

Bible Study # 48
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Major Prophets Series—Isaiah 1—14

This evening we are getting into the book of Isaiah. We **are going to cover the first 14 chapters**. Isaiah's name means "the Eternal is Salvation," and that name ties in very closely with the subject matter of Isaiah's writing.

Isaiah makes very plain that God will not permit uncleanness in His covenant people. God will punish them for their iniquities. However, God will also restore and bless Israel following their national repentance. The book of Isaiah deals with this.

It is one of the most Messianic books of the Old Testament. It is a book that focuses in on the prophecies of the Messiah—the prophecies of Jesus Christ. The most detailed prophecies of Jesus Christ—both in His first coming and what will be His second coming—are contained in the book of Isaiah. We will notice them as we go through.

There's a continual contrast that is drawn in the book of Isaiah. On the one hand is God's punishment for various evils, and on the other hand is the ultimate restoration and glory that will come when the Messiah appears. There is this contrast that is being drawn, developed and explained as we proceed through the book of Isaiah.

The backdrop of events in Judah at the time, the place and circumstance in which Isaiah was writing provides a backdrop for the prophecies and the details that he goes into. Isaiah lived in Judah and wrote in Judah. Some of his ministry overlapped the closing days of the Kingdom of Israel (the northern kingdom) who ultimately went into Assyrian captivity. The sins of the nation had been continually worsening, and God was going to use Assyria to chastise the people.

Assyria conquered Northern Israel and took them captive during Isaiah's ministry. Most of Judah's territory was occupied at a later time. The Assyrian armies came in and conquered Northern Israel around 721 B.C. There was a period of deportation of the Northern Israelites that continued over a period of about the next 20 years.

There was an invasion of Judah that took place in the 14th year of Hezekiah, which was 701 B.C. This invasion threatened to take Judah into Assyrian captivity at the time. Hezekiah went to

God and God miraculously delivered them by wiping out the Assyrian army encamped around Jerusalem (2 Kings 18:13—19:35). God put a stop to that.

Isaiah brings out the ultimate fall of his own nation. The backdrop of crisis in his day and time served to set the stage for the prophecies that relate to our day. Isaiah laid continual stress on the fact that beyond the destruction the people could see lay ahead, ultimately lay the salvation of God—the only hope of Israel. Throughout the book of Isaiah, there is this thrust, this emphasis on the fact that God's salvation is the only hope of Israel.

In order to set the stage for the fact that this is the only hope, Isaiah emphasizes and describes at various points the sins of the nation and the punishment that will come upon the nation, but he then shows the fact that it's not the end of the story. There is a salvation that lies on beyond. One of the reasons he goes into some of the things that he does and to the extent that he does is to demonstrate the fact that Israel needs something beyond itself to save itself.

Let's look at a brief outline. Chapter 1 is sort of an abrupt introduction to the book of Isaiah. In Isaiah 1, the nation of Israel is indicted for its sins. It is indicted as a sinful nation, which must receive God's wrath.

Isaiah 2 through 5 begins with a picture of Christ's millennial rule. Then there follows a detailed indictment of Israel's sins as a society and a prophecy of captivity and destruction. God starts out with an introductory indictment in chapter 1.

In chapter 2, He focuses in on the way the story will end up, with a brief description of the millennial reign of the Messiah. Then He proceeds into a very detailed indictment of the sins of the nation and the captivity and destruction that will come.

In chapter 6, we go back and pick up the story of Isaiah's calling. The first five chapters are really introductory material that sets the stage for what the prophecies of the book are all about. In chapter 6 we go back and pick up the story of how God called and began to work through Isaiah.

In chapters 7 and 8, there is a prophecy that God would help Judah against a combine of Israel and Syria. That event is used as a backdrop of prophecy of the Messiah. Then there is a prophecy of the ultimate canonization of the Bible in the New Testament by the disciples of

Jesus. We will notice those prophecies as we go through.

In chapters 9, 10, 11 and 12, Christ's coming is prophesied. It tells us of God's use of Assyria to punish Israel. Then we have His redemption of Israel, His punishment of Assyria and the establishment of the government of God. These events are detailed in sequence.

In chapter 13, we have a prophecy of the destruction of Babylon, which is really a type of the ultimate, future destruction of Rome. It is paralleled in Revelation 18.

Chapter 14 is where we will end up this evening. In the beginning of chapter 14, we have the description of the house of Israel restored to prosperity during the Millennium. We culminate that chapter with a section that describes the origin of Satan the devil.

Let's notice here, as we begin to go through.

Isaiah 1:1, "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." We have a time span here of about 60 years (a lengthy time span) of Isaiah's ministry. It began quite a ways back. We have the prophecies that he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is used to typify the entire nation—to typify Israel as well as Judah because Jerusalem was the only city that was a combined capital of Israel and Judah. The prophecy deals not only with Judah, but it deals with the whole nation, all the tribes of Israel. Jerusalem is used symbolically to represent all of the tribes of Israel because Jerusalem was the focal point, the center place. This was the city from which David and Solomon reigned as king over all the tribes. Jerusalem is used in a symbolic way.

We use terms like that even in our modern terminology. Today, on the radio, there was the statement made about the arms talks and Moscow's response to Washington's proposal. Moscow is the capital city of the USSR and the name is used to symbolically refer to the whole nation or government of the nation. The city of Washington symbolizes the government of the United States. We use some of the same terminology, so when you see Jerusalem referred to in this way, it is used in a symbolic fashion to refer to the whole nation—to the combined 12 tribes.

Isaiah saw this over a period of time. God begins with His indictment. God makes comparisons here.

Verses 2-3, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the Lord has spoken: 'I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me; the ox knows its owner and the donkey its master's crib; but Israel does not know, My people do not consider.'"

God says, 'My people don't seem to have as much sense as a dumb animal.' Have you ever dealt with animals? A cow knows where the feed and stall is. A cow is not too smart. God says, 'I feed and take care of My people and they don't have as much sense as an ox or a donkey because at least these animals know who feeds them, where to go and respond to their master and their owner. My people don't seem to be able to figure that out.'

We pride ourselves on being very educated, very far-advanced people. God says that He doesn't think we really rank all that smart. We haven't figured out something that dumb animals have figured out. God says He has nourished Israel like children. He draws the analogy of providing for children. He gives the analogy that even an animal recognizes its owner and Israel doesn't.

The consequence is given as He continues.

Verses 4-6, "Alas, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a brood of evildoers, children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away backward. Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faints. From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is not soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; they have not been closed or bound up, or soothed with ointment."

There's a consequence. God says that the nation is sick from head to toe. A sickness is internal. There are prophecies later on in Hosea where it talks about Ephraim seeing his sickness and Judah seeing his wound (Hosea 5:13). When we get into that a little later, we will notice specifically that a sickness refers to an internal condition; a wound is something that is externally imposed.

Our nation, Israel, is described as a nation sick from head to toe. And remember, while the term "Israel" refers in a general way to all of the tribes of Israel, it refers primarily to Ephraim and Manasseh.

Genesis 48:16, Jacob crossed his hands and laid hands on Ephraim and Manasseh, and he said, "... 'Let my name be named upon them,'" His name, Israel, was named on those boys and their

descendants in a very special way. Prophetically, the term “Israel” generally refers to Ephraim and Manasseh in a specific way and in a general way to all of the tribes.

God’s indictment here is of a nation sick from head to toe. God describes an internal moral deterioration and decay. That is the condition that God describes, and there is a consequence that is going to come from that condition. First, God diagnoses the problem: ‘You’re sick from head to toe and the sickness is not healing up. It is breaking out in putrefying wounds and sores.’ He says there is going to come a consequence—the prognosis. First you have the diagnosis; then you have the prognosis.

Isaiah 1:7-10, “Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire; strangers devour your land in your presence; and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. So the daughter of Zion is left as a booth [cottage, shelter] in a vineyard, as a hut in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city. Unless the Lord of hosts had left to us a very small remnant, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been made like Gomorrah. Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom; give ear to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah...”

Simply put, there is going to come a desolation on Israel as a nation as punishment. The destruction will not be total because God will preserve a remnant. A remnant will survive, but there is going to come a devastation of this nation. This is described here. This massive destruction is ultimately going to occur. If it weren’t for God’s stepping in, there would not be anything left (Matthew 24:21-22).

God compares our nation to Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18 and 19). Why do you think He would do a thing like that? We have come so far that in many of the major cities of this nation, they celebrate with parades what they call “gay-pride” week. I suspect they must have had one of those in Sodom and Gomorrah. They were pretty proud of things. There’s not even a sense of shame. It’s like, ‘We do these things, and not only do we do them, we are proud of it.’ It’s absolutely incredible. If you have a talk show and they’re interviewing somebody, chances are they don’t go very far before this character may wind up talking about some celebrity and his homosexuality. That’s how far we’ve come. Things like that are just openly talked about and discussed as though it’s no big deal.

God even compares the nation to rulers of Sodom and people of Gomorrah.

Verse 11, “‘To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?’ says the Lord. ‘I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs or goats.’” He says, ‘What are you going through the motions of religion for? I’m sick and tired of you going through the outward form of religion.’ And we call ourselves a religious nation. Let’s notice.

Verse 14, “‘Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; they are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them.’” This verse is often taken out of context and misapplied by certain Protestants who say, ‘See, God hates the Sabbath and the Holy Days; you shouldn’t keep them.’ “Your New Moons and your appointed feast My soul hates.” He didn’t say, ‘My appointed feasts, My Sabbaths, My day’—He said “*your*.”

There’s a difference between the days that God says belong to Him and the ones that He says belong to the people. Whose are they? Whose days does God hate? Does He hate His own? That wouldn’t make sense. Does God say, ‘I am going to give you these days, but I surely hate them’? What sense would that make? The problem wasn’t with God; the problem was with the people.

There were two problems. In some cases, they substituted in their own festivals. Northern Israel did that right after they rebelled against Rehoboam. Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, changed the Feast from the seventh month to the eighth month (1 Kings 12:31-33). They introduced their own festivals. In some cases, it was a substitute for God’s festivals; in other cases, while they held on to the outward form of the day that God had set, they didn’t celebrate it the way He said. It was a matter that they had come to the point, as it’s described here, of going through the motions of religion, but there wasn’t any substance of the heart.

For that matter, we can come to Sabbath services every week and warm a seat. We can go through all the various motions. We can do everything the Pharisees did, and God is not impressed with that—not any more than Christ was impressed with the Pharisees. The point is we are what we are on the inside. Our religion is something that needs to be lived and not something that is simply put on.

Verse 15, God says, speaking of this, “‘When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. [‘I’m not even going to look when

you make your prayers; I'm not going to listen. Why? Because...'] Your hands are full of blood.”

Verse 16, “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil...” ‘You’re going to have to clean up. You are going to have to cease to do evil.’

Verse 17, “learn to do good; seek justice, reprove the oppressor; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow.” God says you are going to have to repent. It’s not a matter of going through the forms of religion. It’s not a matter of when you get into trouble saying, ‘Oh, God, please deliver me.’ If you’re really sincere, then you’re going to have to change your actions. You are going to have to start doing what’s right. You’re going to have to have an attitude of give, help, love and concern—not an attitude of greed, materialism, selfishness, pride, vanity and violence. God says, ‘There has to come a change if you want Me to listen.’

Coming on down, He describes and indicts the leadership of the nation.

Verse 23, “Your princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves; everyone loves bribes, and follows after rewards. They do not defend the fatherless, nor does the cause of the widow come before them.” It talks about ‘the princes are rebellious and companions of thieves; they all love gifts.’ That sounds like the front page of the paper. It’s almost a badge of status.

If a state official in Louisiana hasn’t been brought before the Grand Jury to be investigated about something, it’s like he almost doesn’t have any status. Everybody who’s anybody gets called before the Grand Jury. Some of them get indicted and occasionally they beat the rap. On a federal matter, they may even be sent to jail. Right now, there are about four U.S. senators that are being investigated. They were tied into some big Savings and Loan bailout that involved about a billion dollars of government money. It just so happened that the guy who owned the Savings and Loan was the major contributor to each of their campaigns. Some are Republicans; some are Democrats—doesn’t make any difference. You can buy one vote as well as the other. He wasn’t a respecter of persons.

‘Your princes are companions of thieves.’ This is the crowd they keep company with. ‘And they follow after reward. They do not defend the fatherless, nor does the cause of the widow come before them.’ They are not judging the cause of the fatherless and looking after the widow. They

are not concerned about those who can’t take care of themselves. They can vote themselves a massive pay increase and turn around and be ready to cut the Social Security benefits taking care of the elderly. There ultimately comes a day of reckoning. God is not impressed. He just doesn’t think that some of the priorities are exactly where they should be.

God then begins to talk about what is going to happen.

Verse 28, God says that there is going to be a destruction of the transgressors. After this kind of preliminary indictment where Isaiah sets the stage, he now goes into prophecies of what is going to come. It is not just going to stay this way. It’s not simply going to end with destruction because God begins to talk about what’s going to happen in the last days.

Isaiah 2:2, “Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it.” The government of God is going to be established. All the different nations and different groups and tribes of people are going to begin to flow up to it. What are they going to say?

Verse 3, “Many people shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.’ For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

God is going to set up His government here on this earth. Jerusalem is going to be the future capital. It’s going to be worldwide in scope. It will be established in the top of the mountains. All nations shall flow to it. It will be headquartered in Jerusalem. Different groups of people are ultimately going to come up.

Later on in the book of Isaiah, we’re actually given a little bit of the sequence of the order in which some people are going to start coming up. We are going to see the way the government of God is actually established. We won’t get into it this time, but next time we will. It is interesting because it even names specific peoples who will be among the first to send ambassadors up to Jerusalem and say, ‘Will you please come down here and teach us? We want some of these things.’

Verse 4, “He shall judge between the nations, and shall rebuke many people;” Some people need to be instructed; others need to be exhorted and admonished. There are a few that are going

to have to be rebuked and corrected. It is a matter that depends on the attitude. Some are going to be willing. They just don't know; God instructs. There are others that are going to be pretty self-willed and are going to think they have a better way. God's not going to put it to a vote. One vote, all right! And the vote will be God's. The ballot will be unanimous. Man has proven and is going to have opportunity to prove he can't govern himself. If people are ignorant of the right way and you put it all together, then you have "collective ignorance"—and what good is that?

Verse 4, continuing, "...They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." God is going to rebuke many people until they beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. God is going to put a stop to the war-making ability. He sets the stage showing what is ultimately going to happen.

Verse 6, "For You have forsaken Your people, the house of Jacob, because they are filled with eastern ways [or, "full of divination from the east"];" This is one of the first things that God indicts the nation as He begins to get very specific. He sets the stage in chapter 2 as to what's ultimately going to happen. God is going to set up His government, and this is the way it is going to work out.

But what is happening right now? Why is God forsaking His people? God's people (the nations of modern-day Israel) aren't looking to God or the Bible. They are looking to some crackpot "new movement" or they are looking to some Eastern mysticism. They are looking to all kinds of ideas and crackpot philosophies—the so-called great wisdom of the East that God is not impressed with. Frankly, using a little common sense, look at the nations of India, China, etc., nations that have produced so-called great wisdom—the great philosophies of the East. What have those things ever done for the East? You find there some of the most poverty-stricken, superstitious, backward, ignorant areas on the face of the earth. What has it done for them? We want to import it over here and say maybe we should get a little of that. It's insane! Yet, this is what God says in verse 6 and this is what we find.

Verse 7, "Their land is also full of silver and gold, and there is no end to their treasures;"

Verse 8, "The land is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands," God indicts the

nation for seeking answers elsewhere than from the God of Israel and His word. The nation is indicted for materialism and for idolatry. These are the things that are going to happen and are happening—the materialism, the idolatry, the looking elsewhere for answers, looking away from the God of Israel. God says there is going to come a consequence.

Verse 11, "The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day."

Verse 19, "They shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, from the terror of the Lord and the glory of His majesty, when He arises to shake the earth mightily." I'll tell you what. When the earthquakes begin to hit and it culminates in the earthquake that occurs at Christ's return—which is going to be an earthquake of such mammoth proportion that it is actually going to reshape the topography of the earth—nobody is going to be strutting around as to how great they are. Let the forces of nature shake the ground right under you, and about that time, nobody is really impressed with himself. It has this humbling effect. God is going to get everybody's attention, and they are all going to be humble because it is kind of hard to be anything else when the ground is shaking. The most solid thing you know is shaking like a dishrag. God has a way of solving that.

He goes into details of the condition and state of our own society.

In Isaiah 3, He gives an indictment on society; there is a lack of wise, competent leadership in the nation. He describes a period of juvenile rebellion and women's lib, a society dominated largely by haughty women. He talks about the leadership, the mighty men, the judge, the prophet and the prudent. These all passed away; they are gone. God says you are not going to have the great, wise, competent leadership that has been available at certain times of crises in the past.

Isaiah 3:4, "I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them." They are children and babes by comparison.

Verse 5, "The people shall be oppressed, every one by another and every one by his neighbor;" We are talking about internal strife and civil strife. We are talking about people seeking to oppress one another to gain selfish, greedy advantage. We are talking about a society divided against itself.

Verse 5, continuing, "...the child will be insolent toward the elder, and the base toward the honorable." Here is a breakdown in the structure of society, a breakdown in respect.

I think one of the most fundamental things we see that has occurred in our society since the 1960s has been the breakdown of respect. Anybody who has been involved in the public school system over a period—of let's say a 25-year period of teaching to look back on—will point out and zero in on the absolute breakdown of respect as one of the major changes that has taken place in our society since the mid-60s. And when respect breaks down, the entire foundational units of society begin to crumble. When you lose respect in society—whether it is those who are younger respecting those who are older, whether it is for the structure of society, the respect and way others look up to those who are in a leadership capacity or the respectful interaction of people in society—when that respect begins to break down, the entire foundational units of society begin to crumble. This is zeroed in on.

Verse 6, "When a man takes hold of his brother in the house of his father, saying, 'You have clothing; you be our ruler, ...'" This part is not here, yet. Right now everybody and his brother are trying to be President. But believe me, before the end of this age, there's going to come a time when they almost can't find anybody who wants to be President.

Verse 7, they are going to say, 'Look, this thing is about to collapse, and I don't want to be responsible for it.' A time will come when the "rats" are going to be trying to desert the ship, trying to blame somebody else.

Verse 9, "The look of their countenance witnesses against them, and they declare their sin as Sodom; they do not hide it."

Driving here this afternoon, I was listening to a talk show interview and they were interviewing this guy. It started out how he had gone from being an athlete to being a dancer; before they got very far, he was talking about his lover, when he "came out" and all this kind of garbage. I wanted to pull over to the side of the road and throw up. "They declare their sin as Sodom; they do not hide it." There's no shame, no embarrassment. Drive down and look at the movie marquee. We advertise it.

Verse 9, continuing, "...Woe to their soul! For they have brought evil upon themselves."

Verse 12, "As for My people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O My

people! Those who lead you cause you to err, and destroy the way of your paths."

Verses 16-18, God continues, "Moreover the Lord says: 'Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with outstretched necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, making a jingling with their feet, therefore the Lord will strike with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will uncover their secret parts.' In that day the Lord will take away the finery: the jingling anklets, the scarves, and the crescents..." He describes all of these various ornaments and things.

He talks about the time of captivity.

Verse 24, "And so it shall be: instead of a sweet smell there will be a stench; instead of a sash, a rope; instead of well-set hair, baldness; instead of a rich robe, a girding of sackcloth; and branding instead of beauty." This is talking about the destruction. When it talks about hair falling out, in some cases, perhaps, it is the results of radiation sickness—the destruction that is ultimately going to hit.

God describes a society whose priorities are upside down. The structure of society has been displaced. God designed proper roles for men, women and children, not roles of superiority and inferiority. God didn't create inferior people. God created human beings in His own image, but He created male and female. God structured a proper and appropriate role for each. One role is just as important as the other. Try eliminating one bunch and see how long the human race stays around.

God established that society have a certain structure. The family is the foundational unit of the structure of society. But we have here a society that is based on materialism. We have a society where the structure is turned upside down. We have a society where the hallmark is pride, haughtiness and what goes on the outside, not what comes out from the inside. There is a replacement, a substitution of the "daughters of Jezebel" in place of the "daughters of Sarah." It is a totally different set of priorities and values. What was looked up to, what was idealized, what was viewed as proper and appropriate, what was the ideal to aspire to, has been thrown aside and replaced with something new. God is not impressed.

We come on down and it talks about the destruction and the consequences of some of these things.

Isaiah 4:4-5, "When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and purged the

blood of Jerusalem ..., then the Lord will create above every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and above her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night.” God will bless the nation when He restores them and when the lesson has been learned.

What has happened to the nation?

Isaiah 5:1, “Now let me sing to my Well-beloved a song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard:” He describes God’s vineyard (Israel) as protected, hedged about, walled off and protected from other nations.

Then in verse 5, God says that because the nation has not appreciated and valued what God has given, He is going to take away the hedge. He is going to allow the protection to be taken away.

I think we have not fully realized the extent to which our nation, the nations of modern Israel (Ephraim and Manasseh), have been hedged off and protected. We are the only nations that have not been invaded by foreign troops. The United States, Britain, Canada and Australia haven’t had foreign troops set foot on their soil. Can you name other nations that haven’t? Try to come up with one.

Look at Latin America and the other nations of Europe. Why could Hitler not go beyond the English Channel? Why couldn’t he get across? Why couldn’t he get beyond? Why couldn’t the Kaiser get beyond? Napoleon? Why hasn’t anyone ever been able to get beyond since the last migration of Israelites in 1066 under William the Conqueror? Since that time, foreign troops have never been able to set foot on British soil. Why? Why haven’t there been any invasions by foreign troops?

The only destructive war we ever had in this country was the war between our states where the states of the North and South fought against one another. That was a war so destructive that there were more American lives lost in that war than in every other war that we’ve ever fought added together. But those weren’t outside forces. Those were forces right here within the nation of Manasseh. We haven’t fully appreciated and valued what it means to not have foreign troops on our soil and not have our land devastated.

Russia can’t say that. Moscow was burned and destroyed. There was a tremendous loss of life, literally running up into many, many millions, tens of millions during World War II. I don’t think we recognize the devastation that Russia went through in the time of World War II. There were great quantities of the area that was occupied. They had gone through an invasion

during the time of Napoleon. There wasn’t destruction on quite as massive a scale, but there was an invasion. Nations like China, Japan and India have been invaded. God says, ‘I have put a hedge, a wall, but I am going to tear that wall down. I am going to open you up and let them come in.’

Then He begins an indictment as to why He is going to do that.

Verse 8, “Woe to those who join house to house, who add field to field, till there is no place where they may dwell alone in the midst of the land!” We haven’t properly used the things we have, even the way we’ve built our cities. God says selfishness and greed have been the motivating factors.

God says there is going to come a famine.

Verse 10, “For ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, and a homer of seed shall yield one ephah.” Ten acres are going to yield about three-quarters of a bushel. That’s not very much. You’re not going to stay in the farming business very long.

Verses 11-12, “Woe to those who rise early in the morning, that they may follow intoxicating drink; who continue until night, till wine inflames them! The harp and the strings, the tambourine and flute, and wine are in their feasts; but they do not regard the work of the Lord,” They are partying. They are out abusing alcohol and various other drugs—wanting to party. That’s what they want to spend their life doing. They are not concerned about the work of God. They are not concerned about doing what God says. It’s pretty descriptive.

Verse 13, “Therefore my people have gone into captivity,” They are going to go into captivity.

Verse 20, “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;” There is an upside-down set of values.

Verses 21-22, “Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe to men mighty at drinking wine, woe to men valiant for mixing intoxicating drink...” Last of the big boozers! Their pride is how much they can manage to “put down” before somebody has to carry them out. There is this upside-down set of values that produced the epidemic of chemical abuse in this country. This is catastrophic!

Then there are very descriptive terms that describe the legal profession.

Verse 23, “Who justify the wicked for a bribe, and take away justice from the righteous man!”

They are not out trying to find justice. It's an adversarial system with each side trying to win.

Back two or three years ago, I heard an interview with one of the most prominent criminal defense attorneys in this nation. He was being asked about his clients. He just made the point that he has seldom, if ever, defended a really innocent man. 'I am not after justice; I am out to try to get my client off. My job is to win the case for my client. That's what I'm being paid for. I don't have any apology for that. The District Attorney is out trying to win the case for the state. He's not trying to get justice. He's trying to win the case for the state, and I'm trying to win the case for my client.'

That was an analysis. God says 'woe to them who justify the wicked for reward.' They are not concerned about what's right, just and equitable. They are out to do what they can do and to get what they can get.

Verse 24, God says they are going to be devoured like fire devours stubble. Ever burned off a field? You know how that fire goes. God says, 'When I light the match, it is going to go like fire through a stubble field. It's going to go, "...because they have rejected the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel."

We have a very descriptive area, describing an overview of the nation. It describes the greed, corruption and materialism. It describes the breakdown of respect, the very foundational force that holds society together. The structure of respect should begin in the home and reflect throughout all of society. It describes the emphasis on the external—the materialism and the things that God says are not of value in the long-term—and the rejection of the true values, rejection of the things that really proceed from God.

God set the stage having briefly introduced in chapter 2 the fact that, in the last days, the ultimate conclusion is that the God of heaven is going to set up a kingdom.

In Isaiah 6, we come to the calling that Isaiah received.

Verses 1-5, in the year that King Uzziah died, Isaiah sees this vision, and in vision, he sees God sitting upon a throne. He is overwhelmed with this. He goes symbolically through the things that occur. He doesn't feel worthy.

Verses 6-7, in his vision, God symbolically cleanses him.

Verse 8, then God says, 'I have a job to do.' Isaiah's response is, "Here am I, send me." God then says that He will.

Isaiah 6:11-13, Isaiah asked the question, "Then I said, 'Lord, how long?' And He answered: 'Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant, the houses are without a man, the land is utterly desolate, the Lord had removed men far away and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land. But yet a tenth will be in it, and will return....'" There is going to come a captivity from which only a tenth of our nation will return. God is going to save out a tithe. We're looking at 90 percent destruction that will occur. That is destruction on a scale that we cannot imagine or comprehend. We don't realize what is taking shape, what is occurring right now, and the things that are beginning to shape up in Europe.

Isaiah 10:5, God talks about that, "'Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger and the staff in whose hand is My indignation.'" This nation is blindly negotiating away. We are talking about Germany reuniting and will they stay in NATO or not. We are ultimately going to find out that with a reunited Germany, NATO is going to be the least of their concerns. Whether or not they stay in is going to be the least of our concern because we are going to find that the Assyrian is going to be the rod of God's anger. God is going to use the Assyrian nation (the modern-day Germans) to chastise and correct our nation. That is going to occur.

We have to look at things that God indicts our nation for and the things that He hates. We have to look at these things as we go through. What we need to do is to ask God to change our set of values from the inside out. We want to learn to hate the things God hates; we want to learn to love and value the things that God values. In our lives as men, women, children, families, employees, employers and human beings, we want to learn to value and appreciate what God values and appreciates. We want to recognize the contrast in the values that are so common in our society.

We live in this society and are influenced by it. Our children are even more influenced by it. We must really dedicate ourselves to try to fill our minds with a godly set of values and to instruct our children as to why the set of values that they see at school, on television, entertainment and in all of the things around are not the values to hang on to because there are consequences that are

going to come. These things are destroying an entire nation.

In Isaiah 7, God begins to describe the alliance of Syria and Ephraim and the conflict that was taking place with ancient Judah at the time Isaiah was writing this—and the fact that that was not going to be a successful combine.

Verses 17-20, the Assyrians were going to take them into captivity. There were events that were going to happen that really, in a sense, foreshadow events that would happen way on down the line.

Notice the sign of salvation that God would give. Isaiah 7:14, “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.” “Immanuel” means “God with us.” This is a prophecy of Jesus Christ. It is quoted in the New Testament (Matthew 1:23). This is set into the context of the prophecy as the nation is looking at what is sure destruction. They are looking at what they can see, and the warning is, ‘Don’t base what is going to happen on what you can see.’

At the time Isaiah wrote this, Judah saw Northern Israel (headed up by the tribe of Ephraim) was making an alliance with the nation of Syria. They were going to invade the Jews. It looked like destruction was on the horizon. This combine was going to come in and really “put it” to them. But before any of that really happened, the Assyrians came in and conquered the whole thing. The picture can radically change. Events can happen very quickly. Isaiah’s message was, ‘Look, don’t depend on what you see. God is the source of salvation.’

Isaiah 8:7-8, He continues talking about Assyria, how He is going to bring the king of Assyria into the nation and how it will pass through Judah. It describes the destructive conquest; after describing the invasions and the things that occur, then it begins to focus in on salvation.

Isaiah 8:13, “The Lord of hosts, Him you shall hallow; let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread.” Don’t be worried; don’t be impressed with what all these other nations and people are going to do. Focus on God!

Verse 14, “He will be as a sanctuary, but a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, as a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” He is speaking of the Messiah who was to be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. People took offense.

Verse 15, “And many among them shall stumble; they shall fall and be broken, be snared and taken.”

Verse 16, “Bind up the testimony, seal the law among My disciples.”

Verse 20, “To the law and to the testimony!” That is a description of the Bible.

Revelation 12:17, remember when it describes the offsprings of the woman (the “Church”), “...who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” That expression is used two or three places. That is a description of the Church. “To the law and to the testimony” is simply another way of saying the Old and the New Testament. The law is reference to what we term “the Old Testament”; the testimony of Jesus Christ is what we refer to as “the New Testament.”

Isaiah 8:20, continuing, “...If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” We ultimately look to the Bible—to the law and to the testimony, to the law of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ—Genesis to Revelation. We look to the whole book.

Who’s going to be responsible for putting it together?

Verse 16, “Bind up the testimony, seal the law among My disciples.” This canon of Scripture would be completed among the disciples of the Messiah, the One who would be the “stone of stumbling.” Who gave us our New Testament? The disciples of Jesus! The disciples of Jesus Christ are the ones who sealed it up and finished it. It wasn’t the Catholic Church in the Nicene Council or something 200 or 300 years later. The only thing they ever tried to do was take it apart. It was already in existence when you read of the first Church Council discussing it. The only thing they discussed was trying to get rid of some of the books that were in it. The testimony was bound up and sealed up among the disciples. We have gone into that before, focusing in on Peter and John specifically.

Verse 17, “And I will wait on the Lord,”

Verse 19, “And when they shall say to you, ‘Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter,’ [seeking out astrology, fortune-tellers, séances and things of that sort] should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living?”

Verse 20, “To the law and to the testimony [That’s where you look—to the Bible.]! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” If someone claims to represent God, the real test is whether he is

teaching what the Bible teaches—“to the law and to the testimony.” Is he teaching the entire Bible?

Isaiah 9:1 is prophecy of the Messiah, a prophecy that He would come from beyond Jordan and Galilee of the Gentile nations.

Isaiah 9:2, “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined.” The reference here is a prophecy of Christ.

Verse 6, “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder.” Jesus Christ was born to be a King.

Verse 7, “Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it...” Jesus Christ is going to sit upon the throne of David when He returns. This is describing a prophecy of where salvation will come from. It will come from the Messiah who we know to be Jesus Christ.

God continues showing that the nation does not recognize its need for salvation.

Verse 10, they say, “The bricks have fallen down, but we will rebuild with hewn stones; the sycamores are cut down, but we will replace them with cedars.” ‘We will work it all out; we will fix it some way or another.’

Verses 14-16, “Therefore the Lord will cut off head and tail from Israel, palm branch and bulrush in one day. The elder and honorable, he is the head; the prophet who teaches lies, he is the tail. For the leaders of this people cause them to err, and those who are led by them are destroyed.” God indicts the leadership for causing the people to err. He says those who are in the responsible positions, those in the leadership positions, are causing error. They are not leading the nation in the right way.

Isaiah 10:1-3, “Woe to those who decree unrighteous decrees, ... to rob the needy of justice, and to take what is right from the poor of My people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless. What will you do in the day of punishment, ...”

Verses 5-7, “Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger, and the staff in whose hand is My indignation. I will send him against an ungodly nation, and against the people of My wrath I will give him charge, to seize the spoil, to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Yet he does not mean so, nor does his

heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy, and cut off not a few nations.”

Right now, as they are planning German reunification, that’s not what they mean in terms of the destruction. ‘He means not so, neither does his heart think so.’ At this point, they don’t really think that they are going to do it again, but it’s in their nature. When they go to war, they go to it with brutal efficiency and they are going to do it. God says they don’t realize what they are up to; right now, at this point, that’s not necessarily what they are actively planning. But the circumstances are going to come about and Satan is going to stir them up; they are going to come—and God is going to allow them to do so. God is going to remove the hedge, the fence, and He’s going to allow the Assyrians to be the rod of His anger, to chastise and correct this nation in a way we have never experienced. He indicts us as a hypocritical nation. Then God is going to deal with the Assyrians after that.

Verse 12, “Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Lord has performed all His work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, that He will say, ‘I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his haughty looks.’” God is going to use the Assyrians (the Germans) to punish us, and then He’s going to “take care” of them. He’s going to turn around and use the Russians and Chinese to punish them. There’s going to be a succession. We’re going to see the succession as we go through the Major Prophets. And we will ultimately see the battle that will actually be fought several years into the Millennium. There are events that are going to occur.

Verse 20, “And it shall come to pass in that day that the remnant of Israel, and such as have escaped of the house of Jacob, will never again depend on him who defeated them, but will depend on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.” They are going to come back from captivity. They are going to learn a lesson.

Isaiah 11:1, we are told, “There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.” This is speaking of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, who was born of the seed of David. David was the son of Jesse.

Verses 2-5, “The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. His delight is in the fear of the Lord, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; but with

righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist.”

He is going to judge in righteousness; He’s going to judge with equity. There’s going to have to be correction and things straightened out. But notice the extent of change which is going to take place.

Verses 6-7, “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.”

Verse 9, “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” When the knowledge of God is pervasive, God is literally even going to change the nature of the animals. God uses wild animals as a description of the way many of the kingdoms of this world act.

When God describes the great world-ruling Gentile kingdoms in the book of Daniel and later in Revelation, He describes them under the guise of wild animals. He describes them as animals that are out for prey, out to devour and to destroy—under the analogy of lions, leopards, bears and this type. God says this is the nature human beings have—they act like a bunch of wild animals. That very nature, even in the animals, is going to be changed to symbolize, to demonstrate, that there is a different way of life. There’s going to come peace, rest and tranquility. There’s not going to be the danger and the harm.

Verse 10, “And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, who shall stand as a banner to the people [in other words, stand like a “flag” that everybody can seek to]; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious.” It really is!

Verse 11, “It shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left, from Assyria and Egypt, from Pathros and Cush, from Elam and Shinar, from Hamath and the islands of the sea.” The remnant of Israel is scattered in Assyria, North Africa and various areas.

Verse 12, “He will set up a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.”

Verse 13, “Also the envy of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not harass Ephraim.” There is going to be peace that is going to occur because the nations of Israel will have learned a lesson when God begins to bring them back from the captivity. At the end of the captivity, at the beginning of the Millennium, they are going to come back in a humble, submissive and teachable attitude.

Verse 15, “The Lord will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt;”

Verse 16, “There will be a highway for the remnant of His people who will be left from Assyria, as it was for Israel in the day that he came up from the land of Egypt.” God is going to begin to bring His people back from captivity at the beginning of the Millennium. He’s going to gather them back by way of a highway God’s going to have constructed right through part of what’s now sea. There’s going to be a highway to bring them down directly so that they can come back.

Isaiah 12 is a very short chapter that ties in with this.

Isaiah 12:1, “...‘O Lord, I will praise You; ..., Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me.” It describes the time of the Millennium.

Verse 3, “Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.” A time of salvation will be opened up. God indicts the nation of Israel, shows their sins, shows what He disapproves of, shows the calamitous events that are going to occur and then He shows the salvation that He holds out—the only source of salvation.

Now He begins to focus in on some of the nations He uses as a tool against Israel and what is going to happen to them.

Isaiah 13:1, “The burden against Babylon....”

Verse 6, “Wail, for the day of the Lord is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty.” This is the Day of the Lord that is going to come. The Day of the Lord comes after the tribulation.

Verse 10, it talks about the heavenly signs.

Verses 11-12, “I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I will make a mortal more rare than the fine gold, a man more than the

golden wedge of Ophir.” God will give a sense of priorities. When all this is over, people won’t place value on material things. People place a lot more value on material things than they do on other human beings. God says, ‘When I get through, they are going to learn what’s important.’

Verse 13, “Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth will move out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts and in the day of His fierce anger.” This describes the Day of the Lord.

Verse 17, “Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them [speaking of Babylon], who will not regard silver; and as for gold, they will not delight in it.” The Medes are the nation that’s settled in the area of what is now the modern-day Ukraine. That is part of Russia, the Soviet Union. What you have and what we are going to see is the pendulum swings that take place.

Right now there is coming into a greater European orbit of what is Eastern Europe, Central Europe and Western Europe. There is coming a European orbit that is certainly going to include many of the nations of what we’ve considered behind-the-Iron-Curtain nations—nations of Central Europe that we’ve tended to think of as the Eastern Bloc. We are even seeing some of the nations that are constituent parts of the Soviet Union in that European orbit. I think that much of Russia and some of the other nations are going to, at least for a time, be allied with the Beast Power. Some of the nations of Central Europe will actually be part of it. I don’t think there’s any indication that Russia will not ever be one of the ten kings. But I think, clearly at the beginning, there is a very great likelihood that they are going to be allied with it. It may be part of that nuclear arsenal that winds up being used against us. Where is Germany going to get their nuclear arsenal? It’s evidently going to be in the context of a European defense force. Where’s it going to come from? The scripture shows that as events go on, there is going to come disillusionment and a lack of trust between Germany and Russia that is going to involve a “double-cross.”

If you remember, World War II started out with Hitler and Stalin being allies. Stalin was Hitler’s ally. That’s the way he picked up Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, a good chunk of Poland, parts of Romania and parts of “this” and “that.” That’s where he got it all at the beginning of the War. He stole it at the beginning of World War II

when he and Hitler were allies. They made a deal and split it up between themselves.

And then Hitler “stabbed him in the back.” Hitler didn’t trust Stalin. When he thought he was in a position to do it, he launched an attack on Stalin. He caught him by surprise; then Stalin launched his counterattack on Hitler. Hitler bogged down as the Russian front won by “General Winter”—the most formidable “soldier” the Russians have. When it drops to 40 degrees below zero, things don’t work very well. The mechanized equipment the Germans brought in froze up, literally.

It’s an interesting story if you read it. It was the last successful use of horse cavalry in modern warfare. Do you realize that took place in World War II? The weather dropped to 40, 50, 60 degrees below zero, and all the mechanized equipment froze up. The Russians brought in Mongol horsemen from Siberia. The Germans were on foot and about to freeze. All their tanks and lubricating oils froze up. The Russians brought in by train these Mongol horsemen and thousands and thousands of Siberian ponies from Siberia. Those things you couldn’t freeze out if you tried. They lived for thousands of years in Siberia. They brought in all these Mongol horsemen. They hitched those horses up to Russian stuff, pulled it around and “rode circles” around the Germans. The Germans couldn’t even get their guns to fire. The things froze up. That’s what defeated Hitler on the Russian front. It’s amazing when technology breaks down—you go back to “old faithful.” There are things that survive.

Anyway, what did you have? You had the pendulum swing. You’re going to have the same thing. Basically what is going to happen, the first woe is Europe coming against Russia. The Germans and the Russians have never trusted one another. They have worked together at various times in history, but there’s a lack of trust. The first woe is Europe attacking Russia. They are going to try to get a pre-emptive attack. They are not going to be successful.

The second woe is the Medes (Communist bloc of nations) are going to come. There is going to be a backlash. Communism right now is being phased out, but don’t think that all the hard-liners and that entire bunch will disappear. They may fade from power. But what’s going to happen when this newfound prosperity and what promises to be success in linking up with the West turns to dust? When this turns into dust, you are going to have a pendulum swing and you

are going to have an alliance of Russia and China coming back.

Verse 17 describes the Medes, “Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, who will not regard silver; and as for gold, they will not delight in it.” There’s going to be a revival, a takeover, of the old hard-liner communists. They are going to rise up and unite the whole Asiatic area of China and India, and it will be dominated by Russia. This will occur well on into the tribulation. These are the events of the Day of the Lord. These are the events in the last year before Christ returns. That pendulum swing will swing back, and they will come in and devastate Europe. They will devastate Babylon. The destruction that you read of in Revelation 18—the destruction and nuclear devastation of modern Rome—that’s who’s going to do it.

Verses 19-20, “And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans’ pride, will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It will never be inhabited....” Now that occurred to ancient Babylon, and it’s going to occur to modern Babylon.

Revelation 18 makes plain it’s going to occur to modern Babylon because Revelation 18 was written way after it had happened to ancient Babylon. That was already old stuff when Revelation 18 was written. Isaiah prophesied it and it happened to ancient Babylon, but it’s going to happen to modern Babylon. Revelation 18 makes that plain.

Isaiah 14:1-2, “For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will still choose Israel, and settle them in their own land. The strangers will be joined with them, and they will cling to the house of Jacob. Then people will take them and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel will possess them for servants and maids in the land of the Lord; they will take them captive whose captives they were, and rule over their oppressors.”

When Christ comes back and all of this occurs, those who were the keepers of the concentration camps and whatever are going to come bringing out the captives, kind of “dusting them off” and taking them back gently. They are going to try to do what they can to get out of trouble. The “shoe is going to be on the other foot.” The way God is going to get the point across to those who were part of the Beast power is by making them servants. They are going to be brought back and they are going to be made servants. Everybody needs to learn to serve.

Here’s a group of people brought back to Israel in the position of servants. Very possibly, it may be a generation or may even be the time of the first Jubilee that the people of the Beast power are brought back from their position of servants in Israel to their own land. So, they’ll have the opportunity of learning to serve. That’s a good place for those who were the haughty, the mighty, those who dominated, to learn how to serve and to perform lowly functions as servants. We all have to learn to serve. There is nothing wrong with being a servant. Jesus came as a servant. He was willing to wash the feet of the disciples. We need to have that attitude of service. Leadership from God’s standpoint is service. There are those whose opinion of themselves and their status are such that they are going to need to be in the role of servants in the beginning of the Millennium.

Obviously, the law of God will be such that certainly by the time of the Jubilee, they will go out and be given back their own land. They will have a chance after they have had a generation or two to really learn the lesson and have it impressed. Then they will be to a point where they can be trusted to go back to their land and be instructed by those of the government of God.

Verse 3, “It shall come to pass in the day the Lord gives you rest from your sorrow, and from your fear and the hard bondage in which you were made to serve.” God is going to give rest from sorrow, fear and from hard bondage.

Verse 4, “that you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon....”

Verse 7, “The whole earth is at rest and quiet; they break forth into singing.” That’s descriptive of the time of the Messiah, of Tomorrow’s World, a time of a millennial Sabbath.

Verses 12-15, we have a description of the one who is really the power behind the throne, the ultimate king of Babylon—Lucifer. His desire was to ascend into heaven and to exalt his throne above the stars of God. He wanted to be like the Most High. Lucifer became Satan and is ultimately the source of all of the problems because this satanic attitude is the source of all the problems.

We end up here in chapter 14 with Lucifer desiring to take God’s place and the events that are going to occur.

There’s an awful lot packed into the book of Isaiah. There is an awful lot that deals with the things that are going on here and now. It gives God’s view of our society; it gives His

perspective. It gives the events that are going to occur immediately ahead and then on beyond that into the World Tomorrow. There is an awful lot that we have yet to uncover as we continue through the Major Prophets.

This is where we will conclude this evening. Next time we are going to cover chapters 15 through 35. I hope to see you here for that the next time.