

Bible Study # 49
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Major Prophets Series—Isaiah 15—35

We are looking at the second section of Isaiah. This particular section of Isaiah, that we **are looking at this evening, deals primarily with prophecies against some specific Gentile nations, as well as some directly against Israel.** This section **concludes with accounts of God's intervention in human affairs and also a description of the time when God's government holds sway during the Millennium.** We will also **notice prophecies relating to the Church in the place of safety.** I think there are a couple of prophecies that many of you may not have been familiar with before that I think you will find of interest. It gives us at least a little bit of insight.

Isaiah 15 opens up with a prophecy against Moab. The Moabites are a people who inhabit much of modern-day Iraq and some of modern-day Jordan. The Moabites and the Ammonites are basically in the area of Jordan and Iraq. The Ammonites are centered in Jordan. The capital city of Jordan takes its name from that ancient tribal name. It's spelled the same way and pronounced "Ammon" today. Basically, this is where those peoples were anciently, and the modern nation is still pretty much in the same geographic boundaries that exist today. In many cases, you have several different ethnic groups that are lumped together inside the same modern nation-state. It's not exact. Iraq, for instance, consists of several different groups such as the ancient Moabites, as well as a certain amount of Arab stock from Arabia that moved in there at an earlier time, as well as other ethnic groups such as the Kurds and others like that.

The description here describes some of the waste in which Moab is laid.

Isaiah 15:1, "...Because in the night Ar of Moab is laid waste and destroyed, Because in the night Kir of Moab is laid waste and destroyed." Moab is laid waste.

Certainly in this context, we are told that the Euphrates River will ultimately be the demarcation line between East and West, and that the kings of the East will assemble their army east of the Euphrates. The Euphrates will be dried up, and they will cross it and will invade. The Euphrates goes through a goodly portion of Iraq. It kind of divides the nation of

Iraq, which would give us the indication that Iraq is ultimately going to be devastated and at least partially occupied if that's the case. Chapter 15 kind of fits in with some of the other prophecies. Isaiah 16 is an interesting section.

Isaiah 16:1, "Send the lamb to the ruler of the land, from Sela to the wilderness, to the mount of the daughter of Zion." The word "Sela" in the margin says "Petra." "Sela" is the Hebrew name, while "Petra" is the Greek name of the same geographic location. It is known today by its Greek name "Petra." "Petra" and "Sela" mean the same thing. They both have the meaning of a great rock. The modern place-name of this location, Petra, is known by its Greek name, but it is referred to here in the Hebrew text by the Hebrew name. Many of the commentaries recognize the location to which is being referred as the area that we would term modern-day Petra.

Here is a description that mentions "the ruler of the land from Sela [the area of Petra] to the wilderness, to the mount of the daughter of Zion." It is describing the area that would include Petra. Now the modern-day ruler of that area is King Hussein of Jordan. That is currently in his territory. "Send a present," as it were, "to the ruler of this area from Petra to the wilderness."

Verses 2-5, "For it shall be a wandering bird thrown out of the nest; so shall be the daughters of Moab at the fords of the Arnon. 'Take counsel, execute judgment, make your shadow like the night in the middle of the day; hide the outcasts, do not betray him who escapes. Let My outcasts dwell with you, O Moab be a shelter to them from the face of the spoiler. For the extortioner is at an end, devastation ceases, the oppressors are consumed of the land. In mercy the throne will be established; and One will sit on it in truth, in the tabernacle of David, judging and seeking justice and hastening righteousness.'"

By the time we get down to v. 5, it is pretty obvious from the context, time wise, it brings us down to the return of Christ because it brings us down to a time when the extortioner will be at an end, when the spoiler will cease, when oppressors will be consumed out of the land, when finally, in mercy, the throne will be established and a King will reign in righteousness there in the tabernacle of David. That is something that is yet to happen and will occur at the return of Christ.

We're looking at prophecy that centers around the area of Petra. It has to do with Moabites,

many of whom have been dislodged from location. At least a portion of Iraq has been invaded, at least up to the Euphrates River. There are many dispossessed, homeless people. They're coming into an area that is inhabited by many of their kinsman.

Actually Moab and Jordan were of the same family. Until Iraq overthrew the monarchy back around 1960 or something like that, the monarch of Iraq was the uncle of King Hussein of Jordan. They were very closely related; it is the same family that ruled both kingdoms. So they are related peoples, related kingdoms in related areas. They border. So if you become dislocated, the logical place you flee is into Jordan there in the area of Petra, which is a fairly empty area.

In v. 2, the statement describes the Moabites as a "wandering bird."

In v. 1, there is a statement made basically to "the ruler of the land" because he is the one who is addressed.

Verses 3-4, "...Make my shadow like the night in the middle of the day; hide the outcasts, do not betray him who escapes. Let My outcasts dwell with you, O Moab..." Moab is not God's outcasts. God addresses Moab and He says, "Let My outcasts dwell with you Moab." This is one of the indications that we have looked at to make us wonder in terms of the location of the place of protection—the place of safety for God's people during the tribulation—as perhaps being the area of Petra. You have probably heard that speculation. Well, this is one of several verses in the Bible that seems to indicate Petra as being a place where at least some of those who are called "God's outcasts" will dwell and be protected until the time of the return of Christ. So this is kind of the setting and context here.

Isaiah 17:1, "The burden against Damascus..." This chapter discusses Damascus. We have addressed the burden of Damascus or modern-day Syria. Damascus is the ancient and the modern capital of Syria. It's one of those unique situations. Damascus, to my knowledge, is the oldest continuously inhabited city. It has continually been the capital of that area since way back in Biblical times. It is a rather unique situation when you consider all the fighting and the wars that have gone on with so many invading troops, off and on. Most cities have been destroyed a long time ago, and others have been built to take their place. Damascus is still there. But Damascus is not going to remain because it will ultimately be taken away from being a city and become a ruinous heap (v. 1).

The timing of that is brought out.

Verses 7-8, "In that day a man will look to his Maker, and his eyes will have respect for the Holy One of Israel. He will not look to the altars, the work of his hands; He will not have respect what his fingers have made..." That's looking on into the future. The setting of this prophecy is at the time of Christ, the time when Damascus will ultimately be destroyed.

In Isaiah 18, we are addressing an interesting prophecy in terms of what it describes. What it describes are the very first people who are going to voluntarily send emissaries up to Jerusalem and say, 'Come and teach us your ways.'

Isaiah 18:1-2, "Woe to the land shadowed with buzzing wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, which sends ambassadors by sea, even in vessels of reed on the waters, saying, 'Go, swift messengers, to a nation tall and smooth of skin [KJV, "scattered and peeled"; margin reference, "outspread and polished"]..." The Jewish translation renders it "a people who are very tall and who are oiled"—a reference to a style of presenting themselves.

The KJV is very awkward, but it is descriptive of the area south of Ethiopia—the area beyond the rivers of Ethiopia where the headwaters come down. We are looking at the area that centers on southern Ethiopia, Uganda and down into the area of Kenya—that area in East Africa is what is described. One particular tribe of the people who inhabit that area, the Watusi, is noted for their height. They are a people who are very tall and slim as compared to the peoples in other areas of Africa. That particular group of people is the dominant people there in East Africa. It's a descriptive term of a rather unique situation as we are going to notice here in chapter 18.

Let me summarize it. That is one of the areas that is the most devastated today. Look at the news of the Ethiopia, Uganda areas where large amounts of people have been dying of starvation and various diseases. It is one of the most tragic circumstances on the face of the earth today when you look at the destruction that has been wrought by the civil wars and the various things. What is described here? This describes the very first people who are going to voluntarily send emissaries up to Jerusalem and say, 'Come and teach us of your ways.'

Verse 7, "In that time a present will be brought to the Lord of hosts from a people tall and smooth of skin [People who are tall and oiled as their traditional style of native presentation. They are noted for that.], And from a people terrible from

their beginning onward, a nation powerful and treading down, whose land the rivers divide—To the place of the name of the Lord of hosts, to Mount Zion.” What it describes here is at the time of Christ’s return. There is nobody who’s going to be more ready to respond than these people down below the rivers of Ethiopia, who have perhaps suffered more in the latter portion of the twentieth century than any other area of the earth. When you read a little bit of what is going on and what has been going on there, it is a very terrible circumstance.

You read in Isaiah 2 of how many nations are going to say, “Come let us go up to the house of the Lord, and He will teach us of His ways.” Those who are evidently singled out here as being the first to respond are those in the area in East Africa, an area that has been trodden down, an area that has really suffered quite a bit of tragedy and trauma, particularly in recent years. It’s kind of an interesting inset as it describes their response. By that time, they will have had enough of what man’s system produces, and it won’t take a whole lot of convincing that they want what Jesus Christ has brought there to Jerusalem.

Isaiah 19:1, “The burden against Egypt....” We address the subject of Egypt. We find what is ultimately going to come about in Egypt.

Verse 2, “I will set Egyptians against Egyptians; everyone will fight against his brother, and everyone against his neighbor, city against city, kingdom against kingdom.” Egypt is ultimately going to be confronted with a great deal of internal unrest and civil strife. There’s a great deal of that below the surface in Egypt right now, and this is what is ultimately going to occur.

Verse 4, “‘And the Egyptians I will give into the hand of a cruel master, and a fierce king will rule over them,’ says the Lord, the Lord of hosts.” This is, evidently, the Beast power. Other prophecies in Daniel show that they will come in and occupy Egypt.

In v. 5, we find the drought that is going to afflict Egypt.

Verse 17, “And the land of Judah shall be a terror to Egypt; everyone who makes mention of it will be afraid in himself...” That certainly has already come about. Remember the Six-Day War and the Yom Kippur War? You realize that the land of Judah has become a terror to the land of Egypt, to the point that it says “everyone who makes mention of it will be afraid in himself.” It scares them to even say the word. It singles out that it is the land of Judah because the nation that

calls itself Israel in the Middle East is really, in Biblical terminology, the land of Judah.

It describes what is ultimately going to occur in v. 21, “Then the Lord will be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the Lord in that day, and will make sacrifice and offerings...” God is going to have to smite Egypt. God is not going to have to smite Uganda, Ethiopia and Kenya when He comes back.

Verse 22, He is going to have to smite Egypt. But after He smites it, He will heal it, and they will return to the Lord. Other prophecies in Zechariah show that it’s going to take a while to get the point. They are not going to want to come up to the Feast and do certain things at the beginning (Zechariah 14:18-19). God will have to punish them, but He will do so for the purpose of bringing them to repentance. And when they repent, He will heal them.

There will ultimately be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria.

Verses 23-24, “In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians. In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land.”

Here we find described that in Tomorrow’s World when the lessons have been learned, Egypt and Assyria (modern-day Germany) will rank up near Israel as the great nations there in the midst of the land. They will serve as a blessing and as a conduit of God’s truth.

Of course, ancient Egypt gave their pagan religion to much of the rest of the world—not only to the rest of Africa, but also to other areas of the world. Greece borrowed their religion from the Egyptians, and the Romans borrowed it from the Greeks. So much of paganism goes back to the ancient Egyptians. They were responsible for that, both in Africa as well as in Europe. They have been a source of a great deal of problems in the past. The Germans (Assyrians) have been a source of problems and destruction, but when those people finally are converted, they will be a source of things that are positive. They will be blessings in the midst of the land. It even describes a great highway that is going to be built that is going to connect Egypt with Germany, going through the land of Israel. It will be something at that time that will serve as a source of blessings to all nations.

Isaiah 20 is more of a historical prophecy inset. It describes an ancient Assyrian captivity of the

Egyptians and Ethiopians, based on what had occurred a little earlier in Ashdod.

Isaiah 21 addresses the areas of Elam and Media. This refers to the Slavic world; the Slavic peoples are basically descended from Elam. Media is a related people. This would refer, particularly, to the Ukraine. This would be an area that would be descriptive of much of Eastern and Central Europe.

Isaiah 21:2, “A distressing vision is declared to me; the treacherous dealer deals treacherously, and the plunderer plunders, Go up, O Elam! Besiege, O Media! All its sighing I have made to cease.”

Verse 9, “And look, here comes a chariot of men with a pair of horsemen! And he answered and said, ‘Babylon is fallen, is fallen! And all the carved images of her gods he has broken to the ground.’”

This section describes these areas, the alliance that is put together (of East and West in Europe); there’s going to be a lot of treachery involved in that. The peoples involved are ultimately going to betray one another, just as Napoleon and the Czar betrayed one another. Napoleon betrayed the Czar way back in the early 1800s, and that ultimately led to Napoleon’s defeat. Hitler didn’t learn anything from history and did exactly the same thing with Stalin. And there are ultimately going to be more treacherous dealings in the future. It is going to lead to the destruction of Babylon (modern Rome).

Verse 11, “The burden of Dumah [Dumah is an Arab tribe that lives in the area of Petra. That’s their modern-day location.]. He calls to me out of Seir [“Seir” is the ancient name for the area of which Petra was the capital.], ‘Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?’” Here’s another indication of a group of people in the area of Petra. The modern-day native inhabitation right around that area is addressing one whom they regard as the watchman. If you go back to the book of Ezekiel, you will find that’s a term used to describe God’s work in the end time. They address one who they regard as the watchman. They see what’s going on, and they inquire of him how much time is left.

Verse 12, “The watchman said, ‘The morning comes, and also the night. If you will inquire, inquire; Return! Come back!’” The watchman simply tells them that they had better turn to God and then come again.

Verse 13 concludes with the burden directed toward Arabia (Saudi Arabia, the modern Arabian Peninsula).

Verses 16-17, Kedar is addressed. Kedar is the main tribe of Saudi Arabia. It describes their destruction and being diminished (KJV, “overwhelmed”).

Isaiah 22:1, “The burden against the Valley of Vision....”

Then it refers to the time of the Day of the Lord.

Verse 5, “For it is a day of trouble and treading down and perplexity by the Lord of hosts in the Valley of Vision....” It describes some of the events that are going to come about.

Isaiah 23:1, “The burden against Tyre....”

Ancient Tyre, addressed here, is symbolic of the state of Babylon the Great (modern Rome). In fact, some of the statements from Isaiah 23 are actually quoted and paraphrased back in Revelation 18 when it describes the fall of Babylon the Great. It describes the destruction of how it’s going to be overthrown.

Tyre was the great coastal trading city of the ancient world. It is used to typify the great trading combine that will ultimately arise. Actually, many of the descendants of the ancient people of Tyre have settled in portions of the southern part of Italy. Tyre, as the great trading capital of the ancient world, in that sense, is symbolic of Babylon the Great, which will not only be the religious, military and political capital, but it will also be a great trading economic combine.

It describes how God will bring about its destruction.

Isaiah 24:1, “Behold, the Lord will make the earth empty and make it waste, distorts its surface and scatter abroad its inhabitants.”

Verse 3, “The land shall be utterly emptied and utterly plundered....”

Verse 5, “The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.” You can go back to Exodus 31 and see where the Sabbath is described as an everlasting covenant.

As a result of that, v. 6, “Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, and those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left.”

I will point this out because this is a verse that is quoted by the Seventh Day Adventist. If any of you are familiar with the writings of Ellen G. White and the Seventh Day Adventist Church, their teaching is that the earth will be desolate during the Millennium. The Seventh Day Adventists, those who followed Ellen G. White, were split-off from the Church of God back in

the 1850s-1860s. There were those who had been associated with the Church who accepted her as a prophetess and followed her visions; that gave rise to the Seventh Day Adventist Church, which dates from about 1860. Her teaching is that the saints will spend the Millennium in heaven taking part in the investigative judgment—pouring over the books—kind of like one great one thousand-year soap opera. And you get to find out everything your neighbors were doing that you always suspected but never knew. Who in the world wants to spend a thousand years watching a sordid soap opera with every detail of every thing? This is what they anticipate doing. Their statement is that Satan is chained by circumstances because there is nobody on earth to deceive. That's their explanation.

In her writing, The Great Controversy, to prove her point that the earth is desolate during the Millennium, she quotes (or misquotes) Isaiah 24:6. The way she quotes it in the book is, "Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, and those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned [period]." If you read her book, you would not know that there were four words left out. She didn't quote the last part of the verse. She put a period where the Bible has a comma and left out the words, "...and few men left." Yes, there is going to be great destruction and great devastation, and all kinds of things are going to happen. But there are going to still be a few people who live through it. Verse 10, "The city of confusion is broken down, every house is shut up..."

Verse 12, "In the city desolation is left, and the gate is stricken with destruction."

Verses 19-20, "The earth is violently broken, the earth is split open, the earth is shaken exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard..."

Verse 21, "It shall come to pass in that day that the Lord will punish on high the host of exalted ones..." It describes the destruction that is going to come about, but there are going to be people who survive the events of the Day of the Lord. There will be a few men left.

In Isaiah 25:6-7, once the earth has come to this point and the world has come to this devastation, God steps in and says, "And in this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all people a feast of choice pieces [KJV, "fat things"], a feast of wine on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines on the lees. And He will destroy on this mountain the surface of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over

all nations." In other words, the veil that covers the eyes of people so they cannot see and understand is going to be removed. God is going to make a feast of fat things to all people. There is going to be a time of abundance and a time of blessing. To make that possible, the veiled understanding that has kept people from being able to really see and understand is going to be removed.

Verses 8-9, "He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces; the rebuked of His people He will take away from all the earth; for the Lord has spoken. And it will be said in that day: 'Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us....'" Certainly God is going to pour out His blessings once the world has come to its senses.

Isaiah 26 continues with this theme. It's basically a song of praise to God.

Isaiah 27:1, "In that day the Lord with His severe sword, great and strong, will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan that twisted serpent..." This is descriptive of Satan the devil. It's the terminology back in Revelation 12:9 referring to Satan, that great dragon.

Verse 6, "Those who come He shall cause to take root in Jacob; Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit." Once the remnant is re-gathered and brought back, they are going to begin to have families. They are going to blossom and bud. They are going to begin to multiply, and they will ultimately fill the face of the earth with fruit. Israel, at that time, will really be the blessing to all nations that God had intended for them to be. They will be a blessing as they begin to spread out once again evidencing God's way.

Verse 13, "So it shall be in that day that the great trumpet will be blown; they will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria, and they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem." This refers to the return of Jesus Christ and the effect that it will have on the Israelites ready to perish in the concentration camps of the future. It will be that final fulfillment of the great day of Trumpets.

Isaiah 28 begins an indictment on Israel of the things that lead to their captivity.

Isaiah 28:1, "Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim [It might be pointed out that one of the highest concentrations of alcohol abuse in the western world is in the area of Britain.], Whose glorious beauty is a fading

flower....” That has been the case. The glory of the British Empire has faded like a flower.

Verse 5, “...To the remnant of His people....” Only a remnant is left.

In v. 3, it describes this crown of pride that is there, and they are going to be brought down. God will bring them to repentance.

We have a little insight in terms of how the Bible is written.

Verses 9-11, ““Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breast? For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little.’ For with stammering lips and another tongue he will speak to this people.”

Verse 13, “But the word of the Lord was to them, ‘precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little,’ that they might go and fall backward, and be broken....” The Bible is written where you have to get a little here and a little there, and you have to build on it. One line upon another, here a little, there a little, but you build it taking precept upon precept, line upon line—build it in a step-by-step way. Those who will be taught have to mature.

Verse 9, ““Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breast?” They have to take it a step at a time. The Bible is written so that those who are not being called are simply deceived. Even though they can read the Book, they don’t understand it.

Verse 16, “Therefore thus says the Lord God: ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; whoever believes will not act hastily.’” This refers to Jesus Christ.

In Isaiah 29, we continue with prophecies about Israel.

Isaiah 29:1, ““Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt!” “Ariel” is a poetic term used to refer to Israel which means “lion of God.” That is the Hebrew translation of Ariel.

Verse 13, “Therefore the Lord said: ‘Inasmuch as these people draw near to Me with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me....’”

Verse 14, God says He is going to work a marvelous work among them. The nation is ultimately going to hear, but God describes a nation that pays lip service—and that’s all. They

are not sincerely seeking God. They pay lip service to God and to religion, but their heart, their priorities are elsewhere.

Verse 15, “Woe to those who seek deep to hide their counsel far from the Lord, and their works are in the dark; they say, ‘Who sees us?’ and, ‘Who knows us?’” Can you imagine anybody being so dumb as to think that what he is doing is secret and nobody knows? Yeah, we can all have imagined that. The point is that God says “woe” to somebody who thinks he is “putting it over” by doing it secretly in the dark and nobody will ever know. God knows! Whom are we serving? God knows!

The fact that no human being saw us doesn’t prove anything. If I do something in a dark closet, God can see in the dark as well as He can see in the daylight. I haven’t hidden anything from God, and God’s the One who ultimately judges. I better live my life in sincerity and truth before God, recognizing that God sees and hears. God will ultimately deal with the nation and with those who take this approach. It describes some of that through the rest of chapter 29.

Isaiah 30:1-2, ““Woe to the rebellious children,’ says the Lord, ‘who take counsel, but not of Me, and who devise plans, but not of My Spirit, that they may add sin to sin. Who walk to go down to Egypt, and have not asked My advice, to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the showdown of Egypt!’” Israel is not seeking God but is seeking Egypt and other nations.

Verse 7, “For the Egyptians shall help in vain and to no purpose. Therefore I have called her Rahab-Hem Shebeth [Rahab sits idle].” (KJV, “...therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength is to sit still.”) They won’t accomplish anything, and our nation won’t accomplish anything by trying to work something out with them. Perhaps they will be looking to them trying to work out something over the issue of oil or the Suez. We need to look to God.

Verse 8, “Now go, write it before them on a tablet, and note it on a scroll, that it may be for a time to come [margin, “the latter day”], forever and ever.”

Verses 9-10, “That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children who will not hear the law of the Lord. Who say to the seers, ‘Do not see,’ and to the prophets, ‘do not prophesy to us right things; speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits.’”

‘We want you to tell us something nice.’ People don’t want to be told their sins by religious

leaders. They don't even want to be told the problem by the analysts and political leaders. They want to believe that everything is going to get better and better, and if somebody comes along and starts telling the seriousness of what's going to happen, people don't like that.

Because the politicians are aware of that, none of them want to talk about the seriousness of some of the things that are happening or are going to happen because that's a good way to lose an election. You have to make people think that they can have a free lunch, take a free ride, put it all on their Visa and MasterCard and the bill will never come due.

That's what we are doing as a nation. We have over a hundred billion dollars a year deficit as a nation (1990). You can't live beyond your means indefinitely. You try it. I don't recommend that you do. Perhaps some of you have. Sooner or later, somebody shows up at the door and they are there to collect. That's life and it happens to nations as well as individuals. But the nation doesn't want to hear that. We don't want to be told. We don't want to pay higher taxes, but we don't want to get any of our government services cut either. We want everything! Everybody's for cutting the government, but they never want to cut anything that applies to them. Cut defense!

Boeing has a big plant in Lake Charles, Louisiana. What do you want to do—cut the Boeing contracts? We have people here that are involved in that, and a lot of people in Lake Charles are involved directly or indirectly. You want to cut defense? Fine. That means you're going to cut out a lot of Boeing's contracts, and that means they are going to shut plants and lay off people. Not only lay off people, but what about all the related service industry? You'd shut down bases, etc.

The point is nobody wants whatever he's getting money from to close down. We don't want anything cut off, but we also don't want to pay. You can't do it that way. You can't live life on a MasterCard or Visa forever and think that the bills will never come.

We say to our seers, to our prophets (both the secular and the religious sort), 'Tell us nice things; don't tell us bad news.' We don't want to hear bad things. 'Tell us what nice people we are and how everything is going to get better and better. Paint a rosy picture. Give us some confidence. Make us feel good about ourselves.' People want that in the secular realm and in the religious realm. Hopefully, we will never get to

the point in our lives that we don't like being told bad news.

If we really find ourselves getting upset when corrective sermons come, then maybe we should go back and read Isaiah 30:10 and say, 'No, that's not the category I want to be in.' When we don't want to be told any bad news, then we are really cutting off our opportunities to grow. Correction hurts! I don't enjoy being corrected, in that sense. It's not pleasant at the time, but we can appreciate it afterwards because that's the way we learn and grow.

God tells us in Hebrew 12:11, "no chastening for the present is pleasant, but afterwards it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness." I didn't enjoy it when my dad put his belt on my rear end. I look back on it, and I am very thankful that I had a father who loved me enough that he put that belt on me when I needed it. He held a tight rein on things, and I appreciate and value that.

It describes the nation and their attitude. They don't want correction; therefore, they don't want the plain word of God. This problem is ultimately going to be solved because when the Millennium comes and God's government is set up, and after all these things are over with, they will be taught.

Verses 20-21, "And though the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your teachers will not be moved into a corner anymore. But your eyes shall see your teachers. Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it.' Whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left."

That is going to be a very interesting thing at the beginning of the Millennium as people get used to that. No longer will they just be able to ignore it and not want to hear the truth. The teachers won't be far off in a corner anymore; you'll see them! Suddenly, a spirit being will materialize behind somebody, and they will hear, 'Wait a minute. This is the way; walk you in it.' Talk about getting someone's attention! That will kind of put a damper on things.

But it will give us a level of supervision that sometimes, as parents of small children, we wish we could have when we're trying to keep them totally in our sight. The minute they get out of sight, they are into something. You're trying to make sure they don't get hurt, and you find yourself having to say, 'No, stop.' Probably one of the very first words kids learn is "no" because that's the one they hear the most often. So many

things that little children think of could be harmful or dangerous.

We're going to have to deal with people and keep things pretty strict. Strictness does not mean a lack of love or a lack of mercy. But if you're going to get things back on the track, things have to be strict. When things start getting loose and lax, things start wandering off the track, and pretty soon you have a mess—not because they started out to have a mess, but because things wander astray. If a shepherd doesn't keep his flock together and where they are supposed to be, if he gets lax and careless, pretty soon they all wander off. Some may get lost in the woods and wolves (or whatever it may be) get them.

God is strict because He does love us and doesn't want us to get hurt. He is certainly going to have to be strict at the beginning of the Millennium to get things back on track because people are going to have so much to unlearn. It is going to take them a while to get the point that God's way really is the best way.

It describes the things that are going to take place.

Isaiah 31:1, "Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong, but who do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek the Lord!" Their trust is not in God. Their trust is in human deliverance. That is an important matter of faith. God wants us to look to Him as our Deliverer. One of the sins of the nation is looking elsewhere, looking to physical resources to deliver us.

It describes the events that are going to occur in v. 4, "...So the Lord of hosts will come down to fight for Mount Zion and for its hill."

Verse 7, "For in that day every man shall throw away his idols of silver and his idols of gold—sin, which your own hands have made for yourselves." It describes the events when Jesus Christ returns and how they are going to throw away their idols. When the Day of the Lord comes, things are going to "melt down" in a hurry, but the result of that is that it will bring about the event of chapter 32.

Verse 8, "Then shall the Assyrians fall by a sword not of man..."

Isaiah 32:1, "Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule with justice."

In v. 2, as a result of that and that society, "A man will be as a hiding place from the wind [A man will be a welcome sight. You see a stranger today, and you don't know how to react and

respond.], and a cover from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." It will be like water in a dry place, like a shadow on a hot day. It's going to be a welcome sight because there will be a basis of trust and confidence.

Verse 15, "Until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is counted as a forest."

Verses 17-18, "The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." Peace is the result of righteousness. That's why there is not peace on earth today, and there will not be peace because first a king must reign in righteousness. The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness is quietness and assurance.

The world has all kinds of peace marches, peace crusades, peace groups, etc. Peace is an effect! It is the effect, the result and the consequence of righteousness. You are never going to have peace until you first have righteousness. Righteousness must precede peace. Peace is simply a logical result. When people are living in righteousness, they have peace. When we are conducting our lives righteously, we have peace with one another. The lack of peace comes in as a result of a lack of righteousness on somebody's part.

The world has to learn righteousness before it's going to have peace. The world wants peace, but they want to have their own variety of peace. The devil, in effect, has sold people on the idea that there's more than one way to have peace. The devil has sold the idea that you can come up with some other way and you can work it out your way. The great peace conferences that men have put together have always set the stage for the next war.

The Spirit is going to be poured out from on high.

Verse 15, "Until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high..." Peace is going to come through Jesus Christ. Human nature will be transformed. Christ will establish the rule of righteousness, and together with that, the Spirit of God will be poured out. That sets the stage for a transformation of human beings.

Isaiah 33:1, "Woe to you who plunder, though you have not been plundered; and you who deal treacherously, though they have not dealt treacherously with you!" This is referring to the

Beast power. They are going to receive consequences for their actions.

Notice a couple of interesting verses.

Verses 5-6, “The Lord is exalted, for He dwells on high; He has filled Zion with justice and righteousness. Wisdom and knowledge will be the stability of your times. And the strength of salvation; the fear of the Lord is His treasure.”

We live in a very unstable world. Everything is in transition, and that has served to destabilize the lives of many, many people. “Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of your times.” There is a source of stability that we can have in our lives as the world is “topsy-turvy” around us. We don’t have to feel like everything is changing around us because if we have wisdom and knowledge, there is a source of stability.

Psalm 111:10, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do His commandments.”

Proverbs 9:10, “The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” It is the starting point.

We have a source of wisdom and knowledge that can provide stability in our lives—a stability that the world does not have because the world doesn’t know where to look for any absolutes. The world doesn’t have absolutes. Everything is “topsy-turvy” and changing. A lot of people feel their whole lives are destabilized because it seems like everything is in a state of flux and changing. All the rules have changed.

The reality is none of the rules have changed if you are going to go back to God’s rules. God is consistent.

Hebrews 13:8, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.” All we have to do is get back to God’s rules. The wisdom and knowledge that comes from God is an eternal wisdom and knowledge and a source of stability. What’s right today was right yesterday and will be right a year, ten years, a hundred years and a thousand years from now. What was wrong five, ten, fifty, one hundred and a thousand years ago, is just as wrong today. If it’s wrong, it’s wrong; if it’s right, it’s right. We have the source of stability that the world doesn’t have.

That lack of stability is one of the things that contribute to so many problems, even the psychological and emotional problems that so many are beset with. They look around and see everything changing, and they feel like they have to change to be “up” with the times—or maybe I should say to be “down” with the times. The times are on a toboggan slide. There is no

agreement on things that even a generation or two ago there was agreement on. You watch old reruns on television made back in the early 60s, and you can see the differences in what was taken for granted as normal. There was, at least, a certain agreement in society about what constitutes normal. Society has lost much of that agreement now. I’m not setting up any period as an ideal time because, no, it wasn’t. But there was, at least, more of a Biblically-based value system that tended to be taken for granted. That has been lost, and there is a lack of stability because of that.

What it describes is in the context of the end-times.

Isaiah 33:7-8, “Surely their valiant ones shall cry outside, the ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly. The highways lie waste....” It describes the time of the end that is going to bring about all of the destruction and all of the things that’s going to catch people by surprise. But, we have a source of stability during those trying times.

Let me call your attention to something in vv. 14-16, “The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness has seized the hypocrites: ‘Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?’ He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, he who despises the gain of oppressions, who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil: He shall dwell on high [or dwell on the heights]; His place of defense will be the fortress of rocks [KJV, “munitions of rocks”]....”

That’s a very awkward translation. The marginal rendering is “the stronghold of Sela or Petra”—“Sela” is the Hebrew term.

Verses 16-19, “He shall dwell on high; His place of defense will be the fortress of rocks; bread will be given him, his water will be sure. Your eyes will see the King in His beauty; they will see the land that is very far off. Your heart will meditate on terror [you will meditate on what is going on]: ‘Where is the scribe? Where is he that weighs? Where is he who counts the towers?’ You will not see a fierce people, a people of obscure speech, beyond perception....” You won’t see these events. You won’t be there at that time.

Verse 20, you will be able to look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities, of our festival seasons; your eyes will see Jerusalem, a quiet habitation. It describes a time when the sinners of Zion are afraid. Who is going to dwell with the devouring

fire? Who is going to be able to survive all these burnings? Who is going to be protected during the time of this catastrophe?

Verse 15 says, “He who walks righteously and speak uprightly....” –The one who does what’s right. How are they going to be protected? They will dwell in the heights. Their place of defense will be the stronghold of Sela; bread and water will be provided for them—and they will ultimately see the King (Jesus Christ) in His beauty. Again, this is one of those verses that seem to indicate the possibility that Petra may very well be the place of protection for God’s Church in the end time.

Notice what Jerusalem is going to be like in Tomorrow’s World.

Verse 20, “Look upon Zion, the city of our appointed feasts; your eyes will see Jerusalem, a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that will not be taken down....” It is truly going to be the city of peace. That’s what the word “Jerusalem” means, and that’s what it will be in Tomorrow’s World. It will be the city of peace.

Isaiah 34 describes the Day of the Lord.

Isaiah 34:2, “For the indignation of the Lord is against all nations, and His fury upon their armies....”

Verse 8, “For it is the day of the Lord’s vengeance, and the year of recompense for the cause of Zion.” Very likely, the Day of the Lord will be that final year of the three and one-half-year period. The tribulation begins three and one-half years before the return of Christ. But the last year of that is going to be God’s wrath—the day of the Eternal’s vengeance. It comes down and describes that.

Then it describes what is ultimately going to be the consequence afterward. There is going to be rejuvenation to the whole world.

Isaiah 35:1, “The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.” The geographic transformation that will take place will make Tomorrow’s World a wonderful, habitable place for all humanity. We see the description of the great transformation that is going to take place. It will be a time of tremendous healings.

Verse 5, “Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.”

A time when the desert will bloom and, vv. 6-7, dry land will produce water. God will divide their inheritance to the nations, but another aspect of that is that everybody’s inheritance is going to be a nice place to be. In

today’s world, nations covet what other nations have and try to take it away from them. That won’t be the case. Christ won’t allow that. But He’s also going to make sure that everybody’s heritage, everybody’s habitation, is going to be a beautiful, productive place.

Scripture describes a highway that is going to be built, and they are going to call it the “Way of Holiness.” I like this description.

Verse 8, “A highway shall be there, and a road, and it shall be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for others. Whoever walks the road, although a fool, shall not go astray.” I like this description. Road directions are going to be simple in Tomorrow’s World. You’re not going to get turned around and lost. If you’ve ever been in one of our big cities and gotten turned around on some of these expressways, sometimes it’s like a bowl of spaghetti. You go to Houston and it’s all headed every which way. You don’t have to be a fool to be lost on something like that.

The highway that God is going to build in the Millennium is going to have a name. It is going to be called the “Way of Holiness.” It’s going to be a highway. It will be for the wayfaring man, and even if he’s not really smart, he’s still not going to get lost on it because it’s going to be simple. That’s descriptive of God’s way of life. The Bible is simple. It’s not all easy. Everything God says is not easy to do, but it is simple and clear-cut. Anytime somebody starts making it so complicated you can’t understand it, you better sit back and have a big “question mark” because God talks about the simplicity of Christ (II Corinthians 11:3). God’s way is simple. It’s clear-cut. There’s a difference between “easy” and “simple.” A program can be simple but not necessarily easy to put into practice. God’s way is simple and clear-cut, and this highway is, in a sense, going to be a reflection of that. Many times God uses physical things to symbolize something, and this is evidently going to be the case here.

This brings us down to a concluding point. The next Bible study we will cover chapters 36-49.