hope of everlasting life. What a blessed hope!

### BACKGROUND

Isaiah used the name “Ephraim” to represent the Northern Kingdom of Israel and its capital, Samaria. Ephraim was the second son of the Old Testament patriarch, Joseph. Both Ephraim and his older brother Manasseh made up individual tribes in the twelve tribes of Israel. When the Children of Israel split into two kingdoms, the northern tribes fell into idolatry.

This prophecy against Ephraim was an announcement of judgment due to their backslidden condition. The Northern Kingdom was to be utterly destroyed, serving as an example to the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

Although the prophet spoke of destruction, it is evident that a portion of Israel was to be saved. In verse 5, Isaiah called these Israelites “the residue of his people.” To those who would acknowledge God, there would yet be the opportunity to receive God’s blessing.

The prophet also explained how the Northern Kingdom had failed God. It was, in fact, the leaders of the Northern Kingdom who were responsible for this great falling away. Even the clergy had participated in the debauchery of the nation.

The reference to “precept upon precept; line upon line” was a negative statement. The people complained that the prophet’s repetitious message was annoying. Because they degraded the prophet’s message, God would speak to them with “another tongue”—that of the Assyrian captivity.

The Southern Kingdom of Judah was afraid of Assyria, but did not trust the Lord for deliverance. Through the prophet, God condemned the leaders in Jerusalem who had made an agreement with what Isaiah called “death and hell.” Some commentators believe that this refers to the covenant between Hezekiah and Egypt’s Pharaoh Tirhakah against Assyria. Others suggest that Judah was considering a covenant with Assyria itself. Either way, Judah trusted in an ungodly nation rather than in God, but their confidence in this resource would prove futile. In 701 B.C., Sennacherib and his Assyrian armies would sweep through Judah, destroying forty-six towns and villages.

In verse 16, Isaiah prophesied of the coming Messiah, pointing to Him as the cornerstone while reinforcing that the judgment of God was unmovable, represented by the plummet. Therefore the covenant that Judah had made with Egypt would not stand.

In metaphorical language, Isaiah pointed out the frustration that Judah would experience in trying to rest upon such alliances, reminding them that the bed was too short, and the blanket too narrow—a picturesque way of stating that their alliances would fail.

The chapter closes with a parable about a farmer who planted a field. Just as the farmer acted with wisdom and care in planting and harvesting, so does God who is “wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.”

## AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

*Hannah's Bible Outlines*  
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- II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging
  - E. Prophecies related to unbelievers in Israel and Judah
    - 1. Woe against the drunkards and scoffers (28:1-29)
      - a. The destiny of drunkards (28:1-8)
      - b. The attitude of scoffers to the prophet (28:9-13)
      - c. The alliance of scoffers with death and hell (28:14-22)
      - d. The parable of the farmer (judgment) (28:23-29)

## A CLOSER LOOK

1. What caused the Northern Kingdom of Israel to fail God?

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2. Why did God indicate that Judah had made a covenant with death?

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3. How can we be sure that our lives are in line with God's plumb line?

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## CONCLUSION

God has provided a plumb line for our instruction. By His grace, we can measure up to it!

## NOTES

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.” (Isaiah 29:13-14)**

He used Christian vocabulary. He talked about the blessing of the Almighty and the Christian precepts which would become the pillars of the new government. He portrayed the earnestness of a man weighed down by historic responsibility. He handed out virtuous stories to the press, especially to church papers. He held up his tattered Bible for all to see and declared that he drew from it the strength for his great calling. Thousands of religious people welcomed him as a man sent from God. Indeed, Adolf Hitler was a master of outward religiosity — with no inward reality!

Much like Hitler, the people in the time of Isaiah were formal and hypocritical in their religious performances. They claimed to belong to God, but they were disobedient and merely went through the motions. They honored God with their lips rather than their hearts, and their supposed reverence was merely an outward and intellectual action. Their religion was a farce rather than a reality.

True worship occurs in the heart. A noted theologian of the early 1900s, William Temple, made this clear in his masterful definition of worship: “Worship is the submission of all our nature to God. It is the quickening of conscience by His holiness; the nourishment of mind with His truth; the purifying of imagination by His beauty; the opening of the heart to His love; the surrender of will to His purpose — and all of this gathered up in adoration, the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable and therefore the chief remedy for that self-centeredness which is our original sin and the source of all actual sin.”<sup>1</sup>

Let us guard against slipping into routine forms of worship practiced with little thought or genuine devotion. If we truly want to be one of God’s people, we must purpose to worship Him honestly and sincerely, with all of our hearts.

### BACKGROUND

In this chapter, the prophetic woe by the prophet Isaiah was directed toward Jerusalem. The name Ariel means “lion of God.” The Hebrew word can also mean “an altar hearth” or a place where burnt offerings were made. Though Jerusalem was the center of Israel’s worship, it would become a place of slaughter. The prophecy of impending doom may refer to the besieging of Jerusalem by the Assyrian army, which was cut off by an angel. It also could relate to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, who conquered Jerusalem in 586 B.C. and took thousands of Jews into captivity. Or it might also refer to the city’s last overthrow by the Romans. Finally, it could look to the end times when Jerusalem will be attacked by the armies of the world in the battle of Armageddon.

The chapter contains three sections. In verses 1-8, it was foretold that Jerusalem would be greatly distressed. Heedless of the prophet’s warnings, the nation had misplaced their trust and had felt the sting of God’s discipline, but eventually their enemies would be defeated. The second section (verses 9-16) is a rebuke of three categories of people: those who failed to heed warnings, those who were formal and hypocritical in their worship, and those leaders who profanely despised God’s providence. The final section (verses 17-24) contains promises of grace and mercy to a remnant, “children” of another generation whom God would sanctify and who would be in true awe of the God of Israel.

The chapter ends with Isaiah’s statement that those who have “erred in spirit” would gain understanding by learning doctrine, bringing out that a proper knowledge of God must be built upon a proper doctrine of God.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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- II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging
  - E. Prophecies related to unbelievers in Israel and Judah
    - 2. Woe against Jerusalem (29:1-24)
      - a. The prediction of Jerusalem’s fall (29:1-4)
      - b. The judgment of Jerusalem’s enemies (29:5-8)
      - c. The spiritual blindness of Jerusalem’s inhabitants (29:9-24)
        - (1) Their insensibility toward warnings (29:9-12)

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## NOTES

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; in returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.” (Isaiah 30:15)**

“Lost in a maze of sin, I could not find my way out,” writes the granddaughter of a missionary. “However, when I was nineteen years old, God found me. He knew exactly where I was, and He reached down and picked me up.”

Although she had been born into a Christian home and taken to Sunday school and church all her life, in her early teens this young woman strayed from that upbringing, seeking adventure and acceptance with her peers. These friends advocated a fast and loose lifestyle, which she sought to imitate. Soon she was far from God, and in the grip of addictions that she had never dreamed of as a child.

Once in a while God would remind her of His love, and send someone across her pathway who would speak to her of Jesus. In one case she babysat for her aunt, who sang a hymn to her before she gave her payment for babysitting the children. Another time, when she was hitchhiking, she tried to peddle drugs to the driver of the car. He told her that he didn’t need drugs to be happy—Jesus had saved him! That same year, her boyfriend was arrested and jailed, and he called to tell her he had been saved. He said she should go to church with her parents. Even though she had no desire to go, she went for his sake.

What she found at church were happy faces, peaceful lives, and the sweet Spirit of God. Before long, she surrendered her life to God as she walked down the street. Happiness and freedom enveloped her as she “floated” to the bus stop that day. God had saved her!

She is now serving the Lord, and testifies how God provides for her needs every day. He has helped her to raise her children as a single mother and get through college, giving her numerous opportunities to witness for Him. She relates, “I would not trade the riches I have in Christ for anything. He is my best Friend. He has given me peace and unconditional love. His power to cleanse and to restore is real!”

This woman returned to the God she was taught about in her childhood, and she found the rest He promised. God, through Isaiah, said the Children of Israel had been invited to return to Him and to be saved, but they would not. Each of us, also, will

choose whether to follow our own ways or to turn to God and find the rest and strength that He promises. We will be glad if we choose God’s way.

### BACKGROUND

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This chapter begins with another “woe” from God against the people of Judah. It comes in two parts: the first is a rebuke for their dependence on Egypt, and the second for their unfaithfulness to Him.

Hezekiah was king at this point in Judah’s history. He had revolted against the strong hand of the Assyrian king, Sennacherib. It was known that Sennacherib was planning to make war with Egypt, and could easily conquer Judah on his way. The Jews were alarmed by a probable impending invasion. Rather than turning to God for protection, a strong faction in Judah wanted to seek aid from Egypt to the south. This was foolish since Egypt was waning as a world power and could offer no real assistance to Judah in a fight against Assyria. However, in spite of Isaiah’s warnings, they made an alliance with Egypt.

God rebuked Judah for going “down into Egypt” to seek help rather than seeking Him. God had promised back in Moses’ time to lead and protect the Children of Israel, yet they wanted to depend upon their own strength. They wanted to make their own decisions. He told them that looking to Egypt for help would bring them shame, and this prophecy eventually came to pass. How ironic that they turned to the very nation from which their forefathers had been delivered by the hand of God through Moses!

God then chastised Judah, through Isaiah’s words, for their spiritual rebellion and unfaithfulness towards Him. They had been warned by many prophets, including Isaiah, to turn from their wicked ways and to trust God. Yet the people had told the prophets they did not want to hear what God had to say. They told them not to prophesy anymore but to speak smooth things to them. They even went so far as to tell the prophets to “cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us” (Isaiah 30:11).

Because they despised the Word of God and trusted in an alliance with Egypt, God pronounced judgment upon them. He told them they would face sudden destruction and would be broken into tiny pieces.

God in His mercy reminded them that if they would return to Him and repent, they would be saved. In reliance upon Him they could have victory. Sadly, they remained stubborn and would not turn back to Him (Isaiah 30:15-16). They eventually paid the price for their rebellion with their lives.

## AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

*Hannah's Bible Outlines*  
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- II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging
  - E. Prophecies related to unbelievers in Israel and Judah
    - 3. Woes against foreign alliances
      - a. The first woe (30:1-33)
        - (1) The denunciation of dependence upon Egypt (30:1-7)
        - (2) The punishment for Israel's unfaithfulness (30:8-17)

## A CLOSER LOOK

1. What price did God tell Judah they would pay as a result of their rebellion?

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2. What steps did Judah take to get to the spiritual condition described in our text?

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3. What steps are you taking to maintain a life of spiritual confidence and reliance upon God and His will for your life?

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## CONCLUSION

God's desire and will for us is that we have complete spiritual rest and confidence in Him in every area of our lives. In doing this we will find true spiritual strength.

## NOTES

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.” (Isaiah 30:21)**

When I was a junior in high school, I faced a spiritual decision. My English teacher was a special woman who took a particular interest in me. Midway through the year, she assigned the class a book to read that soon caused me concern. The author mocked godly morals, and the characters used inappropriate language. The more I read, the stronger I felt that I should not read this book, but I did not want to disappoint my teacher! I prayed earnestly for God’s guidance, and received the same answer every time, so I prepared myself to tell her that I could not read the book.

My teacher responded with the very words I dreaded: “I am disappointed in you. You should not withdraw yourself from learning about these perspectives, even if they’re different than what you believe.” As difficult as it was to hear those words, I felt relieved because I had followed God’s guidance.

After that school year she retired. During my senior year she came to the school to visit our class. By then, the book incident was just a slight recollection in my mind. However, she remembered the incident vividly. The first thing she said when she saw me was, “You were right.” At my perplexed expression, she reminded me of the book and told me that I had made the right decision when I stood up for what I believed.

As Christians, we need God’s guidance. He is a source of wisdom for any situation! We can have confidence that He will lead us in the right direction. When facing life-changing decisions, we often feel an urgent need for God’s help. For example, we want to seek God’s guidance about the person we marry or in choosing the right occupation. We also often seek God’s leading on small things in life. We might pray He will help us find our keys or give help on a school test.

God longs to guide us in spiritual matters as well as physical matters, and decisions we make that could affect our spiritual condition are, by far, the most crucial. We may not even fully realize the long-term ramifications of a decision. Should I develop a friendship with this co-worker? Should I refuse to work on Sundays? Should I watch this movie? Ask God for direction. These kinds of decisions, whether seemingly

small or not, will determine our spiritual condition and happiness.

I was blessed to see a long-term result of following God’s guidance. We may not always see such a result, but there are results even if they are not obvious! Though at times it may seem difficult to follow His leading, it is well worth it! If we seek God’s guidance and follow it, we will be blessed, and others will be too.

### BACKGROUND

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The last half of chapter 30 marked a change from Isaiah’s prophecy against the rebellion of Judah, as he prophesied the restoration of Israel and the Lord’s judgment on Israel’s oppressor, Assyria. As often before, the Lord stretched out His hand to His people who did not deserve it. If they turned to Him, He would be their Deliverer and their Guide.

The “bread of adversity” and the “water of affliction” were expressions for doled out bread and water during times of scarcity, such as during a siege. The people’s unwillingness to listen to the prophets of God forced them to learn through affliction. However, God promised to guide those who put away idols and were willing to follow Him.

The teachers, or true prophets, were often removed and forced to hide when idolatrous leaders had complete power. This evil oppression was promised to end. The “great slaughter,” in verse 25, refers to the battle of Armageddon in the last days of evil on the earth.

The closing theme in this chapter introduced the announcement that God would defeat the Assyrians. The historical event of the defeat of the Assyrian army recorded in Isaiah 36-37 was predicted in chapters 30-35 in great detail. This prophecy was given only about a year before the Assyrian king, Sennacherib, seized Jerusalem, which led to the defeat of the Assyrian army.

God had used the Assyrians to discipline Judah, but He promised that discipline would not last forever. Isaiah described the judgment of Assyria as a storm of fire and hail, and sifting grain with a sieve—sifting the Assyrian nation until nothing was left but destruction. The “bridle in the jaws” refers to godless nations that God would lead into ways they did not intend.

Tophet was a place built for the king of Assyria. Tophet could be translated “hearth” or “fire-pit.” It represented the place in the Valley of Hinnom, below the hill of Zion on the southwest corner of Jerusalem, where human children were offered as sacrifices to the

god Molech. Josiah later turned the heathen place into a dump, naming it Gehenna, which came from *ge-ben-hinnom*, meaning “valley of the son of Hinnom.” Gehenna is the New Testament word for “hell.” The site intended for the king of Assyria was to be one of the lowest places on earth.

In contrast to the destruction promised to the nations who had defied God, Isaiah prophesied that the people of God would have a song during the night (verse 29) and “gladness of heart.” In spite of evil darkness increasing, the song would be one of victory, much like the song of Miriam and the Jewish women after the defeat of the Egyptians at the Red Sea.

**AMPLIFIED OUTLINE** Hannah's Bible Outlines  
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- II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging
  - E. Prophecies related to unbelievers in Israel and Judah
    - 3. Woes against foreign alliances
      - a. The first woe
    - (3) The promise of divine blessing (30:18-26)
      - (a) Spiritual blessings (30:18-22)
      - (b) Material blessings (30:23-26)
    - (4) The destruction of Assyria (30:27-33)

**A CLOSER LOOK**

1. What did the prophet promise would happen if the people of Judah cast away their idols?

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2. Why do you think Isaiah said that Judah had learned to follow God through “the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction”?

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3. Think of a time when you learned to follow God through “the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction.” Think of a time when you learned to follow God through hearing a “word behind” you. Describe how these experiences were different?

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**CONCLUSION**

Following God’s guidance is essential for our spiritual survival. We can learn to hear God’s voice, which will save us heartache and frustration. Let’s seek God’s plan, and follow through with it!

**NOTES**

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD! (Isaiah 31:1)**

For many years, a man in our congregation testified, “I ran around with a preacher’s son. He said if he went to Hell, he would have plenty of company. I couldn’t console myself with the thought of having company in that lake of fire. I didn’t think anyone would walk up to me and say, ‘Bill! Well, we’re here! How about it?’ Everyone would be weeping and wailing.

“I began to count the cost. I said to myself, ‘If I should gain the whole world, live to be a ripe one hundred years of age without an ache or a pain, having everything at my disposal, and then spend all eternity in that lake of fire and brimstone where the Bible says the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched, I would still be the loser.’

“I looked at the other side of the picture and thought how much better it would be to have salvation. Then when it came my turn to cross over the Great Divide, I could enter in through the gates into that beautiful city, whose Builder and Maker is God. I decided that Heaven was cheap at any price.”

Bill Cripps weighed the facts and made a choice to trust and serve God. What a contrast to the people of Judah in Isaiah’s time, who had made a decision to abandon God and seek help from man! The focus verse indicates that Judah was fearful of the Assyrians and was looking to the horses and chariots of their enemies in Egypt for help instead of trusting God. Isaiah warned them that seeking help apart from the Lord would not bring success.

Today, people are tempted to put their hope and trust in many things beside God. Material possessions, a successful career, wealth, powerful positions, and their own knowledge are a few that come to mind. Yet, any substitute for looking to God ultimately will be worthless.

God has great power, infinite understanding, and almighty strength, and He wants to be the object of our trust and worship. He notes the smallest details about our lives, and He loves us more than any human possibly could. When we consider who God is, it will be a joy for us to trust Him. Bill Cripps did, and so will we.

### BACKGROUND

Isaiah 31:1 contains another “woe” on Jerusalem. This verse is a summation of the previous woes—the nation of Judah was putting their trust in men and horses, rather than in God. God had warned the Jewish kings not to seek horses and chariots in Egypt (Deuteronomy 17:14-16), yet they seemed uneasy with infantry alone. At this time, Egypt was known for its great cavalry, so it was a strong temptation to solicit their help. Yet Isaiah said that if Judah looked to Egypt for help, both nations would fail.

Warning the people about trusting in man rather than God and making evil alliances was a common theme for Isaiah and other prophets. Jeremiah and Hosea are two others who gave the same admonitions.

In verse 5, Isaiah used the imagery of “birds flying” to remind the Israelites of the turning point in their history—the night of the Passover when their children were protected from death. The words *passing over* in that verse are from the same root word as *passover*. God promised to intervene for Jerusalem as He had delivered His people from Egypt so many years before.

Isaiah wanted the people of Judah to understand the futility of trusting in their idols. He called them to turn “unto him from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted” (verse 6). This was the common cry of the prophets throughout the Old Testament era.

Verse 8 predicted that the Assyrians would flee, and this prophecy was fulfilled when the angel of the Lord smote 185,000 of the Assyrian army in one night (see 2 Kings 19:35-36 and Isaiah 37:36).

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

Hannah's Bible Outlines  
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II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging

E. Prophecies related to unbelievers in Israel and Judah

3. Woes against foreign alliances

b. The second woe

(1) The warning against relying on Egypt for protection (31:1-3)

(2) The assurance of Jehovah’s protection (31:4-9)

### A CLOSER LOOK

1. What did Isaiah prophesy would happen if Judah obtained help from Egypt?

**2.** Why was it wrong for Judah to look to other nations for military help?

### 3. How can we be sure that we are not abandoning God in our life's decisions?

[illegible]



### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.” (Isaiah 32:17)**

As a fifteen-year-old boy, I attended my first Christian camp meeting convention. Since I had only minimal religious upbringing, I really did not know what to expect. Before camp I had been praying in my local church to be saved, and my pastor thought it would be good for me to attend.

While I wanted to be saved in order to be ready to go to Heaven, I did not want to fully relinquish the reins of my life to the Lord. So there was a little rebellion in me at this time. I didn’t know enough about spiritual things to realize that this struggle was between the Spirit of God and the devil for lordship in my life.

In my semi-rebellious state, one thing stood out which seemed to me to typify all of Christianity. On the wall of our cabin was posted a list of rules for behavior at the camp. To me it said, “Do this,” and “Don’t do that!” My impression at the time was that serving God was all about “do’s” and “don’ts.” Looking back, I realize that I wasn’t being very fair. Many of those rules simply pertained to safety and sanitation issues. Others were to make it possible for a great number of people to live harmoniously together in crowded conditions.

Then I met Ron. He was staying in the same group cabin and was only a year older than me. In spiritual development, however, he was “miles” ahead of me. He was serving the Lord with all of his heart because he truly loved Him. Something about this appealed to me—I saw genuine Christianity in action. I am so thankful that before camp meeting was half over, I too could say that I truly experienced God’s forgiveness and salvation.

Once I had surrendered my heart to the Lord, I no longer thought of Christianity merely as a set of rules. I began to realize that, as our focus verse states, a life of righteousness is a wonderful way to live. It truly does bring peace and assurance to one’s soul.

In our focus verse, the prophet Isaiah spoke of the peace and assurance that come from reliance upon the Lord. While this was a promise that referred specifically to the end-time peace for the Jewish people, God’s promise of peace applies to those today who will surrender their lives to Him. I have heard and experienced for myself that “a clear conscience is the

softest pillow on which to lay your head.” It is a wonderful feeling to know that you are at peace with God. It is also great to know that you are at peace with all men—including not only your Christian acquaintances, but also those with whom you mingle in the world.

### BACKGROUND

As with so many of the prophecies in the Book of Isaiah, chapter 32 has not only a short-term application, but also applies to a more distant time frame, including certain features which will not be completely fulfilled until eternity. In the short range, this book was probably written during the reign of King Ahaz. During that period wickedness abounded, and ignorance and idolatry were prevalent. Meanwhile, the constant threat of the mighty Assyrian army overshadowed Israel. In these verses, the people were pointed to the day when righteous King Hezekiah would take the throne, and there would be a revival of serving the Lord. There would still be much wickedness among the people, however, and for the land to reap the fullest benefits of Hezekiah’s righteous rule, there needed to be a thorough repentance among the people.

The long-range application is the peace that Christ brings to the individual who serves Him in sincerity. It can be said about Jesus, “a king shall reign in righteousness” (verse 1), and “a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest” (verse 2). Yet the completion of this prophecy will not be until the last days, beginning with the glorious Millennial Reign of Christ. At that time, goodness and righteousness will be universal, and wickedness and evil will be totally eliminated.

Several different topics are discussed in this chapter. The first two verses describe an ideal nation where the Leader rules in righteousness, and His staff executes “judgment.” Verse 3 promises that eyes shall not be dim and ears shall hearken to the message of righteousness. Elsewhere in the Book of Isaiah, the very opposite is portrayed: eyes that will not see and ears that will not hear. The fact is that, in one way or another, God will enlighten all souls on earth to what they need to do to please Him.

Typical behavior patterns are dealt with in verses 5-7. There are “churls” (misers) and there are those who are “liberal” or “generous.” Verses 9-14 speak of women (this also applies to men) who think that everything in their lives is fine as long as they are comfortable and prosperous. Financial prosperity and success in this world do not necessarily signify a right relationship with the Lord.

Verses 15-19 promise that a day is coming when the destruction brought on by living apart from God will be replaced by a period where people live in harmony with Him. This time will be typified by peace, sure dwelling places, and quiet resting places. Verse 20 possibly refers to “keeping on” in one’s Christian endeavors.

**AMPLIFIED OUTLINE**

*Hannah's Bible Outlines*  
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- II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging
  - E. Prophecies related to unbelievers in Israel and Judah
    - 3. Woes against foreign alliances
      - b. The second woe
        - (3) The promise of Israel’s ultimate deliverance (32:1-8)
        - (4) The prediction of Israel’s immediate judgment (32:9-14)
        - (5) The promise of restoration through the Spirit (32:15-20)

**A CLOSER LOOK**

1. What King does the first verse of the chapter refer to and when will He reign?

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2. Verses 9-14 condemn those who dwelt at ease in luxury. What should our attitude be toward the material possessions of this life?

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3. Why is it easy for people to think prosperity and success indicate a right spiritual relationship with God?

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**CONCLUSION**

A life of righteousness will yield benefits in both our day-to-day existence, and in our eternal destiny.

**NOTES**

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.”  
(Isaiah 33:17)**

If you have ever gone on a long trip, you know that much planning and anticipation are involved. Several years ago, my wife and I took a vacation with some friends. We started planning the trip about a year in advance, fine-tuning every detail: transportation, gasoline, food, admission fee, lodging, stops, etc. We were all so eager that we left at 8:00 p.m. and drove all night so we would not waste a day driving!

Our trip was estimated to take about fifteen hours, and we decided that stops (except for essentials) were banned. When we started out, we talked about what we were going to do and see, and all of us were excited about our adventure. But, as the hours dragged on through the night, the almost-deserted freeway was long and sometimes lonely. The excitement was gone.

When the travel is by road, you know that it sometimes feels as if you are never going to get there. Many trips have unexpected delays. There may be a traffic snarl-up due to an accident, or perhaps there is road construction and a detour. The miles and miles of road can seem to go on and on forever. However, eventually you come to the last stretch of your journey. How the expectation of finally reaching the destination mounts! The goal is almost in sight.

God has given us a promise that we will see His kingdom some day if we keep on with our spiritual journey. We want to plan, prepare for, and anticipate that moment of arrival. Yet, sometimes it seems that the land is “very far off.” Our spiritual journey may seem long and lonely, and as if it will go on forever. Perhaps trials come that appear to be unexpected delays or detours, and the destination of Heaven seems farther away than ever. At times, situations may seem like roadblocks, and we feel as if we are not progressing at all toward our goal.

Take heart, we are in the last miles of our journey! The end times are upon us and the goal is within view. We shall see the King in His beauty and behold the place that He has prepared for us! Hold onto the promise and live each day as if His coming were today. It will be worth every mile of the trip.

### BACKGROUND

Often Biblical prophecy had dual meanings, and this chapter is an example. Many commentators

consider the prophecy to reference Sennacherib’s failed attempt to lay siege to Jerusalem and Assyria’s subsequent destruction about 700 B.C. (see 2 Kings 18:19 and 2 Chronicles 32). Although King Hezekiah would pay tribute to Sennacherib, Assyria would break their promise and require Judah to surrender unconditionally.

The righteous few in Judah would pray; God would hear them and miraculously send deliverance—the angel of the Lord would kill 185,000 of the Assyrian army in one night (2 Kings 19:35). However, the land would be desolate. Highways would be deserted. Lebanon, Sharon, Bashan, and Carmel—areas that had been especially fertile—would be destroyed.

This prophecy could also look forward to the end times and the rise and fall of the Antichrist, who will certainly deal treacherously. He will make a covenant with Israel and then will break it (see Daniel 9:27). At that time, the destruction of the Jewish people and of the land of Israel will be so horrible that those who are left will cry out for deliverance. The armies that invade will cover the land like locusts, and the highways will “lie waste.” Yet God will send fiery judgment upon Satan and his army.

In the last verses of the chapter, Isaiah looked ahead to the Millennium when peace will cover the earth and blessings will be abundant. A national money manager (receiver) and a security adviser (he that counted the towers) will not be needed. Enemies with a foreign language will not terrorize (verse 19), and their ships will be plundered (verse 23). Jesus Christ, the Messiah, will be the Judge, Lawgiver, King, and Deliverer. He will supply all of Israel’s needs.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging

- E. Prophecies related to unbelievers in Israel and Judah
  - 4. Woe against Assyria (33:1-24)
    - a. The destruction of Assyria (33:1)
    - b. The cry of the remnant (33:2-6)
    - c. The devastation of the land (33:7-9)
    - d. The declaration of Assyria’s destruction (33:10-12)
    - e. The terror of the ungodly (33:13-16)
    - f. The deliverance of the remnant (33:17-24)



## A CLOSER LOOK

1. According to the text, who will “dwell on high”?

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**2.** Put the first verse of the chapter into your own words. What do you think this indicates about those who are “treacherous”?

[illegible]

**3.** What events in the world today might indicate we are close to the end of the journey and will soon see “the king in his beauty”?

[illegible]

## CONCLUSION

The trip may be long, but the destination is worth the effort. God's promises are sure, and if we continue to serve Him, we will reach Heaven. It may be sooner than we think!

## NOTES

[illegible]



### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter.” (Isaiah 34:1, 2)**

“Fire! Fire! Pop’s shed is on fire!” I’ll never forget that day for as long as I live, not only from the lesson learned, but also because of the judgment meted out by my dad. Earlier that hot August afternoon, as my younger sister and I had headed down to the shed, my dad had called out after us, “Don’t go setting any fires in the stove!” Now, you might think that an odd statement given the heat of the day, but my dad had good reason to give that warning. As a child, I had loved playing with fire. I remember being fascinated with watching the flames dance—the fact that those flames were on the basement floor of our house didn’t dawn on me! Having spent much time with my dad, he knew me and the potential temptation that existed in my grandpa’s shed.

While I watched from the front porch of the house, my dad and grandpa put out the fire in the shed. Afterward, as my dad walked up across the lawn, I knew I was in trouble. Despite my pleadings, and crying, “I’m sorry,” I received proper discipline and a just reward for my actions that day. I could have burned down the shed and caused the loss of all of my grandpa’s tools. Or worse, my sister and I could have been badly burned or killed. My dad was completely justified in administering discipline. I knew that my dad loved me, and looking back, I know he had no choice but to discipline me. I needed to understand that what I did was foolishly dangerous and that I should never do it again. That has been almost twenty-five years ago, but I’ve never again set a fire outside of prescribed burning areas.

Our loving heavenly Father, who is slow to anger and of great mercy, only administers just judgments. As this chapter demonstrates, He provides plenty of warning before pouring out His wrath. Through the prophet Isaiah, God provided notice about future judgment to come upon the earth. Like a father speaking to his children, God warned all the nations of the earth about the destruction to be visited upon the people who reject Him and turn from righteousness. Although the judgment Isaiah described was

severe, the warning that God gave was more than adequate. Isaiah, and God Himself, wanted the people of his time to hear and hearken—to turn and change their ways.

God has given ample warnings to the people of our generation also. Rather than risk experiencing the hand of God in judgment, let us heed the admonition today and live within the clearly defined parameters of holy living. As we do, others can recognize the benefits of following God’s Word and hopefully desire to follow Him too.

### BACKGROUND

Idumea (Edom) shared a common lineage with Israel, and was home to the Edomites. (These were the people who had refused passage to the Children of Israel during their wilderness wanderings.) Jacob was the patriarch of the Children of Israel, while the Edomites were descendants of Jacob’s twin brother, Esau. The descendants of Esau had always been bitter enemies of the Children of Israel.

Although the judgments noted in this chapter specifically target the nation of Edom, many Bible scholars feel that the judgments described here are of a much broader scope. Edom may be representative of the Gentile nations as a whole, and the cataclysmic events described may be the judgment of the Great Tribulation.

Chapters 34 and 35 provide contrasting views of the final destiny of the wicked and the righteous. They make up one prophecy of Isaiah; chapter 34 speaks of final judgment while chapter 35 speaks of final redemption.

The animals described in the second part of the chapter are all scavengers. Unicorns (verse 7) could be translated “wild oxen,” cormorants and bitterns (verse 11) are pelicans and heron, respectively. Dragons (verse 13) could be translated as jackals, and satyrs (verse 14) as “shaggy goats.” Isaiah was drawing a picture of a desolate land only inhabited by wild beasts.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

Hannah’s Bible Outlines  
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- II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging
  - F. Prophecies relating to world destruction and blessing
    - 1. The destruction of world power (34:1-17)
      - a. The description of the destruction (34:1-7)

- b. The devastation of the destruction (34:8-15)
- c. The divine promise of Israel's possession (34:16-17)

## A CLOSER LOOK

**1. Who was called to listen to Isaiah's prophecy of judgment, and with whom was the Lord angry?**

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**2.** Why do you think God described the destruction of Edom in such graphic terms?

[illegible]

**3.** How does God's warning in Isaiah 34 apply to us today?

[illegible]

## CONCLUSION

Many warnings concerning the coming judgment of God are contained in both the Old and New Testaments. Those who have knowledge of these warnings are “without excuse.” Let us be wise and heed God’s warnings.

## NOTES

[illegible]



### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.” (Isaiah 35:1)**

Years ago, I drove through the Anza-Borrego Desert in the southeastern corner of California. As the largest desert state park in the United States, the park covers more than 600,000 acres. It is framed by many rugged mountain ranges, and the more than 500 miles of roads in the park wind through rocky hills, deep sand, canyons, and desert badlands.

In the midst of one desolate patch of terrain, I was amazed to see a tall cactus ablaze in lovely pink blooms. Although it had been one hundred degrees that day and for many previous days, the cactus looked healthy. Given its desert location, it had clearly also been subjected to the environmental stresses of low and unpredictable precipitation, harsh winds, and low nutrient availability. Still, the cactus was blossoming. In fact, it almost seemed to be rejoicing in the Lord with its outstretched arms, bursting with flowers, reaching up toward the heavens.

In our focus verse, the prophet Isaiah spoke of the Millennial Kingdom of the coming Messiah. At that time, the climate of wrath, fury, judgment and destruction which will have prevailed during the Tribulation will be reversed, and the land and the people dwelling in it will be blessed. What a beautiful picture of the final Kingdom in which God will reign supreme!

The promise in this verse also holds a message for us today. We may look around us and see “desolate terrain.” Perhaps the road we travel seems rugged, and our surroundings harsh. It may be that the canyons ahead look deep and fearsome. Or we may feel that we are standing alone in a solitary place. Whatever our circumstances, if we are serving the Lord and following His leading, we can blossom like the desert cactus. We can project loveliness in any environment. Our beauty, which stems from being rooted deeply in God’s love, will flourish. We too will rejoice like the desert the prophet Isaiah spoke about!

### BACKGROUND

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Chapters 34 and 35 provide contrasting views of the final destiny of the wicked and the righteous. They make up one prophecy of Isaiah; chapter 34 speaks of final judgment while chapter 35 speaks of final redemption. After the horrific devastation predicted in

chapter 34, the prophet turns to a message of hope for the future.

The remnant are comforted with the thought that God would one day subdue their enemies and liberate the people. Isaiah’s prophecy also contains a message to the redeemed through the ages concerning the Millennial Kingdom, a time when the Prince of Peace will rule and reign on the earth. This hope comforts the hearts of God’s people in the midst of oppression.

The reference to the blooming desert pointed to the dramatic transformation that will take place when the Lord establishes His Millennial Kingdom. Sin will be done away with. The earth will be freed from the curse. Nature will exist in the splendor God originally endowed, and creation itself will rejoice in the Lord. The locations listed in verse 2—Sharon, Carmel, and Lebanon—were three of the most resplendent places in the world, and yet even they would not compare with the grandeur of God’s new Kingdom.

In verses 3-4, an exhortation was given to the weak and sad-hearted. They were to be encouraged, because the Lord had promised to one day take vengeance on their enemies, and recompense the sorrows of the redeemed. They were to look forward to the Messiah’s Kingdom, when there will be an end to physical infirmities.

Isaiah also mentioned that, in the Millennial Kingdom, there will be a highway called “The Way of Holiness.” On this road the redeemed will travel annually to Jerusalem, singing praises to the Lord. It will be a time of peace and joy for the righteous. Those who have mourned will at last be comforted. Isaiah’s message must have given great comfort to the Jews who were at that time experiencing tribulation and dark times. Isaiah pointed to the future time of the Messiah’s Kingdom when all roads will be safe to travel, and there will be no threat from enemies. In that day, there will be no fear, and God’s people will experience endless peace, joy, and blessing.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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- II. The message of condemnation: the Holy One of Israel provoked, rebuking and judging
  - F. Prophecies relating to world destruction and blessing
    - 2. The advent of Messiah’s Kingdom (35:1-10)
      - a. The renewal of physical blessings (35:1-7)
      - b. The return of the remnant (35:8-10)

## A CLOSER LOOK

**1. What name is given to the highway mentioned in this chapter?**

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## 2. What kind of blessings will the righteous enjoy in the Millennial Kingdom?

[illegible]

**3.** How does the promise of future restoration encourage you to endure present trials?

[illegible]

## CONCLUSION

Although we may currently face tribulations and sufferings in our daily Christian walks, we can stand out for the Lord and flourish like a rose in the desert. We can also eagerly anticipate the Millennial Reign of Christ, when peace will reign and sorrows will be no more.

## NOTES

[illegible]



### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“Who are they among all the gods of these lands, that have delivered their land out of my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?” (Isaiah 36:20)**

During my first year in college, I took a sociology class. One afternoon in the middle of fall term, I went to class and our professor, a middle-aged woman who had taught at the university for years, announced that we were going to depart from our scheduled lecture. Instead, we could put our notes away and simply absorb her dissertation.

This was a welcome break for me, and I leaned back in my chair, relaxing as she began. Her words were calm and laced with humor. She was speaking of urban myths and some examples she gave were preposterous! I floated along with the rest of the class as she started to compare myths to religion, and then challenge the “myths” about witchcraft.

“Many ignorant people claim,” she said in her soft voice, “that witchcraft is evil and brings death.” Before I could comprehend the significance of her speech, she had woven words together that questioned every moral law established by God. And she had done so very persuasively.

There will come a time in every person’s life when he or she will face acute spiritual challenge. I faced it that afternoon in college, confronted with a clever, deceptive lecturer. Often during my years there professors and students called Christianity evil.

Satan will try to tempt us to stop serving God, as he did to the Jews in Hezekiah’s kingdom. Imagine being one of the men standing along the wall of defense, listening to an ambassador from a powerful kingdom gloat on the glories of his kingdom, mock the faithfulness of God, and offer a generous reward for submission. The formidable ambassador challenges the wisdom of your king, and reverently looks to the sky and proclaims that God has sent him to destroy your land. No one can defeat his army, so why not submit?

Undoubtedly, Satan has stood outside our hearts and spoken the essence of these words. What we feel in moments such as these can be fear, doubt, and insecurity. What if everything we have known as true and good is, in fact, false? Satan coaxes us with warm words like those that he spoke through the ambassador of Assyria. How will we respond?

God has indicated in His Word that we are in a battle, and there will be moments of intense fighting to

stay on His side. Hold on to truth and never let it slip, even in times of insecurity. God will prove faithful until the end.

### BACKGROUND

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This chapter begins the historical section of the Book of Isaiah. (A parallel history of these events occurs in 2 Kings 18:13 through 20:18 and 2 Chronicles 32.) Up to this point, the prophet Isaiah had written as a prophet. The first half of the book predicted that darkness and destruction would come to the nations who had turned from God. Mingled in these judgments were promises of hope: the promise of Judah’s defeat of its enemy, and the coming Messiah.

The story in this text was inserted for several reasons. Many of Isaiah’s prophecies leading up to this chapter referred to this very event—when Assyria would invade Judah and miraculously be defeated. This account confirmed the fulfillment of these prophecies.

Secondly, the account served as an example of the message Isaiah had preached throughout the first half of the book: Judah would not fall into the hand of the enemy if it restored its relationship with God. Furthermore, the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy confirmed that other prophecies would be accomplished later.

The Assyrians were convinced that they were invincible and that the God of Israel was no different from any of the other gods they had overcome on their westward march. After the fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C., Judah lived under the constant threat of Assyria. Hezekiah finally rebelled against Assyria, and when Sennacherib threatened to attack, Hezekiah tried to bribe him with tribute. Sennacherib accepted the treasures, using them to beautify his capital city, Nineveh; but the Assyrians broke their treaty with Judah in 701 B.C., during the fourteenth year of Hezekiah’s reign.

The Assyrians advanced westward, attacking swiftly down the Mediterranean coast. Lachish was one town they defeated. It was about thirty miles southwest of Jerusalem and became a staging area for attacks on a number of other towns. From Lachish, Sennacherib sent a large army against Jerusalem to besiege it and to demand its surrender.

The Assyrian commander, Rabshakeh, stopped at the aqueduct of the upper pool, on the road to the fuller’s field. Besides setting the stage geographically, this information has theological significance. This was the very place where Isaiah had confronted Ahaz, Hezekiah’s father. Ahaz had refused to trust the Lord



and instead made a treaty with Assyria. Now the Assyrians were ready to take Jerusalem and Hezekiah was faced with the same message of deliverance from the same man of God. The setting heightened the significance as to whether Hezekiah would respond positively to God's promise.

According to 2 Kings 18:17, Sennacherib sent three of his most important officers to arrange for Hezekiah's surrender of the city. The ambassadors from Assyria claimed that Hezekiah insulted God by tearing down his altars in the hills and making the people worship only in Jerusalem. Hezekiah's reform only sought to eliminate idol worship, however, which occurred mainly in the hills.

The Syrian language, Aramaic, was the international language at this time. The men of Judah claimed Hebrew as solely their own since the division of Israel, as if they were now the only representatives of the twelve Hebrew tribes.

The Assyrians hoped to convince the people of Judah to surrender without fighting. They appealed to Jerusalem, a starving city under siege, by offering them plenty of food and land if they surrendered. The Assyrian management of conquered nations was to capture or kill the inhabitants and then to move their own people into the recently conquered area. This policy provided manpower for their armies and prevented revolts in conquered territories.

Judah was offered promises from opposing entities—the promise of protection from the Assyrians for surrender, and the promise of God through Isaiah that the Assyrians would be defeated. It was a significant choice of whom to trust, the essence of the object lesson Isaiah tried to teach.

## AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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### III. The historical interlude: The Holy One of Israel delivering from Assyria

- A. The invasion of Sennacherib
  - 1. The invasion of Judea (36:1-3)
  - 2. The embassy from Sennacherib (36:4-22)
    - a. The words of Rabshakeh to Eliakim (36:4-10)
    - b. The request of Eliakim to Rabshakeh (36:11-12)
    - c. The words of Rabshakeh to the people (36:13-20)
    - d. The report to Hezekiah (36:21-22)

## A CLOSER LOOK

1. Why didn't the people on the wall of Jerusalem reply to the Assyrian when he spoke to them?

2. What was the Assyrian field commander's purpose in approaching the city ahead of the army?

3. Why would it be useful for an enemy to undermine your confidence in your leaders?

4. What can you do in the coming week to deepen your understanding of the character of God so that you will not be shaken by the lies of the enemy?

## CONCLUSION

Continually seek God and trust His promises. Nothing the enemy sends can deceive us if we stay in communication with God.

## NOTES



### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up unto the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.” (Isaiah 37:14)**

Some months ago, my wife was having a physical problem. When she went in to have the situation checked out, her doctor recommended that she see another doctor right away. It was almost quitting time, but that doctor said, “I will keep my staff here; have her come right over.” The next morning we got a phone call. They wanted my wife to go see a cancer specialist. Before that specialist even checked her, he said, “You have cancer.” He said they could do immediate surgery but he was not sure it would take care of the problem. They ran some more tests.

All the next day we were waiting to get those test results back. Every time the phone rang our hearts pounded. What would the news be? The people of God in our church called a prayer meeting that evening at the church, and we went to the prayer meeting. The saints gathered around my wife and prayed—like Hezekiah of old, we brought the matter before the Lord. And God met us that night! The two of us went home totally different from the way we were when we arrived. We still did not know what the doctor would tell us when the call came, but the Lord lifted the load when we prayed. Whatever happened, we knew that God was in control.

When the call did come, the message from the doctor was that my wife did *not* have cancer. The indicators had all suggested otherwise, but we put our trust in God and He answered. God can do that! It pays to live in close communion with God, so that you can get a prayer through when a crisis comes.

What is your need today? You can do the same as Hezekiah did and God will answer your prayer as well! Look to Him, yield yourself to Him, and wait to see what He will do with your situation. He will not fail!

### BACKGROUND

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In the previous chapter, Rabshakeh had intimidated the people of Judah by telling them that if they did not surrender to the king of Assyria, they would be destroyed like the other nations around them. When Hezekiah heard about Rabshakeh’s threats, he humbled himself before the Lord and sent messengers to Isaiah asking for God’s help. This appeal to Isaiah

during a time of crisis portrayed the importance of the prophet’s position in Judah at that time.

Hezekiah asked Isaiah to intercede with God to save the remnant of Israel. The kingdom of Israel (ten tribes) had already been taken captive, and only the two tribes of the kingdom of Judah remained free. Isaiah reassured Hezekiah that the king of Assyria would not prevail against Judah.

At this time, Ethiopia was a district of Egypt, and the king, Tirhakah, was one of Hezekiah’s allies against Assyria. When Sennacherib heard that Tirhakah was on his way to make war with Assyria, he was determined to conquer Jerusalem before Tirhakah arrived. Sennacherib sent messengers directly to Hezekiah. (In contrast, Rabshakeh had addressed the general population.) He reminded Hezekiah of his conquests and pointed out that none of the gods of these nations had been able to deliver them.

When Hezekiah received Sennacherib’s letter, he took it directly to the house of the Lord. The letter was in scroll form and Hezekiah unrolled it before the Lord and began to make intercession. He acknowledged that God alone was the Creator of all things, and that the gods of these other nations mentioned in Sennacherib’s letter were created by men and could not prevent the Assyrians from conquering them. Hezekiah indicated that God’s reputation was on the line, and the salvation of Judah would prove that He alone was God.

Isaiah told Hezekiah that because he had prayed to God and not relied on his own strength, God would fight against Assyria and Judah would be spared.

Because of Sennacherib’s arrogance and rage against the God of Judah, God said he would put a hook in Sennacherib’s nose and a bridle in his lips. A common way of leading captives and humiliating them was to escort them by a cord attached to a ring which went through the upper or lower lip and nose.

In verse 30, God told Hezekiah that though Judah had been ravaged by the Assyrians for two years and food was scarce, in the third year they would sow and reap and have plenty of food. God assured Hezekiah that the Assyrian army would not enter the city of Jerusalem or even shoot an arrow. When the Assyrian army was camped outside of Judah, God sent an angel to smite them, killing a total of 185,000 men, a major part of Sennacherib’s army. Sennacherib was with another part of his army in Egypt, south of Palestine. When he heard about the destruction of his army, combined with the impending invasion by Tirhakah of Ethiopia, he had no choice but to retreat to Nineveh.

A parallel of this chapter is found in 2 Kings 19.

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- ## A CLOSER LOOK

- 2.** Why do you think God used Sennacherib as an instrument to destroy the other nations around Judah, including the nation of Israel?

## NOTES



### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it: I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul.” (Isaiah 38:15)**

Can you think of a time in your life when God’s goodness or provision has left you speechless? At one point in our married life, my husband and I were both unemployed. The situation was desperate and we had very little food. One night, after searching through the cupboards, I threw the only things we had left into a frying pan in an attempt to make some dinner. However, even my husband—who is an easy one to please—couldn’t force himself to eat the end result! We were in a bad spot.

It was mid-week and we went to prayer meeting at the little church where we worshiped. As we headed back to our car afterward, you can imagine our surprise and delight when we saw that the entire back seat was filled with bags of groceries! We were literally speechless! God had clearly placed us on someone’s heart. There was no note from our benefactor, no name of anyone we could thank, but we certainly had a heart full of praise to God for His goodness.

Our focus verse starts by Hezekiah asking, “What shall I say?” Hezekiah found himself in a situation where he struggled for words when he thought about the goodness of God. Though he had been “sick unto death” (verse 1) God had heard his desperate prayer and had granted him fifteen additional years of life. In addition, He promised to release the Children of Israel from their bondage under Assyria. A miraculous sign was given as a confirmation of these promises of deliverance: the sun went back by ten degrees. In response to the promises, Hezekiah praised God by writing a poetic song of praise to the Lord.

When God moves in our lives, we stand in awe. We may feel like asking, “What can I say to thank God? How can mere words express what I feel?” Although we might not be poetic by nature, we can all praise God for His goodness. We do not need to be eloquent; the Bible tells us to simply “make a joyful noise” unto the Lord (see Psalm 100:1). When God answers prayer for us, in matters large or small, let us be sure to lift our voices in praise and thanksgiving to Him for His goodness! God loves to hear our praises.

### BACKGROUND

Historians believe that chapter 38 actually belongs before chapter 36 chronologically, because of its

reference to the Children of Israel’s captivity by Babylon. Parallel passages are found in 2 Kings 20:1-21, and 2 Chronicles 32:24-33.

Following Isaiah’s announcement that Hezekiah was going to die from his ailment, Hezekiah asked God for an extension of his days so he could continue to serve God and complete the restoration of the nation. While he was concerned about his own life, he also had a burden for the people he led.

Hezekiah reminded God that he had walked before Him in truth, and with a “perfect heart,” one of integrity. The Hebrew word *shalem*, translated *perfect*, means “complete” or “whole.” Thus, the king was reminding God that he had served Him with a whole, or morally healthy, heart.

In response to Hezekiah’s brief prayer, God answered very quickly, and granted him fifteen additional years of life. As a sign of God’s promise to Hezekiah, God turned the clock back ten degrees, or approximately twenty minutes.<sup>1</sup> The phrase “shadow of the degrees” could also be translated “the shadow of the steps.” It is possible that the sundial was a pillar whose shadow marked the hours on a set of stairs.

Historians are unsure as to the physical alterations God made—whether the return of the sun by ten degrees was caused by a reverse in the earth’s rotation or by some other geophysical means. However, there can be no doubt that a supernatural miracle was involved in this event.

Although the text does not indicate precisely what was wrong with Hezekiah, there is reference to *shechiyn*, or a “boil” (the same word was used in reference to the plagues of Egypt), and the use of figs—possibly as a medicinal poultice—for healing. Even this is miraculous: boils are caused by a staph infection, which would have been extremely difficult to combat without modern-day antibiotics.

The events recorded in this passage caused Hezekiah to have a new appreciation for the power of prayer (verses 13-14) and for opportunities for serving God (verses 15-20).

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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III. The historical interlude: The Holy One of Israel delivering from Assyria

B. The extension of Hezekiah’s life (38:1-22)

1. Hezekiah’s sickness (38:1)
2. Hezekiah’s prayer (38:2-3)
3. Hezekiah’s increase (38:4-8)
4. Hezekiah’s thankfulness (38:9-20)
5. Hezekiah’s instruction (38:21-22)

## A CLOSER LOOK

**1. What promises did God make to Hezekiah?**

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**2.** In verse 15, Hezekiah asked, “What shall I say . . .” How do you think he felt, and why?

[illegible]

**3.** What are some ways we can show our gratitude to God for His goodness?

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## CONCLUSION

The next time God moves on your behalf, whether in matters large or relatively small, lift your heart and voice in praise. Let's reflect on His goodness today!

## NOTES

[illegible]





### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“And Hezekiah was glad of them, and shewed them the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not.” (Isaiah 39:2)**

The Greek writer Aesop was famous for the many fables he wrote to teach moral lessons. “The Fox and the Crow” was one of such stories.

In the story, the crow stole a bite of meat and hurriedly flew off to the safety of a tree. The fox witnessed this event and wanted the meat for himself. Unable to reach the crow that was high up in the tree, the fox appealed to the pride of the winged fellow. He called out to the crow, deceitfully extolling her shape as beautiful and her complexion as wonderful. He lamented that if only the crow’s voice were equal to her beauty, she would have been considered the queen of birds!

The crow, eager to show that her voice was equally beautiful as her shape and that she deserved to be considered the queen of birds, gave out a loud caw. As she did so, the meat she had guarded so securely dropped from her mouth. The fox quickly seized the meat and triumphantly said to the crow: “My good crow, your voice is right enough, but your wit is wanting.”

While a humorous tale, this fable does accurately portray a common weakness among men: that of pride. In today’s text, Hezekiah’s display of his treasures was done in vanity and pride, and was an action the king would live to regret. When Isaiah learned what had happened, he made a pronouncement from the Lord: all of the treasures would be carried away to Babylon. He further revealed that even the king’s descendants would be taken away to serve as eunuchs in the royal courts of Babylon.

Pride is one tool the devil often employs in his attempts to trip up man. The devil is the prince of pride. He endeavors to convince us that we have the right, experience, or position which entitles us to act contrary to God’s laws of righteousness. As he did in the Garden of Eden, he suggests that we do not need to be subject to every word that God says. What a fatal error it is to believe his lies!

Hezekiah’s self-satisfied display of his earthly wealth brought consequences, and so will succumbing

to the snare of pride in our day. We must be on guard against the devil’s wiles, and remember that all we are or ever hope to be is totally through God’s grace. When we keep that thought foremost in our minds, the devil will not be able to trip or overcome us!

### BACKGROUND

King Hezekiah had miraculously survived a deadly illness. The miracle of his survival was a testimony to the power of God. News of his spectacular healing spread, and the people of Babylon were among those who heard about his great recovery (2 Kings 20:12). Because Hezekiah was a God-fearing and influential king in the region, the king of Babylon sent emissaries with gifts to rejoice with him. On the surface, the goodwill gesture from Babylon seemed harmless and friendly. However, it led to Hezekiah’s foolish and prideful mistake.

Hezekiah’s error was two-fold. First, he acted as the sole owner of the kingdom that God entrusted to him, instead of as a steward. Secondly, he laid aside responsible precaution, seemingly thinking that he knew the situation well enough to make this judgment call.

Babylon would later be the dominant power of the region who, in a determined quest for power and wealth, would become a bitter enemy of Judah. The wealth of Judah and its secret locations were the object of Assyria’s aggression. Hezekiah jeopardized himself and his people when he flung open the national treasury to entertain ambassadors of a rogue nation.

The judgment of God quickly followed Hezekiah’s foolish action. In typical prophetic fashion, Isaiah asked questions before he made his pronouncement. He inquired what the men said and what they had seen. Upon learning that the men were from Babylon and that they had seen all of the national treasures, the prophet was compelled to announce the word of the Lord: that all of these treasures would be carried away to Babylon, and that Hezekiah’s sons would serve in the Babylonian palace. His words were a prophecy of what was sure to come rather than a statement of God’s punishment or curse.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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- III. The historical interlude: The Holy One of Israel delivering from Assyria
  - C. The thoughtlessness of Hezekiah (39:1-8)
    - 1. The inspection of the Babylonian embassy (39:1-2)
    - 2. The inquisition of Isaiah (39:3-4)
    - 3. The prediction of Isaiah (39:5-8)



## A CLOSER LOOK

**1. Why did the king of Babylon send Hezekiah a gift?**

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**2.** Why do you think King Hezekiah showed the treasures of his kingdom to his foes?

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**3.** What could have made King Hezekiah lax in his spirit? What lesson can we learn from this?

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## CONCLUSION

Our continued safety and victory lie in walking humbly with God. We must guard against pride in all its forms.

## NOTES

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” (Isaiah 40:31)**

I’m in a rush! I’m late! There is bumper-to-bumper traffic around me and we are not even moving—there must be an accident ahead. Well, I’ll just have to sit here. I glance at my watch. Okay—while I’m sitting, I can think about what comes next. My body may be sitting still but my mind is still racing along full speed ahead. Then my thoughts are captured by a song on the radio. Its words remind me, “They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” Hmmm, “They that wait . . .” Those words are food for thought.

As I ponder the message of that song, it occurs to me that this is a promise from God. The Bible is full of such wonderful promises—all of which I believe to be one hundred percent true. As I examine this particular promise, I wonder how it is possible to run and not be weary, or to walk and not faint. At this particular moment, my feet are aching, my head is throbbing, and actually, I’m not sure I have the energy to fly anywhere! Perhaps you can relate.

Taking a step back from the immediate situation, I am able to get a clearer perspective of this promise God has given. I realize that it is not meant necessarily just in physical terms but also relates to our spiritual stamina. What does it mean to “wait upon the LORD”? The Hebrew word translated *wait* means “to expect, patiently tarry.” This suggests having an active expectation of God, and then patiently tarrying as He works in His way and time. We have a part in this and so does God, so we are not so much waiting *on* God, as waiting *with* God. We can both hope and quietly wait as the Lord directs our steps.

When we wait with the Lord, we find that our hearts are strengthened. We are connected to Him, and He will help us progress in our walk and will keep us strong. He knows what is best for our lives and His timing is perfect. His benefits are beyond measure—yet available to us if we simply wait with Him!

### BACKGROUND

Chapter 40 begins what is referred to as the “Book of Comfort” or “Words of Comfort.” As with many writings of the prophets, this passage has a dual

purpose: it is one of encouragement for the Children of Israel, but also a message of encouragement for future generations.

This chapter is directed toward “my people,” as stated in the first verse. The Hebrew word translated as *people* was ‘*amiy*, meaning those who have entered into a covenant relationship with God.

The beginning of this chapter has four messages for the needy nation of Israel. Through Isaiah, God gave a message of pardon (verses 1-2), a message of help (verses 3-5), a message of promise that God’s Word would stand forever (verses 6-8), and a message of good tidings and peace (verses 9-11).

In verse 11, God is compared to a shepherd. A shepherd is strong, caring for the most powerless animals. Here, as in other places throughout the Bible, word pictures are used to help the people understand the concept.

The terms *measured*, *meted out*, *comprehended* and *weighed*, mentioned in verse 12, all have different meanings and words of origination, and are not simply different ways to say the same thing. Isaiah was trying to help Israel realize that God Himself was immeasurable, and that His creation was magnificent and intricate. He was and is the only One who can measure it or sustain it.

Isaiah artfully used rhetorical questions in this chapter to bring into clear view the greatness of the one true God. There is nothing that can compare to His likeness. Even Lebanon, considered to be the great forest, did not have enough wood or animals to create a burnt offering worthy to be offered to God.

Verse 22 gives an early awareness of the earth’s shape as a sphere and not flat as some once supposed.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

Hannah’s Bible Outlines  
Used by permission per WORDsearch

- IV. The message of consolation: The Holy One of Israel comforting, redeeming and enriching
  - A. The promise of deliverance (comfort)
    - 1. The comfort of Israel (40:1-31)
      - a. The call to comfort (40:1-11)
        - (1) The advent of comfort (40:1-2)
        - (2) The advent of the comforter (40:3-11)
      - b. The character of the comforter (40:12-26)
        - (1) His greatness (40:12-17)
        - (2) His incomparableness (40:18-26)
      - c. The comforter offered to Israel (40:27-31)

## A CLOSER LOOK

**1. What two statements in this chapter give a picture of the magnitude of God?**

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**2.** Why do you think God instructed Isaiah to speak in a loving and gentle manner in this chapter?

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**3.** What are ways that we can better utilize the strength that God offers?

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## CONCLUSION

Are you waiting with God today? If so, you can trust Him to have every moment of your day under His control, and He can give you the strength for anything that faces you.

## NOTES

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.” (Isaiah 41:17,18)**

On a number of occasions when I have mentioned to those from out-of-state that I live in Oregon, they immediately started talking about rain. What a reputation my state has! Frequent rain is certainly associated with the Oregon coast, and to a lesser extent, the Willamette Valley. However, it comes as a surprise to most people to learn that more than half of the land in Oregon is semi-desert. This fact was forcibly illustrated to us as we returned from vacation via Highway 140 along the Nevada/Oregon border. The landscape was bone dry.

Then we approached the tiny farming community of Adel, Oregon, and what a difference we saw! Instead of dry sagebrush, we were surrounded by a rich growth of healthy hay fields. Everything was green and lush. Numerous cattle were grazing in the fields, while birds were evident around the ponds and marshy areas. The difference was the presence of water—and what a difference that made!

Our key verse references water in a spiritual sense. Many people have spent a lifetime in the desert wastelands of sin, looking for peace and satisfaction. Their souls are barren and unhappy. To them, God promises the waters of salvation if they will only turn to Him and seek Him with all their hearts. The joy, comfort, and blessings that He gives make a greater contrast in a life than water does in the desert.

These verses are a promise to sincere Christians as well. Sometimes, through no fault of our own, we find ourselves going through a spiritual “dry spell.” It may seem that our souls have only sagebrush in them. Take heart! These verses promise that when we, the poor and needy, diligently seek Him, He will be pleased to pour out His life-giving water upon us. By trusting in His promises during the dry times, our faith will be strengthened, and we will cherish His blessings even more than we did before.

### BACKGROUND

Isaiah 41 begins by foretelling how God would one day raise up King Cyrus II (who would live some

150 years in the future) to punish various idolatrous nations. The “islands” spoken of in this chapter refer to lands remote from Judea, probably including the islands of the Mediterranean and possibly even the continent of Europe. Before Cyrus, these heathen lands would be as “dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow.” God pointed out that He “the first, and with the last” would be the One responsible for this, and no one would be able to stand against Him.

Verses 6 and 7 refer to the heathen coalition, and their craftsmen who were working frantically to prepare their idols so that they might forestall the promised retribution of God. This, of course, would all be to no avail, for idols made by man’s hand are vanity.

Israel was not to fear Cyrus, however. As noted in verses 8 through 14, their nation had been expressly called by God to be His servant and to fulfill the promise, made so many years before to Abraham, of a coming Messiah. However, these verses were not for Israel alone. Anyone who has yielded his life to Christ can claim these promises on a personal basis. God’s spiritual children have nothing to fear, and should not be dismayed when difficulties come into their lives. God promised to “strengthen,” “help,” and “uphold.” In verses 15 and 16, God went a step further and promised that He would make His people effective in their spiritual battles.

Verses 21-29 complete God’s dialogue with those who trusted in idols. In effect, He was saying, “If your idols are so strong, then what have they accomplished in comparison to My mighty works?” The answer should have been obvious to these people—nothing!

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

Hannah's Bible Outlines  
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- IV. The message of consolation: The Holy One of Israel comforting, redeeming and enriching
  - A. The promise of deliverance (comfort)
    - 2. The condemnation of idolatry (41:1-29)
      - a. The disgust for idolatry (41:1-7)
        - (1) The call to judgment (41:1)
        - (2) The fact of God’s omnipotence (41:2-4)
        - (3) The fear of idolaters (41:5-7)
      - b. The encouragement of God’s chosen (41:8-20)
        - (1) Israel’s choice by God (41:8-10)
        - (2) Israel’s deliverance from her enemies (41:11-16)
        - (3) Israel’s blessing by God (41:17-20)

- c. The challenge to the idolaters (41:21-29)
  - (1) The idol's inability to predict the future (41:21-24)
  - (2) God's ability to tell the future (41:25-29)

## A CLOSER LOOK

1. What are four of the actions God promised to take in order to help these people?

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2. Much of this chapter warns people to fear the Lord, while other verses offer tender promises of mercy and deliverance. Explain how these diverse concepts fit together.

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3. In 21<sup>st</sup> century North America, literal "idols" are not common. Nevertheless, certain types of things have taken on the effect of idols to many people. Name some of these things.

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4. Recall a time when you were going through a spiritual hard place, and God sent you a mighty deliverance. How can remembering and sharing such incidents help you?

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## CONCLUSION

If your soul seems dry, God can give you springs of His living water today.

## NOTES

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth.” (Isaiah 42:10)**

Have you ever been in a church service when the song leader called a song you didn’t know? Maybe it was introduced as a “new song” for the congregation to learn. Remember how unsure you initially felt? Often as I have learned the words and the tune of a new song, it has “clicked” with me, and I began to enjoy singing it. Sometimes for many days afterward I would catch myself humming the tune or singing some of the words as I went about my business.

In our text today we are encouraged to sing to the Lord a new song. Isaiah was prophesying about the coming Savior and His many characteristics such as His faithfulness and divine justice, and about Him being the healer of mankind. A new covenant was to be given, and the Gospel would be given to the Gentiles.

All of these allusions were meant to spark the obvious response—a new song welling up from within the hearts of the redeemed. Isaiah was calling upon all people to celebrate the divine mercy that was going to provide a Redeemer. The mercy was going to be so great that it *demand*ed a new song!

The soul which has been born again can relate to the new song Isaiah was calling for. Christians can sing the song of the redeemed, one that a sinner cannot sing. Even the angels cannot sing this song! Our new song is one of thanksgiving to God for His mercy and grace which has been extended to us through the death and resurrection of Jesus, and His forgiveness of our sins.

Perhaps you are not a singer. Then you can make a joyful noise unto the Lord. Why not try singing to the Lord in your private devotions? An old Gospel song can make a new song of thanksgiving well up in your heart. Even if the current circumstances in your life do not necessarily inspire singing, you might be surprised at what a song of thanksgiving can do in your soul.

### BACKGROUND

This chapter is a continuation of the same general subject which was presented in the two previous chapters. The purpose was to encourage Israel to put their confidence in God, and to assure them of their eventual deliverance.

The first words of the chapter are, “Behold my servant . . .” Verses 1-17 are the first of Isaiah’s four “Servant Songs,” referring to the promised Messiah.

This Messiah, upon whom God had placed His Spirit, was also called the Servant. These verses describe the character of the Messiah, a description that is so amazing and perfect that it could only refer to Jesus, the Son of God.

Verses 1-4 describe Jesus’ earthly ministry and are quoted in Matthew 12:18-21. God’s Servant will be endowed with the fullness of the Spirit; meek and lowly, gentle and kind. The phrase “bruised reed” was an analogy to persons who were weak and helpless; “smoking flax” represented those who were broken and vulnerable.

In verses 5-9, God himself addressed the Messiah directly, and stated the reason He had appointed Him: to be a light to the Gentiles, to open the eyes of the blind (physically and spiritually), to set the prisoner free, and to be the pledge of the covenant between Him and His people. A portion of verse 7 is paraphrased in Isaiah 61:1. Jesus himself spoke these words in Luke 4:18, then followed up in Luke 4:21 with the statement: “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.” God said He had called His Servant in righteousness, and promised to hold His hand and assist Him with His calling.

In the second half of the chapter (verses 18-25) Isaiah addressed the blindness of Israel. In this section the word “servant” referred to Israel, not the Messiah. Israel should have been the light to the Gentiles by helping them come to know the true God, but they had failed. Isaiah contrasted the faith of those who believed in God with the idolatry of those who trusted in graven images (idols). He described the unbelievers in Israel as being spiritually deaf and blind in God’s eyes. The identifying of Israel’s spiritual weaknesses pointed out the need for a personal Messiah who would deliver Israel from their sin and spiritual bondage. The chapter closes with the reason Israel had been judged and punished: they had sinned against God.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

Hannah’s Bible Outlines  
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- IV. The message of consolation: The Holy One of Israel comforting, redeeming and enriching
  - A. The promise of deliverance (comfort)
    - 3. The character of the servant (42:1-25)
      - a. The description of the servant (42:1-4)
      - b. The ministry of the servant (42:5-9)
      - c. The praise for the servant (42:10-13)



- d. The shame of idolaters (42:14-17)
- e. The fact of Israel's blindness (42:18-25)

## A CLOSER LOOK

**1. Which verse in this chapter explains very explicitly why God hates idol worship?**

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**2.** Why might it have been an encouragement to the Jewish people to know that God's Servant would have mercy on the weak and broken?

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**3.** In what ways are you illuminating the world around you and the people you come in contact with, so that they might be led to God?

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## CONCLUSION

As we sing a new song to the Lord, we don't have to feel uncomfortable about learning the words or the tune. The entire song comes from the depths of our hearts as we begin to praise and thank the Lord for His mercy and goodness to us. Sing that "New Song of the Redeemed" today!

## NOTES

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.” (Isaiah 43:2)**

My grandfather used to tell how he proved the reality of today’s focus verse. Many years ago, he was taking a businessman from Port Townsend, Washington, to the San Juan Islands in his small boat. About four or five miles from shore, trouble developed with the engine and Grandpa asked the businessman to pilot the boat while he went below deck to see what could be done. While he was working on the engine, the boat struck an object. The vessel began to fill with water and within moments it began to sink. Grandpa picked up one life preserver and gave it to the businessman; he took the other one, and they climbed up onto the engine room behind the pilot house.

When the first wave went over them, it was cold; but under that wave Grandpa knew that Jesus was there with him. God’s promise came to him: “When thou passest through the waters, . . . they shall not overflow thee.” As the boat came out of that wave, Grandpa raised his hand to Heaven and shouted, “Glory to God, I have Jesus!” Then another wave went over them.

Grandpa told us later that in spite of the peril they were in, he was just as happy as if he were safe at home because he had a promise. He knew that the Lord would take him safely through. “I didn’t know how He would do so, but that didn’t matter; I was assured that I would come out all right,” he would say. He couldn’t swim, the tide was going out, and the wind was blowing them out to sea, but he had a promise from God.

The boat went down. After about six hours in the water, paddling with a board and with his arms, Grandpa finally came to shore on Whidbey Island—worn and exhausted, but still alive! The other man drowned that night, but God was faithful to the promise He gave my grandfather.

What kind of “waters” are you passing through today? Are the flames raging around you? Do not be alarmed; God is more than able to bring you through! God promises to be present with you in your greatest difficulties and dangers. The floods and the flames can never overwhelm you or separate you from your faith as long as your trust is anchored in Him.

### BACKGROUND

Chapter 42 of Isaiah concludes with God’s sorrow over the spiritual decay of Israel. In this chapter, God told the people that despite Israel’s rejection of God, He would show them mercy and would offer them redemption. The prophet proclaimed God’s comfort to His people through many precious promises.

As a nation, the Jewish people would face much danger and persecution, but God’s assurance of ultimate deliverance and redemption was an unfailing promise. The nation would be preserved.

In verses 8–13 of this chapter, Isaiah described Israel’s role as a witness to the world. In a type of courtroom scene, God challenged the idols of the heathens, revealing them as helpless and speechless. He then went on to tell the people that they could witness for Him, because He had given them many plain demonstrations of his foreknowledge of future events. The false gods were not only weak and unable to save their people, but were also the destroyer of their people—the cause of their great ruin. In contrast, God had foretold the deliverance of His people, and then effected it. Unquestionably, He triumphed in the controversy between God and idols.

In verses 14–28, God promised future deliverance from Babylon and the Chaldeans, and an even greater redemption—that of forgiveness of sin. Just as God had taken His people out of Egyptian bondage and through the wilderness to their new homeland, He would again defeat Israel’s enemies. Even nature itself would cooperate with the God who had formed and called the Israelites, though they had done nothing to deserve this deliverance. Throughout these verses, the verb tense used clearly indicates that this deliverance would be yet in the future.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

Hannah’s Bible Outlines  
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IV. The message of consolation: The Holy One of Israel comforting, redeeming and enriching

A. The promise of deliverance (comfort)

4. The consolation of Israel

a. The assurance of God

(1) The redemption of His people (43:1-7)

(2) The reality that the Lord alone is God (43:8-18)

(3) The fact of God’s absolute sovereignty (43:19-21)

(4) The reality of Israel’s unfaithfulness (43:22-28)

## A CLOSER LOOK

1. What two reasons did the prophet give for being unafraid?

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2. How did the prophet show God's supremacy over the idols of the heathen?

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3. In what ways has God stood by you in times of trial?

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4. Like Israel, our task is to be a witness for God. What are three specific ways we can make Him known to our friends and associates?

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## CONCLUSION

God comforts us with many precious promises and evidences of His care and kindness. How reassuring it is to know that He is always there beside us, no matter what affliction or trial we may be facing!

## NOTES

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.” (Isaiah 44:3)**

A few years ago, my friend gave me a beautiful plant. I usually kept it in my kitchen where I could keep an eye on it. When it began to droop a bit, I would remember to water it. Unfortunately, when I was on vacation, I would forget all about my plant. On several occasions I came home to find it sagging in an alarming manner. I would water it lavishly to try to revive it, and it would perk up again.

When there is a drought, living things suffer. Lack of water causes the earth to become dry and hard, and plants wither and die. A person or animal cannot survive long without water, either. There are many stories of bleached bones of oxen and graves of people along the westward pioneer trail in the United States. There was a stretch after the Rocky Mountains where many people with parched throats and dehydrated bodies would see water ahead, only to find it was a mirage. In those times of desperate thirst, water became more valuable than gold.

It is the same way in our spiritual lives. God’s grace, Word, and Spirit are like water to a thirsty soul. If we do not continually refresh ourselves by communion with God, reading His Word, and connecting with His Spirit, we will soon begin to wither and die. We are encouraged to thirst after righteousness.

God looked down on Israel and saw that their ground was dry and parched. It was lifeless and barren. However, even in such a sad condition, there was hope. God promised to send rain and to renew the watercourses. He promised that the plants would spring up with new life and the trees would flourish.

When we are saved, we partake of living water. When we are sanctified our souls are saturated with love and life. We have partaken of a measure of God’s Spirit, but there is still a thirst. There is a desire to be filled and completely immersed in God’s Spirit. When that wonderful experience occurs, what a refreshing takes place! There is a deep contentment and peace. We are like a flourishing, fruitful tree. What a hope for each thirsty soul!

No matter what our spiritual condition, either flourishing, bone dry, or somewhere in between, as we thirst for God’s living water and seek for it, we will find healing and abundant life for our souls.

### BACKGROUND

Although the nation of Israel was largely apostate at this time, Isaiah prophesied of a future day when God’s Holy Spirit would be poured upon His people. He foretold of water being poured on the thirsty and floods upon dry ground. This prophecy applied to both physical nature and a spiritual outpouring. Not only would the physical desert places become lush with watercourses and vegetation, but also the dry and thirsty souls would be made to flourish by an outpouring of God’s Holy Spirit.

In verse 2, *Jesurun*, meaning “the upright one,” is a poetic name for Israel and was also used in the Book of Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 32:15; 33:5, 26). Because of the outpouring of God’s blessing throughout the land, people would be proud to be called by God’s name. Many of those were likely foreigners who had become citizens of Israel, and were happy to subscribe to God’s law.

Today’s text refers several times to the fact that God is the only God, and that it was He who created man (verses 2, 6, 8, 21, and 24). Yet, though God created man, Israel had persisted in creating idols and worshiping the work of their own hands. Isaiah pointed out the foolishness of their actions. Men would cut down a tree and use part as firewood for warmth, part for the oven to cook meat and bake bread, and then take the remaining wood to fashion an idol to worship.

The chapter goes on to state that only God’s counsel is true. Men who oppose God’s truth will be frustrated and made to look foolish. Any knowledge man attains must be measured by God’s standard of truth.

In the end of the chapter, the Lord, who made Heaven and earth, and formed man in the womb, gave a promise to His people. Though Jerusalem and the Temple had not yet been destroyed, Isaiah spoke of their rebuilding by the edict of a king named Cyrus. Cyrus’ reign occurred about 150 years later, from 559 to 530 B.C. It was King Cyrus at this later time who fulfilled Isaiah’s prophecy by making a decree which allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem in order to rebuild the city and the Temple. (See Ezra 1-2)

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

Hannah’s Bible Outlines  
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IV. The message of consolation: The Holy One of Israel comforting, redeeming and enriching

- A. The promise of deliverance (comfort)
  - 4. The consolation of Israel
    - a. The assurance of God

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## CONCLUSION

## NOTES

1. What types of trees are mentioned in chapter 44?

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else.” (Isaiah 45:5-6)**

“You’ll feel as if you are at the top of the world,” my husband promised. At times it was necessary to focus on that thought while driving up a very steep and narrow dirt road with many rocks and an extremely sharp drop-off to the side of us! However, as we neared the summit of the Steens Mountains in southeastern Oregon, we came to grassy pastures and eventually a view that spanned miles. The deep gorges, the magnitude and vastness of what we saw, were awesome. To me, loudly and clearly it said, “God—the Creator!”

You’ve had similar experiences as you viewed nature—a sunset that took your breath away, the spray of a waterfall that created a rainbow, a tiny flower popping out of a crevice between the rocks. Nature speaks clearly of God, and it seems hard to believe that anyone can miss that message. Yet some people do!

In ancient times, people worshiped many gods, attributing various natural phenomena to different deities. In the focus verses, God was proclaiming that He was, and is, not one of many gods. He is the One and only God!

While people today may not espouse the idea of many gods, their concepts of who God is are just as foolish. Some people are convinced that there is no God at all. Others allow that God exists in some form or other, but make Him impersonal (like “Mother Earth” or an “energy” that makes electrons behave as they do). Still others think that any version of God will do as long as a person is sincere in his beliefs. In short, people act as if whatever they themselves think about God will make it so!

The reality is that God is just who and what He says He is. The focus verses record what God says about Himself, and this theme is repeated over and over in Isaiah 45. God is Lord of all, and there is no power remotely comparable to Him. What people think or say about Him does not change the fact of His existence or alter His character. God is who He is—and He will have the final say.

In reflecting on the greatness of God, and at the same time His concern for each of us personally, the

songwriter expressed it in these words: “He’s big enough to rule the mighty universe, yet small enough to live within my heart.”<sup>1</sup> May we rejoice in our God and show Him our appreciation by serving Him with all of our hearts!

### BACKGROUND

The last verse of the previous chapter and the first eight verses of chapter 45 contain the prophecy concerning King Cyrus. It is interesting to note that Isaiah lived about 740-680 B.C., while Cyrus was not to reign until 559-530 B.C. Thus, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Isaiah was naming a specific leader and foretelling events that would occur over 150 years into the future. Isaiah foretold that Cyrus would be “anointed” by God to restore the Israelites to their own country and to assist in the rebuilding of the Temple—all for no selfish benefit of his own. Yet at the time this was written, the Temple had not yet been destroyed nor had the people been taken into captivity.

Verse 5 points out that God selected Cyrus for this important task although he was not of Jewish heritage and had little, if any, background in their religion. By comparison, none of the kings of Israel (the ten northern tribes) and few of the kings of Judah had ever been used by God in such a dramatic way. In verse 7, the words, “I . . . create evil” are a reference to God’s allowing of calamities and catastrophes, not to moral evil.

While the prophecy concerning Cyrus proved to be accurate, these verses also pointed to the day when Christ would come. Verse 22 indicates something more than a restoration of people to their rightful earthly inheritance. Christ would make it possible for people to be saved spiritually and made eligible for eternal benefits which were otherwise lost by the fall of man.

Repeatedly in chapter 45, God pointed out that He is Lord over all, and that beside Him there is none other. By using Cyrus, God was also showing that He was God of the entire world, not just of Judah or Israel. This thought is reinforced by verse 6, which states that God rules “from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me.” In the same vein, verse 22 is a call for people from all over the world to be saved.

In verses 9 and 10 God used a little irony. Should the wet clay on the potter’s wheel yell out to the potter, criticizing what he is doing? Or would a newborn infant scream out to his mother and father in protest of their roles in bringing him into the world? God wanted



Israel to see that these ideas were no more foolish than when humans protest against God and question His right to rule over them. God created the world, and He definitely has the right to set the rules and boundaries for mankind!

**AMPLIFIED OUTLINE**

*Hannah's Bible Outlines*  
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- IV. The message of consolation: The Holy One of Israel comforting, redeeming and enriching
  - A. The promise of deliverance (comfort)
    - 4. The consolation of Israel
      - c. The proclamations of God
        - (2) The restoration of Israel by Cyrus (44:24—45:7)
        - (3) The reality of God's sovereignty (45:8-17)
        - (4) The invitation to salvation (45:18-25)

**A CLOSER LOOK**

1. How many times in Isaiah 45 do we read words to the effect that “God is the LORD, and beside Him there is none else”?

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2. What are some of the proofs given that God indeed is the Lord?

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3. Cyrus was not a worshiper of God. What does God's plan to use and help him indicate?

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4. How can God's statements about Himself in this chapter encourage us today?

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**CONCLUSION**

Perhaps today you will “see” God in nature or by His moving in your life. Whatever each moment brings, you can know that God is God, and there is no God beside Him. Yet He wants to walk with you if you will let Him.

**NOTES**

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.”  
(Isaiah 46:4)**

I have had the privilege of working side by side with a number of Gospel veterans over the years, and have been tremendously blessed by their dedication and godly example. Among these pioneers of the faith, one special gentleman stands out in my mind.

Brother Roy was a tall man, though slightly stooped now in his elderly years. Soft-spoken, studious, and kindly, he was quick to jump to his feet and give a “shout for the battle” in our testimony services, even when he was almost ninety years of age! One testimony he gave some years ago made an especially deep impression on me. He said, “More than sixty years ago, over at the end of the altar in the tabernacle, the Lord found a penitent teenager who was sorry for the life of sin he had lived. That day I asked for mercy, and God had mercy. He put a star in my sky and a joy in my life. He has given me many benefits over the years. The Psalmist said, ‘Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits’ (Psalm 68:19). Sixty years comes to 21,900 days. If God had given me just one blessing a day, that would be many, many blessings, but the Psalmist said the Lord gives ‘benefits’—plural! I have had more than my share. I could not begin to tell of all the benefits God has given me through the years!”

What an example of today’s focus verse! Brother Roy proved God’s promise through decade after decade. The sixty years he spoke of in that testimony were extended by sixteen years. By my calculations, that adds about 5,480 more benefits to his tally, for I am sure he would have told us that the blessings of serving God continued through every day of his life!

He experienced God’s protecting hand during time of war. He told of working on an airplane overseas when something said to him, “Get out from under this plane.” He immediately obeyed, and had just stepped aside when it fell flat on the ground—about 34,000 pounds of airplane.

In 1973, he suffered a serious affliction in his eyes. He had an ulcer that would affect one eye and then the other. His eyes would be so sore he could hardly see, but Jesus was near. One day, God undertook for that problem and healed him. Brother Roy has never suffered with that problem again.

Another time he had a growth on his forehead. It started small, but soon began to grow fast and become sore. The enemy of his soul told him it must be cancer, but he remembered how many times the Lord had healed him, and determined in his heart to trust God. God did not fail him! God healed that sore, and afterward there was not even a scar to show where it was.

Does it pay to serve God? Does God keep His promise to carry us “even to old age”? Brother Roy would have told you that He does!

### BACKGROUND

In this chapter, Isaiah’s prediction of deliverance for the people of Israel began with recognition of the supremacy of God over the false and impotent gods of Babylon. The idol Bel, which may be the Babylonian pronunciation of the Canaanite Baal, was considered to be the sun god and lord of the universe (the ancient Greeks equated him with Zeus). Nebo, his son, was the god of wisdom—the name *Nebo* is related to the Babylonian words for “oracle” or “prophecy.” However, these false gods were disgraced; the emphasis of this passage is that the Babylonian religion would fall in recognition before the Lord God.

The mention of the idols being carried by beasts (verse 1) refers to them being carried away in the attempt of Babylonian people to flee from the coming Persian conquest. It was customary after a conflict for the victorious army to carry away the gods of the defeated nation. This was why the Philistines carried away the Ark of the Covenant in Eli’s time, and placed it in Dagon’s temple. Bel and Nebo were not just defeated, they were non-existent. Their images were nothing more than lifeless objects. Far from being able to help others, they could not even help themselves.

On the other hand, God emphasized through the prophet that He would carry His people from birth until death. He is unique; there is no being, much less any object, which is on the same level with Him. Those who worship Him are honoring the only One worthy of worship.

Verse 10 declares God’s omniscience (“declaring the end from the beginning”) and His omnipotence (“I will do all my pleasure”). Israel was challenged not to just remember about Him, but to remember Him in the sense of talking to Him again, getting to know Him again, and repenting of having followed idols. God promised to be merciful and save Israel if they would turn back to Him.

The phrase “ravenous bird from the east” in verse 11 likely referred to Cyrus of Persia. In his plan to

conquer the nations of the Near East, he would come from a “far country” to perform the will of God.

The proclamation that God’s salvation “shall not tarry” (verse 13) conveyed the thought that while from man’s perspective it may seem that the deliverance of God is tarrying (or waiting), according to God’s timetable everything is being done with divine precision.

**AMPLIFIED OUTLINE**

*Hannah's Bible Outlines*  
Used by permission per WORDsearch

- IV. The message of consolation: The Holy One of Israel comforting, redeeming and enriching
  - A. The promise of deliverance (comfort)
    - 5. The destruction of Babylon
      - a. The destruction of Babylon’s idols (46:1-13)
        - (1) The captivity of Babylon’s idols (46:1-2)
        - (2) The care of God for Israel (46:3-4)
        - (3) The futility of idols (46:5-7)
        - (4) The call from God (46:8-13)

**A CLOSER LOOK**

1. What contrasts were made between God and the idols?

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2. Why did Israel need to repent?

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3. What things in our society are like idols today?  
How do people worship them?

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4. What steps can we take to avoid being ensnared by idols in our day?

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**CONCLUSION**

Verse 4 is the basis for a sometimes-omitted stanza of the well-loved hymn “How Firm a Foundation.” It says:  
*E’en down to old age, all My people shall prove,  
My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love;  
And then when grey hairs shall their temples adorn,  
Like lambs they shall still in My bosom be borne.*

How encouraging it is to realize that God’s love for us is so enduring that He will care for us every step of the way until we meet Him in Heaven!

**NOTES**

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“As for our redeemer, the LORD of hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel.” (Isaiah 47:4)**

Prior to 1945, the country of Romania had approximately one thousand Communist party members. After the war, membership soared to over one million with engineered help from Moscow. One year later, King Michael of Romania was forced to abdicate as his queen mother was held at gunpoint. The period that followed was full of terror as prewar leaders and prominent intellectuals were imprisoned or interned in hard-labor camps. Factories and businesses were nationalized and people had to turn over all of their possessions to the government.

In the following decades, the Communist party intensified control and intruded more deeply into the daily lives of its citizens. My mother was seven years old when she had to witness the government taking away her family’s land and possessions. I was born under the regime and never knew any other way of life until the age of fifteen, when I stepped for the first time on American soil and experienced freedom and democracy. What a contrast to the life I had been living!

I am thankful that before I experienced the freedom and democracy that this country offered, I experienced a far greater freedom in my heart, and that is freedom from sin. Satan had dominion over my heart and it caused more significant ruin than any earthly government could cause its citizens. But God, through a simple prayer of repentance, forgave my sins and changed my life. He gave me a fresh start and new outlook on life. That day, He became my Redeemer, my wonderful Friend.

The Communist regime of Romania was eventually overthrown and the people were given their freedom. Personal possessions were returned to them, and the abusive environment, where personal worth was continually crushed, ended. However, even today, nearly two decades later, that regime left deep imprints in the hearts and lives of those who lived under it.

Over twenty years have passed since I gave my heart to the Lord. Interestingly, I have found that the redemptive work performed in my heart back then has passed the test of time. There are no traces of the oppression that Satan can have over one’s life. Each day, the sound of Jesus’ name grows dearer. He has not only been my Redeemer and Friend, but He is Lord of my life.

### BACKGROUND

This chapter predicts Babylon’s destruction. The Children of Israel would be delivered into Babylonian captivity in just over one hundred years, allowed to suffer perpetual reproach and many troubles. God would use Babylon to correct His people. However, Babylon would carry its oppression too far and show no mercy to God’s people. Instead, it would lay a heavy yoke on the aged and would itself be lifted up with pride. Babylon was to become enchanted with the wisdom and knowledge of the astrologers, star-gazers, and sorcerers, and would trust in their foretelling of its future to the point that it would become self-sufficient and proclaim, “I am.” This language of pride provoked God, who pronounced judgment on the city.

The language used in this chapter is filled with metaphors that illustrate Babylon as a woman. For example, the magnificent empire was called a “virgin” in the first verse. One commentator believes that this referred to the fact that it had not been captured by its enemies. Verse 1 states, “Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon.” The phrase “Come down” was a call to descend from authority, throne, magnificence, power, and pride. “Sit in the dust,” referred to sitting down on the ground and casting dust on the head. This was done by Job in the Bible and it represented a state of humility. The prophet was calling Babylon to humility.

In verse 3 God said, “I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man.” In His proclaiming of judgment on Babylon, God would not confront her with the strength and compassion of a human. Rather, he would meet Babylon with the power of God, a strength which could not be resisted. He would show her the justice of God, which could not be bribed or changed.

Verse 8 speaks of how Babylon would be “given to pleasures,” and “dwellst carelessly.” The people would be indulging in a life of false security, luxury, and corruption, while not taking into consideration possible dangers and consequences. Babylon would feel she was immune from future catastrophes when she declared, “I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children.” She believed herself to be invincible and able to escape her worst fears.

However, in verse 9, God addressed that specifically. He revealed that at the height of her sorceries and enchantments, Babylon would find herself a “widow” and would suffer of the loss of her “children.” It is believed that this prophecy took place

when Belshazzar, her king, was unexpectedly killed, therefore leaving her as a widow. The city was taken over by the Medes and the Persians who crucified over three thousand of her inhabitants — this representing the loss of her children.

God fulfilled what He had promised regarding Babylon, at the same time liberating His people from their oppressor in a miraculous way, and bringing judgment on the nation that took advantage of them.

**AMPLIFIED OUTLINE**

*Hannah's Bible Outlines*  
Used by permission per WORDsearch

- IV. The message of consolation: The Holy One of Israel comforting, redeeming and enriching
  - A. The promise of deliverance (comfort)
    - 5. The destruction of Babylon
      - b. The destruction of Babylon (47:1-15)
        - (1) The declaration of judgment (47:1-7)
        - (2) The description of judgment (47:8-15)

**A CLOSER LOOK**

1. God promised that He would take vengeance on Babylon. How did he accomplish this?

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2. What do you think God referred to when He said, “They shall come upon thee in their perfection”?

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3. Pride in her own abilities led to Babylon’s downfall. What actions can we take to prevent self-reliance in our lives?

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**CONCLUSION**

The forces of righteousness are much stronger than any earthly dominance. They stand ready to act on the behalf of those who are ready to surrender their lives to the One whose name is “LORD of hosts,” and “Holy One of Israel.”

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.” (Isaiah 48:17)**

In about 1929, a man by the name of George Joli attended a revival meeting in a little church in New York and gave his heart to the Lord. From that time on, he and his wife went to church after church searching for a people who believed the whole Bible. Despairing of ever finding such a group, they began to read the Bible and pray for God’s leading to help them find the right people with whom to worship. One midnight while praying, the Lord spoke to George and said, “Follow the Star—Jesus the Light of the World.” His wife wrote down those words, but they had no idea what they meant.

Not long after that, a friend gave one of their daughters a bundle of Sunday school papers and other religious publications. As the little girl looked through them, she called, “Mother, look! Here is just what Daddy said in his prayer!” There in the upper corner of one of the papers was a star and right under it were the words, “Jesus the Light of the World.”

As George’s wife scanned the front page of that Apostolic Faith paper, her eyes fell on an article describing an ordinance service at the Portland church. George had said, “If we ever find a people who believe in foot-washing, they will be the people of God.” When he saw this account he said, “We have to go to Portland.”

How do you go about moving a family of nine children across the country? The Great Depression was at its worst about that time, and the task seemed impossible. However, God was leading and He opened the way. In 1933, the family of two parents and nine children left New York, with only \$120 to make the trip across the continent. They camped along the road each night, and their meals consisted almost entirely of cornmeal or oatmeal mush with canned milk. On rare occasions, people gave them fresh vegetables from their gardens. The laundry was done in the creeks and rivers along the road.

On July 15, 1933, the family pulled onto the church campground in Portland, Oregon. Their best clothes were little more than rags, and some of the children had lost their shoes, but friendly Christian people saw to it that they were able to attend that afternoon teaching service. At last they had reached the

people under the sign, “Jesus the Light of the World,” and they felt like they were in Heaven!

Today, God will be our Conductor and Guide if we will let Him be. Although we may not be facing a physical move as the Joli family did, in each of our lives there are many decisions for which we need guidance. God leads and teaches us the way to go by His Word and His Spirit. God wants to guide us with love and wisdom along the best pathway for our lives. Will we submit to Him and let Him lead?

### BACKGROUND

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The prophecy of this chapter is addressed to the “house of Jacob,” which includes both Israel and Judah, and concerns the deliverance and salvation of the Jews. Through Isaiah, God foretold the destruction of Babylon and their deliverance.

God admonished the hypocrites among the people, who gave lip service to Him but did not follow Him in truth and righteousness. The purpose of God’s chastening of His people through bondage was to teach them to profit or benefit, and to lead them “in the way they should go.” In spite of all their failures, God reminded them that He had called them and chosen them to be His people.

God informed them that their coming deliverance would not be for any merit of their own but purely for the sake of God’s own name and for His own glory. He had chosen them, purified and saved them, as gold tried in fire. He foretold that their deliverer would be the King of Persia, Cyrus (a type of Christ), whom he loved, called, sent, and made prosperous. Then God directed the people to walk in His ways, with promises of peace and prosperity. He encouraged them to depend purely upon His power for this deliverance. He showed them that, as it was by their own sin that they were in captivity, so it would be only by the grace of God that they would obtain mercy and deliverance.

Isaiah predicted the fall of Babylon more than 140 years before it happened. The people of Israel felt secure because they lived in Jerusalem, the city with God’s Temple. They depended on their heritage, their city, and their Temple, but they did not depend on God.

This portion of Scripture is a classic example of Isaiah’s distinctive style: he announced impending judgment but immediately followed that announcement with a proclamation of hope for a future blessing. He clearly predicted the coming Babylonian invasion and their resultant captivity, but he also looked beyond that captivity to the people’s release and redemption.



## AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

*Hannah's Bible Outlines*  
Used by permission per WORDsearch

- IV. The message of consolation: The Holy One of Israel comforting, redeeming and enriching
  - A. The promise of deliverance (comfort)
    - 5. The destruction of Babylon
      - c. The declaration to Israel (48:1-22)
        - (1) The purpose of Israel's chastening (48:1-11)
        - (2) The liberation by a Gentile deliverer (48:12-16)
        - (3) The sorrow over Israel's disobedience (48:17-19)
        - (4) The instructions to flee from Babylon (48:20-22)

## A CLOSER LOOK

1. Why did God say He would defer His anger?

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2. What was the purpose of God's chastening of disobedient Israel?

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3. What blessings have you received because you followed the prompting of the Holy Spirit?

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## CONCLUSION

God takes us by the hand, teaches us to go in the path of faith, and leads us as we walk with Him. We can be confident, as we follow His direction for our lives, that He will lead us in the very best way!

## NOTES

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.” (Isaiah 49:15)**

When I was five years old, our family lived in a small town in Siberia. One Christmas, we received an interesting gift—two oranges. In Siberia, you do not usually see oranges in the winter, so this was a very special gift. Even if you love oranges, you cannot enjoy them as we enjoyed those oranges! As my mother peeled them, we savored the special fragrance. We were a very large family, so my mother cut the slices apart and gave each child a slice and a half. She did not take one for herself, and we asked her, “Don’t you want a slice?” She said, “I like the orange peel better.”

After our family moved to America, my dad brought home a bag full of oranges one day. We all rejoiced as we peeled and ate them. Each one of us took the peel to our mother, but she said, “No, no, I would prefer the oranges.” We were shocked because she had convinced us that she liked the peel.

My mother’s self-sacrificing actions with those two oranges have always seemed to me an excellent example of how a mother loves her children. Yet God is indicating in our focus verse that He cares even more than a mother cares!

In this chapter, Isaiah began to describe the character of Israel’s future deliverer. God was conveying His deep love for this lost nation. Though they had forsaken Him for idolatry, He would not forsake them. He could no more forget them than a mother could forget her child. God in His great mercy would reach out to them through His Servant. God’s promises to Israel were fulfilled, not only in the eventual return of the Jews to their land, but also in the coming of Jesus to bring spiritual deliverance.

God had a plan for the salvation of the Jews and of the whole world. He had His plan in mind from the beginning of the world and was willing to share some of it with Israel many years before it happened. This reminds us that God knows exactly what He is doing and has a plan for our lives, too. Whatever our circumstances, God has not forgotten us. He loves us more than a mother could.

We need to pay attention to the promises that God so freely shares with us and keep our lives committed to Him, so that we can remember those promises and believe them.

### BACKGROUND

Isaiah looked ahead to the time when the people of Israel would feel that God had deserted them in Babylon, but Isaiah pointed out that God would never leave them. This prophetic consolation has many passages where the role of the Messiah (or the Holy One) as a suffering Servant is revealed. These Scriptures, like other such passages in Isaiah, combine a message of comfort and deliverance by the Servant Deliverer, along with predictions of His rejection by His own people.

This chapter consists almost entirely of poetic passages, and these verses are prophesies of the future. They deal with the coming Babylonian captivity and ultimately with the coming of Jesus Christ. The two events are connected because, even though the Jews would return from Babylon long before Jesus’ first coming, they still would be under foreign rule during Jesus’ lifetime—a foreign rule that would be nearly uninterrupted from the time they were carried away to Babylon.

The first six verses describe the Servant’s call. A number of features in this passage point to the identity of the Servant:

- His mouth is like a sword. This description is also made of Christ in the Book of Revelation, and to the Word of God in Hebrews 4:12 and Ephesians 6:17.
- He is identified as Israel, but cannot be the nation of Israel because in the same passage, He is called to raise up the nation of Israel. This shows the Servant is the fulfillment of the law and history of Israel.
- His first mission is to raise up Israel, and then to be a light to the Gentiles.
- He is a covenant to the people, referring to the New Covenant (or New Testament).
- He is despised by the nation and the people.

Here, and also in the following chapter, Zion (or Jerusalem) that Jesus referred to as “the city of the great King” stands for the nation as a whole. While the captivity will make Jerusalem feel forsaken by God, the following promises are given:

- The hungry and thirsty will be cared for.
- The dispersed refugees will be gathered back.
- Their hearts will be comforted.
- There will be deliverance from oppressors.
- There will be a restoration of the land.
- The Gentiles, even their kings and queens, will look up to Israel.

The passage ends with judgment of Israel's enemies, but the final word is universal knowledge of the One true God and their Savior.

## AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

*Hannah's Bible Outlines*  
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#### IV. The message of consolation: The Holy One of Israel comforting, redeeming and enriching

B. The person of the deliverer (redemption)

1. The mission of the servant (49:1-26)
  - a. The commission of the servant (49:1-6)
  - b. The humiliation and exaltation of the servant (49:7)
  - c. The restoration by the servant (49:8-13)
  - d. The comfort of the servant (49:14-26)
    - (1) His faithfulness to Israel (49:14-21)
    - (2) His judgment on Israel's foes (49:22-26)

## A CLOSER LOOK

**1. Why did God have Isaiah prophesy about the return from captivity before Israel had been taken captive?**

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**2. What characteristics of Christ are revealed in this passage?**

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### 3. What did God promise to accomplish through His Servant?

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**4.** What circumstances in life might cause us to wonder if God has forsaken us? How can we find encouragement?

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## CONCLUSION

Even though we may try, we cannot comprehend how much God loves and cares for us. Today, take courage in His concern for you!

## NOTES

[illegible]



### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.”**  
(Isaiah 51:3)

The life of my grandmother was marked by tragedy. When she was eighteen years old, two of her sisters and her mother acquired tuberculosis. It fell on my grandma to take care of them. In those days, tuberculosis was so prevalent that afflicted people were quarantined at home. So the porch was enclosed, and it was my grandmother’s job to crawl through the window into that porch and nurse them. One at a time, all three of the invalids died.

Not long after they died, my grandmother found she had tuberculosis. By then she was married and expecting a child. She called for the ministers to pray for her, and God healed her. She was concerned that the baby would have tuberculosis when it was born, but it did not.

Years later, it appeared that my grandfather was about to pass away. While my grandma was caring for him, their forty-five-year-old daughter died suddenly. A year later, they buried their thirty-two-year-old son, and the next year my grandfather passed away. Yet when we would talk about these things, Grandma always said, “I have so much to be thankful for.” The difficulties and tragedies were not the hallmark of my grandmother’s life. The hallmark of her life was her thankfulness. She loved to sing and to play church songs on the piano. My grandmother had learned to lean upon the Lord, and He had comforted her. He gave her joy and gladness because she chose to focus on Him, and consequently those around her benefited from her attitude.

Perhaps today you are facing situations that seem like “waste places,” a “wilderness,” or a “desert.” Look to God, and He can help you to have joy and thanksgiving in spite of the circumstances. The Lord would have us not only receive His comfort and help, but also extend it to others. Will we do that today?

### BACKGROUND

The Prophet Isaiah lived at a time when Assyria was the world power. Her many successful military campaigns had catapulted her to dominance and established her as an imperial power. In the face of such a

threat, the people of Judah were beginning to consider a self-designed practical solution of their own. This was to form alliances with other nations in the region. They would depend upon such alliances for their preservation, rather than upon a theocratic system, where God Himself was their defender. During the time of King Ahaz, Judah was completely pro-Assyria in an effort for self-preservation.

Today’s passage could be divided into two parts. The first part is Isaiah 50, which opens with a rhetorical question that God posed to the people of Judah, because they had forsaken Him: “Where is the bill of your mother’s divorcement, whom I have put away?” This was followed by an even sharper question: “Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver?” The Lord gave Judah a quick lesson in how He created the world with all her majestic wonders. The point was that Judah was very little when compared to God’s vast creation. How, then, would God not be able to defend her? By forsaking God and running for cover elsewhere, Judah, in a senseless bid for security, had sold herself.

Amidst this flurry of questions to Judah, the magnificent voice of Christ as the Messenger of God comes upon the scene. Christ revealed Himself as One who is totally dependent on God the Father. He opened His dialogue with, “The LORD GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season . . .” and cited many instances of how God would help Him in His redemptive mission. He concluded by pronouncing a condemnation on the people who would trust in their own efforts rather than God’s.

The second part is chapter 51, where the prophet exhorted the upright to righteousness. He admonished the righteous in Judah to follow after the pattern of Abraham. He reminded them that it was God who had dried the sea so the people could pass over. He promised that Judah also would go into exile but they would return with joy and gladness, and those who afflicted Judah would be punished.

Judah forsook the Lord because she paid undue attention to her adversaries. The Lord’s challenge to Christians today is the same as it was to Judah: “Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings” (Isaiah 51:7).

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

Hannah’s Bible Outlines  
Used by permission per WORDsearch

IV. The message of consolation: The Holy One of Israel comforting, redeeming and enriching

- B. The person of the deliverer (redemption)
  - 2. The submission of the servant (50:1-11)
    - a. The bill of divorcement (50:1-3)
    - b. The humiliation and suffering of the servant (50:4-11)
  - 3. The consolation of the servant (51:1-16)
    - a. The exhortation to the nation (51:1-11)
    - b. The comfort for the nation (51:12-16)
  - 4. The exhortation to return to the Lord
    - a. The cessation of Jerusalem's oppressors (51:17-20)
    - b. The judgment upon Jerusalem's oppressors (51:21-23)

## **A CLOSER LOOK**

**1.** Which Old Testament character did Isaiah tell the people to look to as an example of God's blessing?

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**2.** How was the future Messiah's compassion illustrated in this passage?

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**3.** What can we do to ensure that we are spiritually awake?

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## **CONCLUSION**

Try being extra thankful today, and see what attitude of heart the Lord will give you.

## **NOTES**

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“For thus saith the LORD, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.” (Isaiah 52:3)**

Bruce Archer, a man from our Portland congregation, used to testify: “My mother was a Christian, and she faithfully read the Bible and prayed with me. My father tried to bring me up to do the right thing, but I would not come under his rule. When I was fifteen years old, I left home and got a job washing dishes in a restaurant. There was a gambling hall upstairs, and I began to frequent that place. In a very short time, I saw that I was going to need more money than my wages. The boss’s long pistol was under the counter. I decided to steal that gun and get more money with it.”

Over a number of years, Bruce committed a string of crimes that reached across the United States. Once he hid for fifteen days in the swamps of Arkansas, a Winchester strapped to his back. Another time, a posse of twenty-five men was instructed to take him dead or alive, and some of them came within thirty yards of him. That first crime led to a life of misery because, by giving in to sin, he “sold himself for nought.”

One day, however, Bruce heard a Gospel street meeting. He pulled his car over and listened. When the service ended, Bruce went to the church. There he knelt at the altar and prayed, “Lord, if You will save me, I’ll give You my life.” God did save him, “without money,” but because Bruce brought Him a submitted will and a repentant heart. In a moment of time, God revolutionized Bruce’s life and set him free. Released from the bondage of sin, Bruce went back over his past and made restitution for his wrongs. At the end of his life, he could say, “I have a clean record and a clean heart. Jesus did it for me!”

How easily the human family can sell themselves “for nought.” In Isaiah’s time, God’s people had sold themselves into sin, and the profit was nothing. Although they had not deliberately provoked Egypt or Assyria, they had provoked God by sinning, and He had sent judgment through those nations. Captivity was the result of their sin, yet God promised to redeem them “without money.” He would deliver them for His own sake.

Today, God still wants to redeem those who have sold themselves to sin. If we know of people in that condition, we can extend hope to them. We can pray they will offer God a surrendered will and a repentant heart, so He can redeem them as well.

### BACKGROUND

The first verse of this chapter contains a third “wake-up” call to Jerusalem. (The first two wake-up calls are found in Isaiah 51, verses 9 and 17.) This was an important admonition to get up and put on garments of righteousness. God’s chosen people had been oppressed and persecuted by Egypt and Assyria, and would be held captive by the Babylonians. (Note that Isaiah speaks from a future perspective, as though both the captivity and the people’s return had already occurred.)

Verse 1 mentions “Jerusalem, the holy city.” Several Scriptures in both the Old and New Testaments refer to Jerusalem as the holy city. It had been set aside by God, but because the Jews refused to obey Him, it would be destroyed first by armies of Babylon (this occurred in 586 B.C.) and then by the Romans (this occurred in 70 A.D.).

Isaiah also saw ahead to the time during the Millennial Reign when the remnant of the Jews will return to Jerusalem, and God will receive the full honor due His wonderful Name. The prophet foretold that during the Millennium, the “uncircumcised and the unclean” (those who are not saved) will not go into Jerusalem. The Jewish people will be able to shake off the “dust” of captivity.

Verse 7 refers to good tidings. In the future, the Jews will rejoice to be able to return to their land, rebuild their Temple, and worship God. They will again bear the “vessels of the LORD,” leaving all foreign and idolatrous worship behind.

“Depart ye, depart ye” (verse 11) was a challenge for the Israelites to separate themselves unto God and return to their homeland. Verse 12 uses the term *rere-ward*, which means “rear guard.” God was promising that He would go both before and behind His people, and that He would provide totally for their protection.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

Hannah’s Bible Outlines  
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- IV. The message of consolation: The Holy One of Israel comforting, redeeming and enriching
  - B. The person of the deliverer (redemption)
    - 4. The exhortation to return to the Lord
      - c. The cleansing of Israel (52:1-12)
        - (1) The restoration of Israel (52:1-6)
        - (2) The praise for liberation (52:7-10)
        - (3) The purification of Israel (52:11-12)



## A CLOSER LOOK

**1. Why were the people to sing?**

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**2.** In their history, Israel had seen God go before and behind them to give protection. Why should that have helped them at the time Isaiah was writing?

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**3.** What kind of protection does God promise us today?

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## CONCLUSION

God promised to deliver Israel when they turned their hearts and minds to follow Him. So, too, He will lead those today who set their hearts and minds to follow His instructions.

## NOTES

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:5)**

During World War II, the SS Dorchester, carrying 903 servicemen, was headed over the Atlantic during the winter. One night a German torpedo hit the ship and the men realized it was going down. As men ran for lifeboats, a young GI came up to one of four chaplains and said he had lost his lifejacket. The chaplain handed the man his own lifejacket and said, “Take this.” Before long, the other three chaplains did the same. Then the chaplains linked their arms and prayed aloud as the ship went down into the icy waters.

An exchange took place that night, an exchange of something valuable. In those moments, lifejackets and lifeboats were the most priceless items available. Money, material possessions, prestige—things that usually seem valuable—were worthless. Each of those chaplains made a heroic exchange when he gave his life to save another man.

In today’s focus verse, Isaiah prophesied of a day when an exchange would be made. Jesus Christ would give His life, not to save one man, but to provide salvation for the whole human race. As God’s Son, His Blood was pure and, consequently, by far the most valuable commodity upon the earth. When His Blood was shed on Calvary, He made the exchange for us that nothing in this world—money, houses, lands, fame, or power—could buy. The price was more than giving His life. He took on Himself the transgressions and iniquities of every person throughout all the years of time.

What thanksgiving should be in our hearts as we try to fathom the infinite price of our redemption! Without question, the four men who received lifejackets on the sinking ship appreciated the chaplains’ sacrifices every time they thought of it. Yet those heroic actions could only save lives, not souls. How much more grateful we should be that Jesus gave His life for our sins!

### BACKGROUND

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One writer says of today’s passage that it is “holy ground.” It is one of the most beautiful prophecies about the Messiah in all of Scripture, and it is referenced in the New Testament more often than any other chapter of the Old Testament.

Isaiah 52:13 indicates the Servant (the Messiah) would be “exalted and extolled, and be very high.” The three-part description emphasized the magnitude and certainty of the prophecy. Some commentators feel it may also refer to the Lord’s resurrection, ascension, and place at God’s right hand.

The prophet foretold that Jesus’ appearance (visage) would be “marred” (verse 14)—He would be so beaten and disfigured that He would hardly be recognizable as a human being. After He had offered His life, He would “sprinkle many nations.” This referred to how the Old Testament priests sprinkled blood to achieve ritual purity. By His death, Christ offers atonement for the sins of the whole world. Consequently, the people of the world, including kings and leaders, will be speechless at God’s love which Christ demonstrated through His death.

The people of Christ’s day would reject His message, refuse His person, and misunderstand His mission. However, His vicarious suffering—the Innocent One who died instead of the guilty—brought salvation to mankind. Jesus faced suffering, He died, and was buried, but the end result would be His exaltation.

The reference “no form nor comeliness” indicated that the Messiah would be a common person, not royalty. He would come as a man; He would not make an appearance with the fanfare of a king.

Jesus Christ was not only the substitute for man’s sin, but Isaiah indicated in this Scripture that He also bears our griefs and sorrows.

*Wounded* means “pierced through”—the nails pierced His hands and feet, and the soldier’s spear pierced His side. *Bruised* means “crushed”—the burden of mankind’s sin crushed the Lord. Yet Christ suffered all this silently, without resistance. He was “brought as a lamb to the slaughter,” the fulfillment of the thousands of Old Testament sacrifices, the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world.

Isaiah detailed with incredible accuracy the events of Jesus’ death. “He was taken . . . from judgment”—His trials were illegal. “He was cut off” indicated a violent death. His grave was “with the wicked” when He was crucified between two thieves. Criminals in the time of Christ did not receive an honorable burial, but Jesus was “with the rich in his death” when He was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

The chapter closes with the result of the Messiah’s sufferings and His exaltation. Christ was victorious in conquering sin. Therefore, every sinner who repents can be accepted by God.

*Hannah's Bible Outlines*  
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(2) His allotted portion (53:12)

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## This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.



### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes.”  
(Isaiah 54:2)**

On May 31, 1792, William Carey preached a sermon that mission experts agree changed the world. Thousands have read or quoted two remarkable phrases from it: “Expect great things from God; Attempt great things for God!”

William Carey was led to Christ by English Christians who had separated themselves from the official Church of England. His conversion brought a deep realization that people around the world also needed Christ. At that time, Protestants were doing little to spread the Gospel. In fact, one time when Carey spoke up in behalf of missions, an older pastor rebuked him, saying witheringly, “Young man, sit down: when God pleases to convert the heathen, He will do it without your aid or mine.”

However, Carey could not ignore the vision he had received of a world in need. He gathered facts and statistics, Bible commands, and common-sense arguments which decried the position of those who said the church should do nothing. The result was a book called *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians*.

On that memorable day in May of 1792, Carey addressed fellow ministers at a conference, taking as his text our focus verse, Isaiah 54:2. As he saw it, the command to “enlarge the place of thy tent,” and to “lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes” was a challenge for missionary work. “Expect great things from God; Attempt great things for God!” he urged.

Sadly, his listeners seemed indifferent. At their meeting the next day, they said the venture was too big for them. Carey, in deep distress, asked his fellow pastors whether they were once more going to go their separate ways without doing anything. This final plea made the difference. The gathering put forward a resolution for drawing up plans to form a mission society.

William Carey became the society’s first missionary when he sailed to India in 1793 to bring the people there the message of Jesus. He stayed in India for over forty years, not returning home even once. In the remaining years of his life, he oversaw more than thirty-four translations of the Bible—more than had been done in all previous Christian history combined. Carey is revered as the “Father of Modern Missions,” and his legacy of missionary endeavor has inspired countless

Christians of succeeding generations to reach out to a world in need.

Today, as in the times of the prophet Isaiah and William Carey, the church faces the challenge recorded in these verses. Both corporately and individually we must expand our horizons, stretch out further with our outreach endeavors, always making sure that we are anchored to the “ground stakes” of truth.

Who knows what might result from your obedience to this challenge!

### BACKGROUND

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The message of consolation found in the 54th chapter of Isaiah fulfills God’s command in Isaiah 40: 2 to extend comfort to God’s people. The message of comfort is symbolically portrayed in two ways: through a representation of a bride re-wooded and rewed, and a city rebuilt and resplendent. Both images offered a preview of the coming blessing of Zion.

In this chapter, the prophet depicted the universal extent of the Servant’s atonement. While chapters 40: 1 through 52:12 refer repeatedly to Jacob, Jerusalem, and Zion, these designations for Israel appear very infrequently in chapters 52:13 through 57:21. In this portion of the Book of Isaiah, the promise of atonement was expanded to the whole world, including the Gentile church.

The chapter begins with the words, “Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear. . .” In the Near Eastern culture of that time, infertility was considered disgraceful, and on occasion husbands would take a second wife or divorce the infertile wife in hopes of bringing children into the family. Although the prophet compared the church, including Gentiles, to a woman who had not been able to bear a child, he also promised restoration. The previously barren woman would end up with children without number—spiritual descendants who had been redeemed from sin’s captivity.

In verse two, the church was told to enlarge its tent. The imagery is of a Bedouin pulling up his tent stakes, lengthening the tent cords, and repositioning the stakes to make room for expansion. God promised that the church would flourish again: there would come a day of blessings. Instead of war, God promised peace. In place of desolation and destruction, God promised beauty and prosperity. He promised that their shame would be ended, and that His kindness would not depart from His people.

The portrayal of a city in verses 11-17 uses language that is similar to the description of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21:10-27.

## AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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- IV. The message of consolation: The Holy One of Israel comforting, redeeming and enriching
  - B. The person of the deliverer (redemption)
    - 6. The exaltation of the restored nation (54:1-17)
      - a. The return to the land (54:1-3)
      - b. The restoration to the Lord (54:4-10)
      - c. The review of future blessing (54:11-17)

## A CLOSER LOOK

1. What names are given to “thy Maker . . . thine husband”?

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2. Read verses 10, 13, and 14. What would Israel be like if this promise were fulfilled today?

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3. What are some specific ways we can respond to the missionary challenge of verse 2?

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## CONCLUSION

Expansion efforts for the cause of Christ must include the extension of our faith and a recommitment to the ground-stakes of truth.

## NOTES

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.” (Isaiah 55:2)**

Just after the turn of the twentieth century, a homeless man in the city of Baltimore found a gold coin lying on the street. He considered all the things that he could do with the money. He could buy a supply of wine and have his fill of it for many days. However, it was Christmastime and he knew he would feel bad if he hoarded it all for himself. So he thought, I will buy as much as I can but I will share it with my homeless friends.

Satisfied that he had made the right choice, he started down the street to go to the liquor store. As he was passing along the store fronts he noticed a baseball bat exhibited in one of the shop windows. His mind went back to his childhood and he remembered how desperately he wanted to have his very own baseball bat as a young boy. After reflecting on this for awhile, he went inside the store and used his gold coin to purchase the baseball bat. The homeless man then walked a few blocks back in the direction he had come, and stopped at the door of an orphanage building. When a staff member answered his knock, he asked if they would please give the bat to the young lad who played stickball in the courtyard every day. The gift was delivered. And the young boy who received the bat made good use of it—he grew up to become the baseball legend, Babe Ruth.

The homeless man realized his best choice was to give the young boy a gift that would bring happiness at Christmas and a source of enjoyment in the following days. The wrong choice would have brought momentary personal pleasure, but no lasting satisfaction and probable remorse at not having done the right thing.

In our focus verse, Isaiah was telling the people of Israel to choose carefully. He admonished them not to spend their resources and efforts on things that would never satisfy. Isaiah encouraged the people to obediently follow God, and promised they would be spiritually well-fed if they did so.

Giving our lives to God is the best choice that we can make. The deep satisfaction, joy, peace, and contentment that all of us naturally crave are met when we submit ourselves to God and His plan. Subsequent choices should be based on our desire to build our

relationship with Him. We will find that decisions which inhibit our ability to read God’s Word, spend time in prayer, or miss church services lead to dissatisfaction and spiritual leanness.

God desires for us to enjoy the Gospel and the satisfaction it brings, but the choice is ours. Let us be sure to choose the best!

### BACKGROUND

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A universal call to the empty and poor is the emphasis of the first verse of this chapter, where the spiritually thirsty are invited, “Come ye to the waters.” Because of the scarcity of water in the Middle East at this time, it was especially appreciated by the people there. A town or village was known throughout the country for the quality of its water, which was described by many adjectives, such as “light,” “heavy,” “sweet,” etc. (This is why David longed for a drink of water from the well at Bethlehem; it “tasted” like home.)

Water was necessary for life, but milk was considered food. It ranked next to bread in importance. Israel was frequently described as a land “flowing with milk and honey.” Milk was among the first things set before a weary traveler. The people used the milk of cattle, sheep, and especially goats. It had to be consumed quickly (or made into cheese) because it soured so fast in the climate of that region.

While water did not spoil and milk could be drawn fresh from an animal for each use, grape juice was another matter. *Tirosh* was the Hebrew word used to describe fresh-pressed grape juice. Keeping grape juice safe enough to drink until the next harvest was difficult, especially in the warm and not overly clean conditions of ancient Palestine. Fermentation was the answer. *Yayin* (translated “wine” in verse 1) was the word used for grape juice that had been allowed to ferment enough to keep safely.

The prophet urged the people not to spend “money” (representing self-effort) for that which is “not bread” (spiritually satisfying). God’s salvation is freely offered, but individuals must receive it in order for it to nourish their souls.

The Servant did not die only for the sins of Israel, but also for the sins of the whole world. The prophet Isaiah made it clear in verse 5, by referring to “nations that knew not thee,” that the Gentiles are included in God’s plan. In this chapter, he began a threefold invitation to the Gentiles: *come* (verses 1-5) and *seek* (verses 6-13). The final element of this invitation is *worship*, and it is found in the first eight verses of the next chapter.



## AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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- IV. The message of consolation: The Holy One of Israel comforting, redeeming and enriching
  - B. The person of the deliverer (redemption)
    - 7. The inclusion of Gentiles in the kingdom blessing
      - a. The invitation extended (55:1-5)
      - b. The call to seek the Lord (55:6-7)
      - c. The explanation of the Lord's ways (55:8-11)
      - d. The results of acceptance (55:12-13)

## A CLOSER LOOK

1. What is the urgent warning contained in verse 6?

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2. Since we know salvation is not "free," what did the prophet mean when he said, "Come, buy...without money and without price"?

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3. How can we delight in the Lord today?

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## CONCLUSION

Salvation is available to all and will certainly produce the results which God intended in the hearts of those who seek and receive it.

## NOTES

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.” (Isaiah 56:7)**

Children need kind and loving instruction about being respectful in church. Teaching them to reverence God’s House takes time, consistency, and patience. Over and over, a child should hear that this is a time to be quiet and sit still, both foreign concepts to a healthy little one. There are setbacks along this road, but learning is one of the things children do best—they just need to be guided in the right direction.

A woman tells of the challenges of trying to keep their four small children tranquil during meetings while she and her husband played in the church orchestra. Since three-year-old Bob was prone to squirming, his dad would situate him on the front pew in plain sight. As a church service progressed, the father would make hand signals to the small boy to encourage proper behavior. Hands held together facing up indicated, “Get a songbook and sing,” even if the book was mostly a prop. One finger held to the lips, of course, said, “Be quiet,” and a forefinger held up in warning meant, “We will discuss this later.”

As adults, we should also remember the concept of reverence in church. God has proclaimed that His House is a house of prayer for all people. This proclamation defines a church as a place to meet and interact with our Heavenly Father.

God is present whenever people pray. Upon entering a sanctuary, notice how His Spirit dwells there. It is a holy place—one that should not be tainted with irreverence. Worship services help attune our hearts to God before, during, and after meetings. Our minds need to concentrate on spiritual things while we are in God’s House.

The marvelous thing is that, when we set the church apart as holy, we are rewarded with God’s presence and continual answers to prayer. Many of us have personally been recipients of the blessings that come from designating God’s House as a place of prayer. Some of my most miraculous spiritual breakthroughs have been obtained while in God’s House: physical healing, sanctification, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and solutions to seemingly impossible problems.

God made the proclamation in the focus verse to Israel, but its promise extends to our day. When we set

a church aside for prayer, it becomes God’s House, not just another building. He will dwell there, and our offerings to Him will be accepted. Let’s purpose to make our church a house of prayer for all people.

### BACKGROUND

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Starting with Isaiah 56, a shift takes place in the message God sent Israel through Isaiah. Prior chapters of this Book promised salvation and extended hope to those who would turn to God. In this chapter, Isaiah began to declare God’s condemnation of the people who would not repent. However, the message began with an instruction to “keep judgment” and “do justice.” Once more, those who were willing to do right were encouraged.

According to the Mosaic Law, both foreigners and eunuchs were excluded from worship. (Eunuchs were chamberlains over harems, or court ministers in general.) But God now wanted to let the excluded know that they were welcome. They would be given a more lasting name than a family name, which was regarded with high honor among the Hebrews.

Another theme of the chapter is holiness and reverence to God’s designated places and times. Keeping the Sabbath was important under the Law (Exodus 20:8-11). Keeping the Sabbath holy represented trust and allegiance to God. For instance, by not engaging in agricultural or business pursuits on that day, a person acknowledged that he believed God would take care of him and bless him. Since the Sabbath was a sign of Israel’s covenant with God, keeping the Sabbath signified that a person believed in the covenant and the Lord.

With the promise of the Messiah, the house of God was declared to be open to all people (verse 7). No longer would priests alone be able to pray in the Temple. Jesus quoted this verse in Matthew 21:13.

The ninth verse opens with calling on the enemies of the Jews, the Chaldeans, and subsequently the Romans, to be as beasts of prey against them. Furthermore, Israel’s own spiritual leaders were corrupt, and had failed to give instruction and admonition, as reliable watchmen should. They were like a dog that “cannot bark.” They not only slumbered involuntarily, but loved it.

The 56th chapter proclaims that those who would partake of the blessings of God are required to be holy in all manner of life and conversation. Those who so live will be accepted. These blessings are available to the whole human race, without any respect to persons or nations.

## AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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- IV. The message of consolation: The Holy One of Israel comforting, redeeming and enriching
  - B. The person of the deliverer (redemption)
    - 7. The inclusion of Gentiles in the kingdom blessing
      - e. The universal availability of salvation (56:1-8)
    - 8. The condemnation of the wicked in Israel
      - a. The condemnation of Israel's rulers (56:9-12)

## A CLOSER LOOK

1. Who specifically was included in the call to fellowship with God?

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2. Why did God want the Sabbath set aside as holy?

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3. What can we do while we are at church that will help us further establish God's House as a house of prayer?

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## CONCLUSION

The purpose of God's House is for worshiping Him, and all are now included in the invitation to gather for worship. Our reverent, respectful actions will illustrate that we truly believe God's Word.

## NOTES

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works; for they shall not profit thee. When thou criest, let thy companies deliver thee; but the wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall take them: but he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain.”**  
(Isaiah 57:12-13)

For several years, we lived in a part of the United States known as “tornado alley.” Having never experienced a tornado, we were somewhat oblivious to the dangers of one. However, the people who had lived in the area for many years had a different view than we did, and they warned us not to ignore the signs of impending danger.

The year before we moved there, a brutal tornado had destroyed over four hundred homes in one area of town. The local people understood the devastation that could result from a severe storm, and they had a healthy respect for the indicators that could precede a tornado. On one occasion, we stopped during a church service and gathered in a small entryway until the storm passed. Another time, we got a phone call from a family in the middle of the night telling us they were headed our way to get out of the path of a tornado.

Through the warnings and admonitions of those who had experience, we learned to be more attentive and cautious during severe storms so that we could take cover if needed. We understood that our safety depended on our willingness to listen to those who had firsthand knowledge, and to follow the instructions we had been given.

In our focus verses, the prophet warned the people that their self-righteousness and good works would not profit them. They had turned to idols and rejected God, but Isaiah told them that when the storms came, their idols would blow away like chaff. The people seemingly did not understand the danger they were in, and ignored the fact that judgment would come if they did not change their ways. Still, God held out hope to those who had a contrite and humble spirit. He encouraged them that if they would turn from their wicked ways and trust in God, they would “possess the land” and inherit His “holy mountain.”

Today, too, that promise is extended. Those who recognize their spiritual peril and turn to God with a contrite and humble spirit will find deliverance. This passage contains a great promise of hope to all who, in their own inadequacy and brokenness, throw

themselves upon the mercy of God. God will revive them and restore them to a right relationship with Him. What a God of mercy we serve!

### BACKGROUND

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The message begun in chapter 56 is continued in this passage, which was set in the last days of the Northern Kingdom, before their overthrow by Assyria. In idolatrous Israel, the people practiced sorcery, prostitution, offered their children as sacrifices, and worshiped their idols in every part of the land, both publicly and privately. The righteous were persecuted and the only way they would find deliverance from the evil to come was through death. Through the prophet, God likened the offense of idolatry to adultery against Israel’s true husband — Himself.

The “high mountain” mentioned in verse 7 alluded to the fact that pagan altars were commonly built in high locations. The prophet noted that the idolater had “enlarged” his bed, which means he was worshipping several pagan gods at once.

In verse 9, God told the people that they were seeking for security in the wrong places when they made political alliances with their pagan neighbors. He said the reason they did not fear Him was because He had been merciful to them and had not sent judgment sooner (verse 11). He told them that their trust in their idols and their own spirituality would not profit them. They would be overrun by the enemy and their idols could not save them when judgment came. The fate of the worshipers of God is set in contrast to the godless in that they “shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain” (verse 13).

In verse 14, God encouraged the faithful remnant to remove every hindrance and denounce sin in order to worship the Lord. The phrase “cast ye up, prepare the way” referred to the process of heaping up a mound of earth and stones in order to build up the surface of the road.

In verses 15 through 21, God told the people what they needed to do to receive peace and restoration with Him. They needed to recognize who God really was by understanding His great majesty and His holiness. It was imperative to come before Him with a humble and contrite spirit before He would dwell with them. God wanted them to know that because of His love for them, He did not want to remain angry with them. Even though they had stubbornly gone their own way, He longed to have a relationship with His people. He wanted to heal them and restore comforts to them.

The peace God desired to give them was more than just the absence of hostility with their enemies. It meant a wonderful sense of well-being that came from a relationship with their God. The wicked could not receive this peace because they were like the restless sea whose sin tormented them and caused them to be in continual turmoil.

**AMPLIFIED OUTLINE**

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- IV. The message of consolation: The Holy One of Israel comforting, redeeming and enriching
  - B. The person of the deliverer (redemption)
    - 8. The condemnation of the wicked in Israel
      - b. The idolatry of Israel's rulers (57:1-13)
        - (1) The iniquity of idolatry (57:1-10)
        - (2) The futility of idolatry (57:11-13)
      - c. The mercy of the repentant (57:14-21)

**A CLOSER LOOK**

1. What two things was Israel putting their trust in instead of God?

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2. Why did the people give their love and worship to worthless wood and stone instead of the God who made and loved them?

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3. Why are humility and contrition so important in God's sight?

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4. What steps can we take to avoid falling into idolatry in our day?

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**CONCLUSION**

God offers His peace and place of refuge to those who come to Him with a humble and contrite spirit. What an opportunity is ours!

**NOTES**

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.” (Isaiah 58:11)**

When I was in college, a fellow student shared with me how Jesus Christ died so painfully for my sins. At that moment God broke my heart. My friend prayed with me and the Lord saved me!

That was a wonderful experience, but I knew very little about how to live a Christian life. I did not have a clear understanding of Bible doctrine and those I associated with taught me things that I now know were incorrect. I was informed that I sinned every day, and so I needed to ask forgiveness every day for my sins. Because of this, I made many poor choices. Temptations were all around me on the campus, and I figured that I would just ask forgiveness later for the sin I was about to commit. Although this sounds ridiculous now, it is easy to justify sin if you do not know that God’s power can help you live without it.

I am thankful that the Lord was faithful to guide me to a family who believed the whole Bible and in living a holy life without sin. What I saw in their home impressed me. They invited me to attend church with them, and there I heard more testimonies of God’s power to help a person live a victorious life. The Lord helped me to see the truth in this and taught me the right way to go. One day I yielded my heart to Him again, and He gave me an ongoing satisfaction and peace in my life that I had never known before. What a relief it was not to have to struggle with sin any longer!

In our focus verse, God promised the Israelites that He would continually guide and abundantly satisfy them if they would meet His conditions. This chapter contrasts hypocritical fasts with true acts of devotion.

God wants us to serve Him out of our love for Him. When we are obedient to Him because we want to please Him, we, too, will find that He will guide us into truth and His blessings will be poured out on our lives in abundance. In turn, those blessings will then be channeled through us to others “like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.” That in itself is enough to make our hearts overflow with love and gratitude to our Savior!

### BACKGROUND

In Chapter 58, the prophet denounced empty religious sanctimony. His cry was against sin and was a plea for the restoration of true worship in Israel.

The first four verses describe the condition of Israel at that time related to their worship practices. God told the prophet to “cry aloud”—to verbally sound a loud, clear warning to the people because of their hypocrisy in worship and the practice of fasting. The people were self-righteously following all of the religious motions and mechanics of worship, but their actions were nothing but empty ritual because their motives were impure—they wanted to impress God with their fasting. At the same time, they were contending and debating with each other.

In verses 5-7, God instructed Israel about a proper fast, one that is selfless and from the heart. The prophet asked a series of rhetorical questions through which he presented the characteristics of a fast that God would bless. The people needed to understand that more important than correct forms of worship was genuine compassion for the poor, the helpless, and the oppressed.

Verses 8-12 describe the blessings that would result to those who would meet God’s conditions. This series of promises is climaxed by an ultimate promise of revival and restoration.

The “putting forth of the finger” mentioned in verse 9 was a gesture of contempt, and it signified pointing an accusatory finger of spiritual superiority at others. The phrase “they that shall be of thee” in verse 12 indicated that the descendants of those to whom Isaiah was preaching would one day rebuild the destroyed city of Jerusalem.

In the final two verses, the prophet reminded the people once more of God’s conditions. The conditions were grouped into three categories: man’s responsibility toward God, man’s responsibility toward others, and man’s responsibility regarding the Sabbath. If the people would obey God in these areas, they would enjoy God’s covenant blessings.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

Hannah’s Bible Outlines  
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- IV. The message of consolation: The Holy One of Israel comforting, redeeming and enriching
  - C. The provision for deliverance (future glory)
    - 1. The need for deliverance
      - a. Their hypocritical worship (58:1-14)
        - (1) Their false worship (58:1-5)



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1. What did the prophet say were the reasons for Isra-

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We too are assured of God's guidance and provision if we will meet God's conditions and serve Him with a true heart!

[illegible]



### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.” (Isaiah 59:19)**

Recently one of my friends had a rough week. On Tuesday, while she was at the neighborhood grocery store, her tire was deliberately slashed. The next morning the dryer quit working, and since there are six people in her household, many loads of laundry can pile up in a hurry. After a semi-desperate conversation with her repairman, he finally agreed that he would schedule her on Friday. Later that afternoon the dishwasher went out, so she called to change the repair order to two items. Then the icemaker in her refrigerator quit working, necessitating another call to the service department. This visit would really be worth his time! It turned out that each item had to have parts ordered, which would take a week or two to arrive.

While this is a relatively insignificant example of the enemy coming in like a flood, it is still a disquieting accumulation of repairs. However, when my friend learned about a family who was facing the death of a child, she knew she had so much to be thankful for. Her home was intact, all of their children were safe, and she still did have several working appliances!

It is easy to get so comfortable with the rhythm of our days that we chafe under the minor trials that life brings. However, upheavals do come, and a “flood” of challenges all at once can leave us feeling slightly battered, or even overwhelmed. In the midst of multiple challenges, we can claim the promise in our focus verse. The appropriate definition of *standard* in this usage is, “a flag indicating the presence of a sovereign or public official.” That Sovereign is Jesus, and if we are obeying Him, He is present with us.

Obviously, not all trials of life are spiritual battles, but whatever their nature, they can help us to grow in spiritual virtues. Let us remember to talk to the Lord about each issue in particular, and especially when many issues have stacked up all at once. If we ask for His strength and wisdom to get through the “flood,” He will help us tackle the barrage in a composed manner. When the problems have passed, we can discover that we have gained spiritual ground, such as trust in the One who helped us, patience to just deal with the

problems at hand, and grace to simply accept the flood as potential for spiritual growth.

As a bonus, if we exemplify patience in tribulation, people around us will be influenced for good. If they are not yet Christians, they may ask about the source of our strength. If they have already been redeemed, they might be encouraged to trust more fully when they encounter a flood!

### BACKGROUND

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Chapter 59 begins with a description of the potential power of God to save if man would only seek Him, followed by a warning of the separation brought about by mankind’s propensity to sinfulness and neglect of God. Through Isaiah, God condemned the thoughts, language, and actions of the nation of Israel. There was widespread disintegration of moral values, and those who were unfaithful to God were often disloyal to their fellowmen as well. Various members of the body aided in perpetrating this unrighteousness: hands, fingers, lips, tongue, feet, and mind. Their wicked acts included iniquity, lies, killing of innocents, lack of truth or justice, conceiving mischief, and violence. The end of the chapter is a reminder that salvation is of God, and He is all-powerful.

In verse 2, the prophet stated that sin hides God’s face and separates the Creator from those He created. Israel had turned toward iniquity, and God was in the other direction. The people could not expect Him to look favorably upon them. It was an affront to God that Israel moved in the direction of sin and yet expected Him to rescue them from their difficulties. Similarly, when “truth is fallen in the street,” they could not expect justice.

The word *vanity* in verse 4 means “nothingness.” The same word is used in Genesis 1:2 (“the earth was *without form*. . .”). This form of the verb implies continuous action, meaning the people of Israel were constantly trusting in nothingness or worthless ideas.

Cockatrice eggs, mentioned in verse 5, are from poisonous snakes. Eating the eggs brought death, and if they were left to hatch, they brought forth more snakes. Similarly, the spider’s web was an attempt to ensnare.

Israel had been so rebellious against God that justice, truth, and righteousness had departed. Therefore, God would not rescue them, but would allow Babylon to conquer Israel as punishment. “There was no intercessor” indicated that there was no one to stand between the sinful people and God’s judgment. Consequently, God caused Isaiah to prophesy of the

time when He Himself would step in to help them. The concluding verses of the chapter look forward to the Millennial Reign when Israel will recognize their Messiah and peace will cover the earth.

## AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

*Hannah's Bible Outlines*  
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- IV. The message of consolation: The Holy One of Israel comforting, redeeming and enriching
- C. The provision for deliverance (future glory)
  - 1. The need for deliverance
    - b. Their separation through sin (59:1-21)
      - (1) The sinfulness of Israel (59:1-8)
      - (2) The confession of Israel (59:9-15)
      - (3) The intervention of God (59:16-19)
      - (4) The advent of Messiah (59:20-21)

## A CLOSER LOOK

1. List the sins enumerated in this chapter. Which are also common in today's world?

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- 2. How should we expect God to react to similar wickedness today?**

[illegible]

- 3.** Several promises are found in this chapter. What must we do for these promises to apply to us?

[illegible]

## CONCLUSION

Upheavals, trials, and sin may be around us, but we can hold fast to God and His promises. He wants to be a strong Savior for us.

## NOTES

[illegible]



### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.” (Isaiah 60:1-2)**

Not long ago, our town suffered a major electrical blackout in the middle of the night. A portion of the power distribution station for the surrounding area exploded with a loud boom and a light show that could be seen across town. The result was a loss of power to every part of the city. There were no street lights, traffic lights, or porch lights—in fact, the only lights at all were those on emergency vehicles and headlights. The darkness was so dense in our house that you couldn’t see your hand in front of your face. I found it difficult to sleep under these circumstances, but my biggest concern was that if our two small children woke up, they would be afraid. Sure enough, before long they both awakened and found the darkness so disturbing that they began to cry. To put their minds at ease, we lit some candles in the living room. That was all it took and the children found the peace and comfort they needed to drift back into slumber.

Deep darkness, such as you might find in a cavern or a large blackout, can be frightening when there is no light to dispel it. It is very difficult to find direction in darkness like this, yet the smallest amount of light can fill an entire room and help you find your way. In our focus verse, the prophet Isaiah predicted that “the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people.” In the midst of this spiritual darkness, God said He would shine His light and glory upon His people and in turn it would draw other nations to Him.

Today, if we have been born again, God’s Light has shone upon us, and we are His people through His Son Jesus Christ. As such, we need to direct others to His Light. Just as our children found peace in the candlelight during our neighborhood blackout, people around us can find peace in the Light of Christ. This world grows darker every day and many are looking and longing for something that will bring peace to their troubled world. Whether it is at school, on the job, or in conversation with our neighbors, God’s Light is the very thing they need.

If you think that what you can do seems small, remember that any glimmer of light will appear brilliant in a dark room. With God’s help, we can point others to His Light in this darkened world!

### BACKGROUND

This chapter begins with a climactic announcement of hope—a divine call to Zion and Jerusalem, which was pictured as a captive slave, lying upon the ground. The summons was to “arise” and “shine” because the “glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.” Note that the prophet was so assured of the future fulfillment of his message that he used a verb tense indicating it had already occurred. After the dire depictions of the darkness and misery brought about by the sins of the people, the prophet proclaimed the advent of the new city of God, where the Lord will have dispelled the darkness. Because the Messiah would come to Jerusalem (see Isaiah 59:20), the Shekinah glory of God would emanate from the city.

In verses 4 through 9, the prophet indicated that the Jews living in foreign lands would return, and that Gentile nations from the east and west would come, bringing their tribute to Israel. This will result in great wealth flowing into the country. The specific places mentioned in verses 6 and 7 belonged to obscure tribes in the Arabian desert, hundreds of miles from Israel.

Verses 10 through 18 paint a graphic picture of Zion’s restoration. In His Millennial Kingdom, God will motivate foreign nations to help rebuild the city of Jerusalem, and the city that was once forsaken will become one of “eternal excellency.” Israel will become the world’s preeminent nation, and those who rebel and refuse allegiance to Jerusalem will be destroyed. Violence and crime will be unknown in Jerusalem, and the city will be one of both outward beauty and inward stability.

In the last four verses of the chapter, the prophet concluded by alluding again (as in verses 1-3) to the city being filled with brightness that comes from the Redeemer. The dark days when sin encompassed the world, referred to in verse 20 as “the days of thy mourning,” will have ended, and the people will be nourished and cared for by God himself.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

Hannah’s Bible Outlines  
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- IV. The message of consolation: The Holy One of Israel comforting, redeeming and enriching
  - C. The provision for deliverance (future glory)
    - 2. The glory of the kingdom
      - a. The position of Israel in the kingdom (60:1-22)
        - (1) Her enlightenment (60:1-3)
        - (2) Her prominence (60:4-14)
        - (3) Her peace (60:15-22)

## A CLOSER LOOK

## 1. Who will come to Jerusalem in the Millennial Kingdom?

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**2. How does the Jerusalem portrayed in our text differ from the Jerusalem of our day?**

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**3. In what ways has Jesus Christ been a light in your personal life?**

[illegible]

## CONCLUSION

God's light alone can dispel the darkness of the wicked world that we live in. How we long for the day when the promises of this chapter will be fulfilled!

## NOTES

[illegible]



### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“As the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.” (Isaiah 61:11)**

“Spring” is such a wonderful, lively word. During the season of the year called spring, we see dramatic changes in our gardens or fields as new growth “springs” up and mere sprouts begin developing into bountiful, fruitful plants. It is a time of great expectations for the farmer and gardener—a time when optimism prevails as plans are made for an eventual harvest.

On our farm, planting the crops for the year involved several factors. Dad kept a watchful eye on the fields and the sky as the winter snows receded, the weather warmed, and the soil began to warm and dry out. He was cautious not to drive the tractors into the fields too early, because getting mired down in the soggy ground was a very real possibility. Pre-planting preparations included applying fertilizer, tilling the soil, removing big rocks, and “dragging” the field to smooth the furrows. It was a glad day when he finally felt the conditions were right to put in some seed! The planter was hooked up to the tractor, carefully chosen seeds were poured into the hoppers, and off Dad drove to the prepared acreage. If all went well, by evening vast expanses of land were ready to spring forth. Now it could rain!

Jesus also went to great lengths to provide the correct environment for His people to prosper and grow spiritually. He came to sow righteousness among mankind. He willingly left His heavenly home and lived among men, modeling forgiveness and compassion, and teaching us how to pray and how to live. His was a mission of good: preaching, binding up, comforting, proclaiming liberty, and giving beauty, the oil of joy, and the garment of praise. Thus, the Word of God was brought down to a level we could comprehend, using common circumstances to explain eternal concepts.

As we go about our daily lives, let us have a consciousness of Christ working through us by patterning after His righteousness, expressing His care and concern for the oppressed, and evidencing His attitudes of humility, kindness, and love. The lives that come in contact with ours should sense the presence of Jesus.

When we live in that manner, Christ’s righteousness will “spring forth,” and there will be an eventual abundant harvest!

### BACKGROUND

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Restoration, deliverance, and salvation to mankind are all proclaimed in this superb chapter where we see a panorama of the Messiah’s mission. Isaiah foretold that Christ was coming to usher in a New Covenant.

It was from this chapter of Isaiah that Jesus read in the early days of his earthly ministry (Luke 4:17-21). Just prior to that time He had been tempted for forty days in the wilderness, returning afterward to Galilee “in the power of the Spirit.” On this particular Sabbath He was in His hometown of Nazareth, and went to the synagogue as usual. He stood to read, and by divine design, the Book of Isaiah was given to Him at this very portion of Scripture. After reading the first two verses, Jesus told them that the Scripture was fulfilled that day in their ears. Those who heard “bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.”

When Jesus read the first phrase in this chapter, “the Spirit of the Lord is upon me,” it was a powerful indication of the Trinity. The Lord God referred to God the Father. Jesus was on earth reading the verse, which declared that the Holy Spirit was upon Him.

Christ’s purposes in leaving the courts of Heaven to come to this earth were several. As the Anointed One, He preached good tidings unto the meek, bound up the broken-hearted, and proclaimed liberty to the captives, as well as the acceptable year of the Lord. In addition, He comforted those who mourned, giving them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. These actions were directed toward those who were downtrodden (meek, captive, bound, and mourners), thus illustrating that God loves to give His good gifts to the poor in spirit. Through His death on the Cross, He empowered those who responded to His message to become trees of righteousness that God might be glorified through them.

God loves justice between men, and hates all injustice. He is displeased with oppression against His people, not only because it harms them, but also because it violates eternal equity. Ritual service to God does not atone for defiance of moral precepts.

The new plan for the people of God was that they would build up the former desolations, repair the waste cities, receive everlasting joy, and be rewarded



double for their shame. The descendants of the righteous would be renowned, and acknowledged to be a blessed people. The prophet's message was one of a wonderful hope for the faithful.

The phrase in verse 10, "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD," was even more powerful in the original language. A more literal translation would be, "rejoicing I will rejoice."<sup>1</sup> Hebrew writers often emphasized their points by repeated words. This verse spoke of inner joy coming out of the soul, and that joy was caused by God's righteousness within.

**AMPLIFIED OUTLINE**

Hannah's Bible Outlines  
Used by permission per WORDsearch

- IV. The message of consolation: The Holy One of Israel comforting, redeeming and enriching
  - C. The provision for deliverance (future glory)
    - 2. The glory of the kingdom
      - b. The ministry of the Messiah (61:1-11)
        - (1) The two advents of Messiah (61:1-3)
        - (2) The results of the second advent (61:4-11)
          - (a) The restoration of Israel (61:4-9)
          - (b) The gift of righteousness (61:10-11)

**A CLOSER LOOK**

1. With what does God clothe His people?

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2. Why might the promises of this chapter have been especially helpful to the people of Isaiah's time?

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3. What are some ways God's righteousness in us might impact others?

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**CONCLUSION**

We are to be trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, bringing glory to the Lord. Let us allow His righteousness to spring forth from our lives today!

**NOTES**

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1. *The King James Bible Commentary* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, Inc., 1999), pg. 856.



### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

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**“I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence.” (Isaiah 62:6)**

A number of years ago, the London Missionary Society sent a group of missionaries to Tahiti. For fourteen years these missionaries faithfully preached the Gospel and prayed for the salvation of the people there. However, their efforts seemed like feathers blown against a brick wall—in fourteen years there had not been a single convert. Idolatry and savagery were prevalent. Finally the directors of the organization began to consider calling the missionaries home from their seemingly fruitless field.

However, there were a few people in the society who felt that the Lord would not be honored by their unbelief if the missionaries were brought home. Instead, these intercessors began to pray more earnestly for the workers in Tahiti. As the Lord led, they sent money and letters to the weary missionaries far from home, encouraging them to hold on and to keep proclaiming the Gospel.

Before their letters even reached Tahiti, God started working in a mighty way among the Tahitian people. The faithful preaching of the Gospel began to have an affect, and the idols that had been so prevalent throughout the islanders’ history were overthrown. Scores of souls were saved from their sins and righteousness replaced evil.

This wonderful outpouring of God’s mercy and grace might never have happened if the missionaries on the island of Tahiti had given up and held their peace. It might never have happened if the faithful band back home had not persevered in continual, persistent intercessory prayer. How important it is to persevere!

Often we may become discouraged and feel the Lord is not listening to our prayers for the salvation of a loved one because our prayers seemingly have gone unanswered. Discouragement is a trick of the enemy! Our prayers *have* been heard and God *is* working, though we may not see evidence of it as yet.

In our focus verse, we see God appointing faithful watchmen to pray continually day and night for the salvation and peace of Jerusalem. Although the petitions of those faithful prayer warriors have not yet been answered, they will be answered after the Lord returns.

We too must pray persistently for others and trust the Lord for results. If we continue to do so without wavering, God will answer our prayers also!

### BACKGROUND

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Bible scholars note that if the Book of Isaiah were arranged chronologically, this chapter would precede chapter 60, as the content outlines the situations preliminary to the deliverance of Zion and the establishment of Christ’s kingdom. Commentators differ on whether it was the prophet, or God himself, who was speaking in this chapter. Verse 6 would seem to indicate that it was God.

The text begins with the proclamation that there will be no righteousness or peace in the earth until Jerusalem becomes “a crown of glory” to the Lord. The word translated *diadem* is the same root word used to describe the headpiece of the high priest. Isaiah pictured the crown in the hand of Jehovah, rather than on His head. This implied that God will display Zion—present her as a manifestation of His redeeming power.

Though Israel will have been left alone by the Lord for many years, when the Lord returns, she will be reconciled to Him again. He will make the land plentiful again and give the people of Israel a new name. Formerly called ‘*azubhah*, or “forsaken by Jehovah,” the land will then be called *Hephzibah*, which means, “my delight is in her.” This can be compared to a bride who marries and is given a new name through her husband. The Lord will also change the name of the land from *Desolate* to *Beulah*, which means, “married to.”

Verse 6 refers to the fact that, throughout the years, God has appointed spiritual watchmen to pray for the salvation, peace, and protection of Israel. They have been called to intercede continually until the Lord comes to fulfill His promise to Jerusalem.

When Jesus returns, the land will grow plentifully again. God’s people, instead of strangers, will eat the fruits of their land (verses 8-9).

In the last few verses of the text, Israel is commanded to prepare herself for the great changes that will take place in Zion when the Lord returns. A cry is made to God’s people around the world to prepare themselves to leave their heathen cities and return to Jerusalem to see the coming glory of the Lord. The phrase “thy salvation cometh” in verse 11 refers to more than a new kingdom coming to Jerusalem, but a coming King as well. As God’s people return to Jerusalem, they will be called “sought out.” This

word, *derushah*, means the opposite of “forsaken” in Hebrew. Israel will finally have a permanent home and God’s love and mercy will never leave them again.

## AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

*Hannah's Bible Outlines*  
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#### IV. The message of consolation: The Holy One of Israel comforting, redeeming and enriching

- C. The provision for deliverance (future glory)
  - 2. The glory of the kingdom
    - c. The position of Jerusalem in the kingdom
      - (1) The resolve to bless Jerusalem (62:1)
      - (2) The restoration of Jerusalem (62:2-5)
      - (3) The promise of Jerusalem's permanent deliverance (62:6-12)

## A CLOSER LOOK

**1.** Who is “the crown of glory” in the hand of the Lord that is mentioned in verse 3?

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**2.** What was the main purpose of the watchmen upon the walls of Jerusalem?

[illegible]

**3.** In what ways could we be considered “watchmen” in our day? How can we fulfill that responsibility?

[illegible]

## CONCLUSION

Let us purpose in our hearts to be faithful watchmen, praying and working continually for the salvation of loved ones and the world. When the Lord returns, we want to be ready with a harvest of souls to rejoice because our King and Savior has come!

## NOTES

[illegible]



### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.” (Isaiah 63:10)**

The importance of listening to God when His Spirit speaks to our hearts cannot be overstated. Jim Gilmon proved that. He said, “Rheumatic fever struck me when I was just a lad. The doctor told me I would not be healthy. I promised God my life if He would heal me, and He did! But I broke my promise.

“God never let me forget what I had vowed. Years later, while I was in drunken stupors, He would remind me that I had promised to serve Him. One night while under the influence of liquor, I was in an automobile accident. The doctors tried everything they knew but they could not bring me back to consciousness. Then the people at my mother’s church prayed for me. When consciousness returned, once more I promised God that if He would just get me out of the hospital, I would serve Him. Again, God did His part, but I did not do mine.

“One day a loaded logging truck that I was driving got away from me. It rolled over two-and-a-half times into a canyon. When the truck hit the bottom and quit rolling, I was afraid to move. With my head on the seat, I cried, ‘O God!’ Again God spared my life. I climbed out of that wreck with only a few scratches. Still I was not ready to give up my life of sin!

“Over a year later, I stopped alongside a road to look at a wrecked car. A dead man was under the steering wheel. Right then it seemed God spoke out of Heaven to me, ‘You are going to be next!’ I told myself, ‘I’ll go to church Sunday,’ but I didn’t. Oh, what conviction settled on me that night! Finally I phoned my parents, and they told me to come to their home. They called the minister, and at an old davenport I knelt to pray. Jesus did not turn me away. He saved me that night.”

Although Jim Gilmon had turned God away many times, he did finally yield and give God his life. In contrast, Israel refused to turn and eventually was destroyed. The focus verse says they “rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit,” and God’s condemnation of them was strong. God’s mercy had been extended to them many times. Throughout Isaiah’s ministry, he urged Israel to turn to Jehovah and find His salvation, but they did not heed. Other prophets, too, heralded God’s warnings, but Israel stubbornly refused. God’s strong words and judgment were the result.

We want to learn a lesson from Israel and heed God’s instructions. Furthermore, we want to be quick to do so, not testing God’s mercy. Will we obey God today?

### BACKGROUND

In our text, Isaiah looked forward to the time when the enemies of God’s people would be destroyed (verses 1-6). Then he recounted God’s mercy toward the Israelites (verses 7-14), and requested that the Lord work again for His people in miraculous ways (verses 15-19).

The capital city of Edom was Bozrah. As descendants of Esau (see Genesis 25:23), the Edomites were related to the Israelites. However, they were consistently antagonistic to Israel. Later, when Jerusalem was overcome, Edom sided with Israel’s enemies and delighted in her destruction. In prophetic statements, Edom often was a type of those who were in opposition to God and hated His people.

In verse 1, Isaiah asked the identity of the royal figure coming from Edom. Verses 1-6 contain the answer, giving a vivid picture of Christ and His ultimate victory over His enemies. In verse 2 a question was asked about why this royal person’s garments were stained as if He had been treading out grapes. (Pressing grapes was a familiar scene to Isaiah’s audience. The grapes were put into a bowl-shaped area in a rock, and the people walked over them, squeezing out the juice.) In verse 3, the Lord answered, “I have trodden the winepress alone.” Because Jesus would go to the Cross alone, even being separated from God the Father, He alone has the right to judge and execute His sentence upon mankind.

Verse 4 references the “day of vengeance”—a day planned by and known to God alone. This vengeance does not mean an uncontrolled outburst of human anger, but indicates God’s retribution to those who persisted in rebelling. The next two verses complete the picture of full and final destruction for His enemies.

Isaiah recalled the mercies, goodness, and loving-kindnesses that God had bestowed on Israel, leading them through the wilderness, forgiving them when they rebelled, and bringing them into the Promised Land so that God’s name could be glorified (verses 7-14). He boldly stated, “Doubtless thou art our father” (verse 16). Acknowledging God as a father was very rare in the Old Testament. Isaiah emphasized God’s eternal love for them and all people as His creation. Even if the patriarchs Abraham and Israel (Jacob) could not help them, God would.

# AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

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- ## A CLOSER LOOK

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- [illegible]

To ignore God's instructions is to presume on His mercy. Let us choose to be obedient rather than presumptuous.

[illegible]



### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.” (Isaiah 64:8)**

Isobel Kuhn, missionary to the Lisu tribesmen of China, learned a priceless lesson about submission. In her book, *In the Arena*, she wrote about how, early in her preparation to become a missionary, a fellow Christian’s example of a submissive state of mind had impacted the whole course of her own life.

Marjorie Harrison, a talented young candidate for the mission field, had looked forward to going to China for years. She had carefully saved her earnings to pay for her own provisions and passage to China, but when the time came, the mission board determined that her health was too delicate to withstand pioneer life in the Far East. Marjorie took the blow like a true soldier of the Lord, and quietly accepted the decision that spelled the end of her dreams and plans of a lifetime.

After receiving the news, Marjorie went to her room and knelt down beside her bed. She prayed, “Lord, this money I have saved—I cannot take it back. Will You help me to find someone to go to China in my place?” No one but the Lord knew of that offering or the cost of her submission, but that very evening, a dinner guest at the family table spoke of the financial need of another young woman, Isobel Kuhn, who longed to go to China but could not afford it. Marjorie said nothing, but her heart sprang up with joy at the clear answer to her prayer. The connection was made, and through Marjorie’s gift, Isobel was able to go to China.

Submission is a key element in the successful Christian life. In our focus verse, Isaiah acknowledges that God is the Creator of our very being. As we submit to His plan for us, God shapes us into His image, just as a potter shapes and re-shapes clay into a beautiful and useful vessel of honor.

There is “shaping” value even in the seemingly small events that come our way. Today, let us accept with peace and grace the circumstances that come our way, yielding ourselves fully into God’s loving hands.

### BACKGROUND

Chapter 64 continues the prayer of Isaiah who was longing for visible divine intervention that Israel might be protected from her adversaries. In the first few verses, the prayer was that God would come down in great power and judgment upon their oppressors. When God gave the Law at Mount Sinai, He had manifested

Himself mightily to Israel through smoke, thunder, and an earthquake. Isaiah felt if the nations who oppressed them saw such a demonstration, they would tremble from fear.

Verse 4 shows the eternal nature of God and that there is no one equal to Him. (The Apostle Paul referred to this verse in 1 Corinthians 2:9, although he did not quote it exactly.) Verse 5 shows that in spite of the awesomeness of God, He will meet those who are righteous.

Sin, the hindrance to this relationship with God, is addressed beginning with verse 6. Isaiah saw that Israel fell short of God’s requirements, and therefore was unclean, like the garments of a leper. The religious actions of the people did not cleanse them because they did not come with the proper attitude of heart. Therefore, their righteousness was “as filthy rags,” and they faded as dried leaves and could be easily swept away spiritually. Still, they did not pray for mercy. The word *consumed* at the end of verse 7 indicates that because of their iniquities they had “melted”—all their strength was lost.

In verse 8, Isaiah reminded God on behalf of the righteous that He was their Father, and they were the product of His own making. Saying they were the clay and God the potter indicated submissiveness and being yielded to God. They wanted God to make them into what they should be. Verse 9 was an eloquent cry for God to mitigate His wrath, which their nation deserved, and give them mercy.

Isaiah looked ahead and saw that their land, including Jerusalem, would be desolate, and the Temple would be burned with fire. Isaiah ended his prayer with three questions. Would God restrain Himself from answering their prayers because of the land’s and Temple’s desolation? Would He be silent (hold His peace)? Would He afflict them exceedingly—to the full extreme? The last two chapters of the Book of Isaiah give the answer.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

Hannah’s Bible Outlines  
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- IV. The message of consolation: The Holy One of Israel comforting, redeeming and enriching
  - C. The provision for deliverance (future glory)
    - 3. The prayer of the remnant for mercy
      - a. The prayer request
      - (3) The realization of His power (64:1-3)
      - (4) The confession of Israel’s guilt (64:4-7)
      - (5) The plea for mercy (64:8-12)



## A CLOSER LOOK

**1. What relationship between God and Israel does this prayer reference?**

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**2. Why did Isaiah say, “Be not wroth very sore”?**

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**3. How can we show God that we acknowledge His greatness?**

[illegible]

## CONCLUSION

Are you submitted to the Lord, knowing that He is the potter of your life and therefore in control? You will find peace when you have yielded to Him in that way.

## NOTES

[illegible]



### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.”  
(Isaiah 65:19)**

March of 2000 was a special time for members of my family—we took a trip to the Holy Land. One of the outstanding places we visited was the Jewish Holocaust Museum just outside of Jerusalem. We were deeply moved by what we viewed. I wandered off alone, looking and reading of this horrific time in history. When I went into the Children’s Museum it became very dark. The only lights in this large area were five candles; the walls and ceiling were all mirrors. I could not count the reflections of candles as I walked through. Each candle reflection represented a Jewish child who did not live through the Holocaust. In somber voices, a man and a woman would recite the name of a child, the child’s age, and the country he or she lived in. It is estimated that as many as 1.5 million children were killed during the Holocaust.

As I looked and listened, tears came to my eyes. I wondered how many of those terrified, little children had received the hope of a better day that God is preparing for all His children. Whatever their knowledge, His love is great for each person of any race who calls on Him. A loving God received these little children: the One who will make a new Heaven and earth where there will be no sorrow or tears, but just great joy. They are now in the arms of Jesus, far removed from the grief and trauma of their brief lives on earth.

All through the Book of Isaiah, the basic theme is God’s faithful love. Over and over the people turned away from God, were punished, and were made to go through hard things, but then in loving mercy God called after their hearts. When the people repented, He received them with joy. In this chapter Isaiah brought his prophecy to a climax. He described the day when faith and hope will come to its ultimate fruition for those who believe.

When sorrow comes and terrible events happen in this wicked world, it is important that we keep our eyes on the goal. There is a wonderful hope of a day when our Lord will show us what He intended for us from the beginning before sin came into the world. When we are bombarded with the news and events of the day, let us remember that God will have the final say and is preparing a place for those who love and serve Him.

### BACKGROUND

Most Biblical historians believe this chapter is a continuation of the preceding chapter. God continued to show His righteous anger in regard to the Jews, and especially with reference to the unrighteousness and disregard for God described in the preceding chapter. God gave the reasons why He had afflicted the people, but went on to encourage the righteous among them with the hope of great future prosperity and safety.

Because God’s own people were backslidden and living rebellious and wicked lives, He called another people who had not sought him, and extended the blessings of salvation to those who had been strangers to His name. In the previous chapter, because their nation had been in a covenant with God, the people felt that He should save them. Yet they did not repent. God showed an important principle here. They were not to be saved because they were Jews. He said that other nations that had not known Him would be introduced to His favor, while He would reject His ancient covenant people. The Jews were slow to believe this; as Paul stated in Romans 10:20. Isaiah was “very bold” in advancing so unpopular a sentiment.

God stated the true reason why He had punished them (verses 2-7). It was not because He was changeable, or was unjust in His dealings with them. He had punished them and had resolved to reject a large portion of them because of their continual backsliding and returning to wickedness. He specified that they had been a rebellious people, and He had stretched out his hands to them in vain, inviting them to return. They had constantly provoked Him by their idolatries, their abominable sacrifices, and by eating the things which He had forbidden. They were proud and self-righteous. God’s justice demanded that He should not pass by such offences.

Yet, God ended by giving hope. The whole nation would not be destroyed. There were still a few who would follow their Lord and be saved, even though the wicked portion of the nation would be cut off.

Verses 17-25 bring hope for a glorious future and prosperity, for which the saints of all ages are waiting. The chapter closes with the promise that God will create “new heavens and a new earth” where there will be rejoicing, peace, security, and happiness. Isaiah pictured a remnant of the ancient Jewish people preserved through all their sufferings. The people will enjoy the fruit of their own labor without hindrance, and their prayers will be speedily answered—even while they are speaking.

## AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

Hannah's Bible Outlines  
Used by permission per WORDsearch

- IV. The message of consolation: The Holy One of Israel comforting, redeeming and enriching
  - C. The provision for deliverance (future glory)
    - 3. The prayer of the remnant for mercy
      - b. The prayer answered (65:1-25)
        - (1) Jehovah's complaint against Israel (65:1-7)
        - (2) The two destinies for Israelites (65:8-16)
          - (a) For the righteous remnant (65:8-10)
          - (b) For apostate Israel (65:11-12)
          - (c) The states contrasted (65:13-16)
        - (3) The future blessings for the remnant (65:17-25)

## A CLOSER LOOK

1. What did God, speaking through Isaiah, promise to create?

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2. How does this prophecy of Isaiah reinforce the fact that the blessings we receive are dependent upon us?

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3. What promise can encourage you the next time you feel discouraged at the terrible things happening in the world today?

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## CONCLUSION

Let us keep focused on the hope of eternal life in the place that God has been preparing for us.

## NOTES

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### DEVOTIONAL FOCUS

**“As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.” (Isaiah 66:13)**

There is no one better at administering comfort than your mother. Just ask Nick Anderson. One fateful night in 1995, the Orlando Magic guard missed four free throws in the final seconds of his team’s NBA Final’s game against Houston. Those free throws could have sealed the win, but missing them put the game into overtime. With seconds to go and the close game still undecided, one of the Houston guards blew past Anderson for an easy lay-up and scored. Orlando lost the game and eventually the championship.

Understandably, when he got home, Anderson was upset and unhappy. “My mom put her arm around me,” Anderson later said, “and told me, ‘You’ve got nothing to put your head down about. You’ve pulled your team through many other times.’”<sup>1</sup> His mother had just the right words to bring him comfort.

Like Nick Anderson, I’ve experienced the comfort of a mother, and know that it is like no other. As a child, whenever I fell down, scraped my knees or hurt myself in pretty much any way at all, I immediately ran to my mom. She was the source of my consolation—the one who would dry my tears, put on a Band-Aid, and offer me solace. I could count on her unwavering love and care in any situation.

Given this ability of mothers, it makes perfect sense that in our focus verse, Isaiah compares the comfort God gives to that of a mother. God is love; in addition, He is omniscient—the perfect combination for the supreme source of comfort and care. Despite Israel’s past failure, God extends comfort to her, and one day she will revive and flourish.

While the verse specifically points to the comfort God promised to bring to His people during the Millennial Reign, we too have the privilege of looking to God for solace. God is not just the Comforter for Jerusalem, but for us as well. He is standing by today, ready to offer the encouragement, support, and comfort we need.

### BACKGROUND

The Northern Kingdom of Israel was taken into captivity by Assyria in 722 B.C. In this chapter, Isaiah looked beyond the judgment which would descend on Judah in 587 B.C., when Judah would be conquered

by Babylon, to describe the blessings in store for God’s people during Christ’s Millennial Kingdom. At that time, Israel will take center stage on the international scene, and is described in verse 7 as being born in a day. The nation, which is compared to a nursing baby, will find health and peace in the arms of the Lord.

While God’s hand will bring blessing to His servants, there will be “indignation toward his enemies” (verse 14). The Day of the Lord will be a storm of judgment with fire and whirlwinds, and those who disobeyed God’s Law and turned to pagan idols and practices will be punished.

In this chapter, Isaiah reached the climax of his teaching, bringing once again a message of both impending doom and future deliverance. This book of powerful poetry ends in prose. The prophet’s closing words describe the religion of the last days as an *abomination*, which literally means “the hateful thing.” Because of this, God will pour out judgment on the wicked and unrighteous nations of the world.

At the same time, messengers will go to the ends of the earth to announce what God has done for Israel (verse 19). The result will be that many will come to Jerusalem to bring offerings to the Lord. All mankind will come to worship Him, but the bodies of those who rebelled against the Lord will be scattered over the land.

### AMPLIFIED OUTLINE

Hannah’s Bible Outlines  
Used by permission per WORDsearch

- IV. The message of consolation: The Holy One of Israel comforting, redeeming and enriching
  - C. The provision for deliverance (future glory)
    - 4. The prosperity of believers in the Millennium (66:1-24)
      - a. The condemnation of the unrighteous (66:1-6)
      - b. The blessings of the righteous (66:7-24)
        - (1) The birth of the new Israel (66:7-9)
        - (2) The comfort of Jerusalem (66:10-14)
        - (3) The punishment of wickedness (66:15-17)
        - (4) The prominence of Jerusalem (66:18-21)
        - (5) The perpetuity of Israel (66:22-23)
        - (6) The punishment of the wicked (66:24)

## A CLOSER LOOK

**1. What qualities will be present in the person God says He will look to?**

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## 2. What will Jerusalem experience during the Millennial Kingdom?

[illegible]

**3.** In what ways has God given mother-like comfort to you?

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## CONCLUSION

God promised that His comfort will be extended to Israel during His Millennial Kingdom. How grateful we should be that God's comfort is available for us today too!

## NOTES

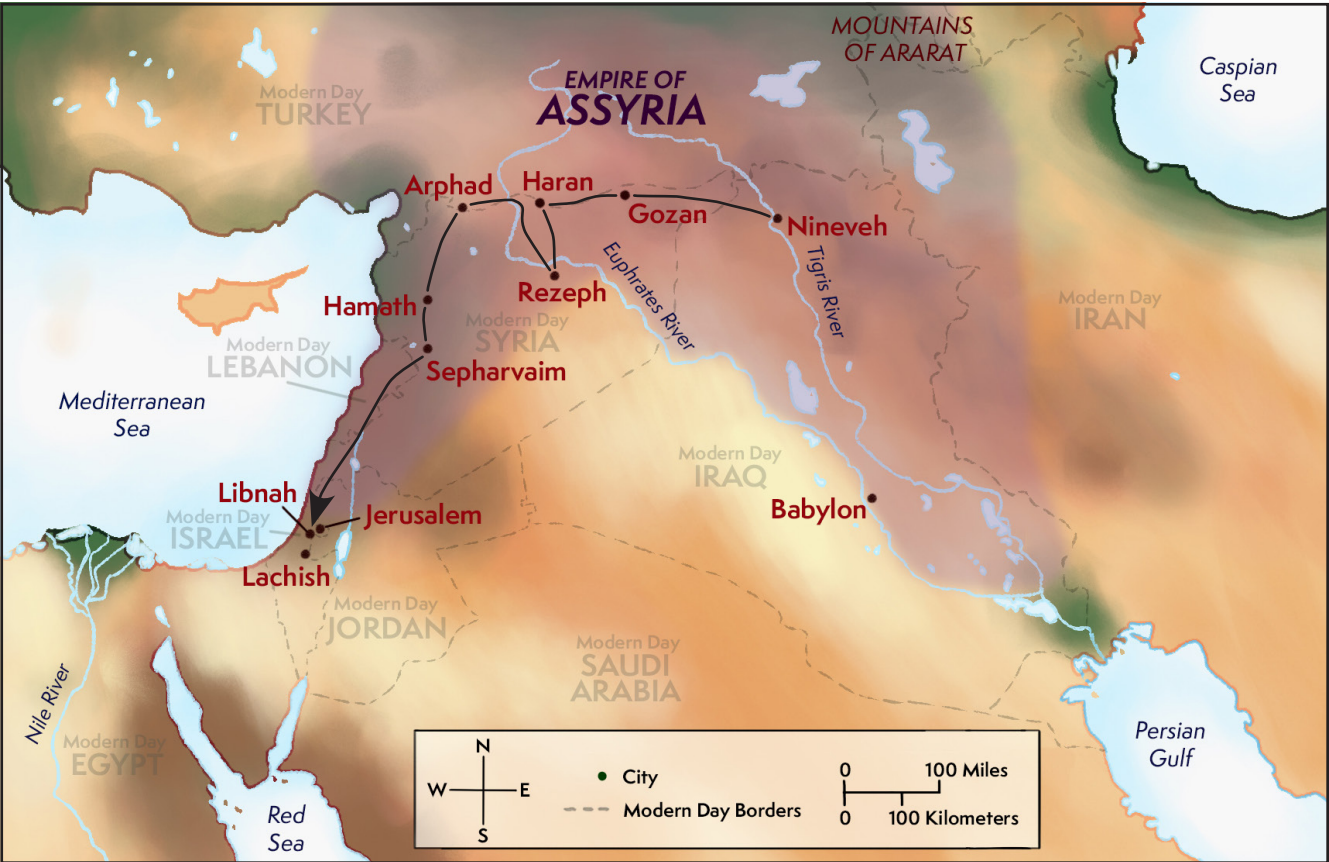
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A map of the Empire of Assyria and surrounding regions. The empire is shaded in a reddish-brown color and is labeled "EMPIRE OF ASSYRIA" in large, bold, black letters. The map shows the Tigris River and Euphrates River flowing through the empire. Major cities are marked with black dots and labeled: "Tarshish" (with a note: "(More than 3000 miles west, possibly in Modern Day Spain)"), "Nineveh", "Joppa", and "Jerusalem". The map also shows the Mediterranean Sea, Red Sea, Persian Gulf, and Caspian Sea. Modern-day countries are labeled: "Modern Day TURKEY", "Modern Day SYRIA", "Modern Day IRAQ", "Modern Day JORDAN", "Modern Day SAUDI ARABIA", "Modern Day LEBANON", "Modern Day ISRAEL", and "Modern Day EGYPT". The "MOUNTAINS OF ARARAT" are labeled in the north. A compass rose and a scale bar (0 to 100 miles and 0 to 100 kilometers) are located in the bottom right corner.



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# Assyria's Conquest Reaches Judah



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