

## THROUGH THE BIBLE ISAIAH 20-24

Countries from all over the globe send delegates to the United Nations along the East River in Manhattan, NY. Imagine, Isaiah as one of those delegates - *“the honorable ambassador from the nation of Judah.”*

Isaiah strides to the lectern to deliver his speech...

And he reiterates the message he’s written in Chapters 13-24. He pronounces God’s **“burden”** - His heavy judgments - on the nations in attendance.

*Babylon, Assyria, Philistia, Moab, Damascus, the land beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, Egypt, Edom, Arabia, Tyre* - even his own capitol city of *Jerusalem*.

His grand finale is a blistering judgment against the whole world. When he’s done, Isaiah has made bitter enemies. They probably would’ve tied the prophet of God to a concrete block and thrown him in the East River. Isaiah was a brave and bold man of God.

In chapter 20 he continues his judgment against Egypt and Ethiopia. **“In the year that Tartan came to Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against Ashdod and took it...”**

A lot of Isaiah’s prophecies have flip-flopped back and forth from immediate to future - from 700 BC, until the end of the age. Here Isaiah helps us get our bearings. He pinpoints where he is on the timeline...

The northern Hebrew kingdom of Israel was conquered by the Assyrians in 722 BC, with the fall of Samaria. Eleven years later, in 711 BC an Assyrian General, *Tartan*, conquered the coastal city of Ashdod.

The fall of the Philistine city sent word to Judah that they were next in line for an Assyrian invasion.

Verse 2, "At the same time the LORD spoke by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, "Go, and remove the sackcloth from your body, and take your sandals off your feet." And he did so, walking naked and barefoot."

Here's another aspect of Isaiah's ministry that would not have gone over well at the United Nations.

Imagine, Isaiah in front of the esteemed ambassadors from around the world delivering his speech in the buff. It was *Isaiah's nude review*.

He spoke *the bare facts... the naked truth!*

Verse 3, "Then the LORD said, "Just as My servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and a wonder against Egypt and Ethiopia, so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians as prisoners and the Ethiopians as captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt." Some Bible teachers suggest Isaiah didn't actually strip completely naked. Just down to his inner garment - *his underwear, so to speak*.

Like a man being processed into the prison population. He was stripped to his skivvies, then issued new prison garb. The Prophet Isaiah had dressed himself in the minimal uniform of a prisoner of war.

The idea was to send a visual message to the people who saw him. They knew his nakedness and bare feet represented a POW. This illustrated his prophecy. Assyria will invade Egypt and Ethiopia.

Isaiah's bare buttocks and feet are just one example of a type of ministry given to many of the Hebrew prophets. "A picture is better than a thousand words," so God used living parables, spiritual skits to illustrate His burdens. And Isaiah was not the only example...

**Ezekiel** lay on his side for 390 days.

**Hosea** was called by God to marry a prostitute.

**Jeremiah** buried a sash by the river.

In the NT, **Agabus** tied up Paul with his own belt.

These acts illustrated God's message to His people.

Here Isaiah is told to walk naked and barefoot for three years - whether that was 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for 3 years - or a portion of each day for 3 years we're not sure. *But this was a taxing ministry...*

As a pastor I've discovered there's an aspect to all sincere preaching that requires revealing yourself...

*Thankfully, not literally,* but you've got to be honest and vulnerable. People watch you and know you... and if you're not nakedly honest about your struggles they sniff out your phoniness. It might be *rough*, but all good Bible teaching requires some preaching in the *buff*.

Verse 5, “Then they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation and Egypt their glory.

And the inhabitant of this territory will say in that day, 'Surely such is our expectation, wherever we flee for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria; and how shall we escape?'" Isaiah's prophecy of judgment on Egypt and Ethiopia was not just a message to those two nations. It also spoke to God's people, Judah.

The Jews had just forged an alliance with their neighbors in Africa to protect them against Assyria. Isaiah is saying to Jerusalem, Egypt will be no help.

Jerusalem needs to put their trust in God, not in man. And this is also a lesson we need to learn. Don't be foolish. Rather than put your trust in the doctor, or union, or government, or coach - trust in the Lord!

Chapter 21, “The burden against the Wilderness of the Sea. As whirlwinds in the South pass through, so it comes from the desert, from a terrible land.” Here's an odd expression, “*the Wilderness of the Sea.*” What is the “*desert*” of the sea? - Or the “*dryness*” of the sea?

Throughout the Bible “*the sea*” is an idiom for “*humanity*” - “*the vast sea of humanity.*” We'll learn from the context here, Isaiah is speaking of Babylon.

Geographically, coming from the north, Babylon was the gateway to the Persian Gulf, but spiritually speaking it was a mirage. Babylon was the home to the world's wisdom, and wealth, and religion. But under the glitz and glamour there was a dryness - an emptiness.

Isaiah speaks of Babylon in chapter 21, “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.” During Isaiah’s day, Assyria was the world power. It would be another 100 years before the rise of the Babylonian empire. At the time of Isaiah, Babylon was just a hotbed of unrest on the Euphrates.

Yet here Isaiah not only speaks of Babylon, but two of the groups who will conquer and overthrow its future empire - the people of Elam and of Media.

We read Isaiah from the perspective of history and marvel at the precision of his prophecies. Whereas Isaiah’s first readers might’ve wondered if he was nuts.

Isaiah speaks about a future Babylon, “Therefore my loins are filled with pain; pangs have taken hold of me, like the pangs of a woman in labor. I was distressed when I heard it; I was dismayed when I saw it.

My heart wavered, fearfulness frightened me; the night for which I longed He turned into fear for me.

Prepare the table, set a watchman in the tower, eat and drink. Arise, you princes, anoint the shield!

Daniel 5 describes the Medo-Persian conquest of Babylon from the persecutive of Belshazzar's banquet.

The king was wining and dining his guests, while the enemy went upstream and dammed up the Euphrates.

Remember, the strategy of the Persian General, Ugabaru. The Euphrates flowed under the walls of Babylon, so the invaders dried up the riverbed so their troops could march in under the walls. The Medes and Persians conquered Babylon without firing a shot.

Earlier that night, the hand of God had written on Belshazzar's palace wall, *that Babylon's number was up, they'd been tried in the balance, and found lacking.*

Verse 6 "For thus has the Lord said to me: "Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he sees." And he saw a chariot with a pair of horsemen, a chariot of donkeys, and a chariot of camels, and he listened earnestly with great care. Then he cried, "A lion, my Lord! I stand continually on the watchtower in the daytime; I have sat at my post every night. And look, here comes a chariot of men with a pair of horsemen!"

Then he answered and said, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen! And all the carved images of her gods He has broken to the ground." This is the reaction of a far-away city when news arrives of Babylon's fall.

And here again we see in Isaiah a blending of both the immediate and the future. Revelation 18 speaks of events that will occur near the end of the age...

John sees another Babylon - either a future, rebuilt Babylon - or a kingdom with the same name and idolatrous spirit as ancient Babylon. But that Babylon is also toppled. In fact, God rains down fire on the city.

In Revelation 18:2 John uses the same language as Isaiah. "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen..."

And notice what the messenger to this city cries out, "A lion, my Lord!" The fall of this future Babylon will be at the claws of a lion. Think of Revelation 5, "the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Jesus Christ) has prevailed."

Babylon's judgment ends in verse 10, "Oh, my threshing and the grain of my floor! That which I have heard from the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, I have declared to you." This too reads like Revelation.

In Revelation 14 an angel appears in the clouds with a sharp sickle in his hand. He thrusts in His sickle and the earth is brought to judgment. One day Jesus will return to separate the wheat from the chaff.

Verse 11 initiates a new focus. "The burden against Dumah" - another name for "Edom." Drop the "E" and it's "Dom" or "Dumah." The word means "silent."

Here's a play on words. The idea is that soon God's judgment will come. The sounds of work, and play, and laughter will be silent over the land of Edom.

The Edomites lived south of the Dead Sea. Their stronghold was the rock fortress of Petra.

They were kin to the Moabites. We talked about Moab in chapters 14-15. Isaiah predicted the Assyrians would invade Moab. And while they were at it they would press even further south into the land of Edom.

Verse 11, "He calls to me out of Seir, "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" The watchman said, "The morning comes, and also the night. If you will inquire, inquire; return! Come back!"

The first two verses of Isaiah 14 predicted a nighttime invasion on the cities of Moab. Apparently, this is also how Assyrian troops defeated Edom.

Verse 13 begins “**The burden against Arabia.**” Isaiah speaks to present day *Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates*. Which reminds me, “**What do to they call a first offender in Saudi Arabia?**”

Answer, “**Lefty!**” Imagine, the reaction of a Jewish Isaiah, walking naked on the streets of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - and proclaiming God’s judgment on Arabia?

He wouldn’t just be called, “**Lefty**” - *that’s for sure!*

“**In the forest in Arabia you will lodge, O you traveling companies of Dedanites.**” When you think of the Arabian Peninsula you think of barren hills, and sand blown deserts. Or perhaps an oasis pool in a date palm grove. But here Isaiah speaks of “**the forest in Arabia.**”

Today, the only forest in Saudi Arabia is in the southwest - there’s a forest in the Asir Mountains. In Bible times, the Peninsula was much wetter and cooler, and more conducive for forested areas in other parts.

“**O inhabitants of the land of Tema, bring water to him who is thirsty; with their bread they met him who fled.**

For they fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, from the bent bow, and from the distress of war.”

Dedan and Tema were nomadic tribes that roamed the Arabian Peninsula. Evidently, these Arabian bands narrowly escaped the destruction of the invader.

“**For thus the LORD has said to me: "Within a year, according to the year of a hired man, all the glory of Kedar will fail; and the remainder of the number of archers, the**



mighty men of the people of Kedar, will be diminished; for the LORD God of Israel has spoken it."

*"Kedar"* was another Bedouin tribe that roamed the sands of northern Arabia. Kedar was the second son of Ishmael. Abraham was his grandpa. But the Assyrians will invade Arabia - and Kedar's *"mighty men"* will fall.

Chapter 22, *"The burden against the Valley of Vision..."* Usually people ascend to the mountains, or up on the tower, or to the top of the walls for vision.

*"The Valley of Vision"* is an oxymoron.

It's intended to indicate the low spiritual state of the people in question... *and the people of Jerusalem had become a valley of vision!* God's people, Judah, had sunk so low they couldn't see over their shoelaces.

Isaiah asks, *"What ails you now, that you have all gone up to the housetops, you who are full of noise, a tumultuous city, a joyous city?"* They use to dance in the streets, now they've retreated to the housetop.

*"Your slain men are not slain with the sword, nor dead in battle."* In other words, the people of Jerusalem gave up without a fight. They fought like defeated men.

*"All your rulers have fled together; they are captured by the archers. All who are found in you are bound together; they have fled from afar. Therefore I said, "Look away from me, I will weep bitterly; do not labor to comfort me because of the plundering of the daughter of my people." For it is a day of trouble and treading down and perplexity by the Lord GOD of hosts in the Valley of Vision - breaking down the*

walls and of crying to the mountain. Elam bore the quiver with chariots of men and horsemen, and Kir uncovered the shield.”

Isaiah sees the Elamites among the armies that invades Jerusalem... To me it's unclear whether this is the Assyrian invasion in 701 BC (*that Jerusalem survives*) - or the Babylonian invasion in 586 BC that toppled the walls and sent the people into captivity.

The one certainty that we glean, is that there will be “*a day of trouble and treading down*” for Jerusalem.

Verse 7 “It shall come to pass that your choicest valleys shall be full of chariots, and the horsemen shall set themselves in array at the gate. He removed the protection of Judah. You looked in that day to the armor of the House of the Forest; you also saw the damage to the city of David, that it was great; and you gathered together the waters of the lower pool.

You numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses you broke down to fortify the wall.” Rather than trust God, they took debris and strengthen the walls.

“You also made a reservoir between the two walls for the water of the old pool.” To prepare for the Assyrian siege in 701 BC, King Hezekiah built a tunnel from the Gihon Spring, the city's chief water supply (which was outside the southeast wall of the city) to the Pool of Siloam (which was inside Jerusalem's walls).

Hezekiah's Tunnel was quite a feat of engineering.

It runs 1750 feet, and its 7 feet high - at places much higher. This tunnel was cut through solid bedrock.

Go with us to Jerusalem and we'll walk this tunnel.

The tunnel gave the city an internal water supply that would help it withstand a siege from an enemy army.

Yet Isaiah rebukes the Jews in verse 11, “But you did not look to its Maker, nor did you have respect for Him who fashioned it long ago.” The construction of this tunnel actually displeased the Lord. The Jews were better at *fortifications* than they were at *faith* in God.

We need to be careful lest we put more trust in our ingenuity than in our God. Never forget, “Man looks for better methods, but God looks for better men.”

Verse 12, “And in that day the Lord GOD of hosts called for weeping and for mourning, for baldness and for girding with sackcloth. But instead, joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating meat and drinking wine: “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!” The Jews were fatalistic and narcissistic.

Rather than repent, they said, “What will be, will be. Life is short. Play hard. Live it up while you can.”

“Then it was revealed in my hearing by the LORD of hosts, “Surely for this iniquity there will be no atonement for you, even to your death,” says the Lord GOD of hosts.” Fatalism is destructive. For there is something you can do about your future... *repent!* But because Judah refused, God refused to forgive.

Verse 15 is God’s judgment on a Jerusalem official who must’ve made Him mad. It’s interesting that in the midst of *God’s burdens against the nations*, He deals with a person. Sometimes God takes things personally.

“Thus says the Lord GOD of hosts: "Go, proceed to this steward, to Shebna, who is over the house, and say: 'what have you here, and whom have you here, that you have hewn a sepulcher here, as he who hews himself a sepulcher on high, who carves a tomb for himself in a rock? Indeed, the LORD will throw you away violently, O mighty man, and will surely seize you.” This man, Shebna, was a high official in the court of King Hezekiah - perhaps Secretary of State.

But what upset God was his pride.

He made a mausoleum or monument to himself. He got the bighead. Figured he'd die an important person and needed to be honored. In essence, he had the nerve to write his own obituary and brag on himself.

Verse 18 “He will surely turn violently and toss you like a ball into a large country; there you shall die, and there your glorious chariots shall be the shame of your master's house. So I will drive you out of your office, and from your position he will pull you down.”

The monument Shebna built over his tomb will do him no good, because he'll never be buried there.

He'll be driven from Jerusalem and die in exile.

'Then it shall be in that day, that I will call My servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah; I will clothe him with your robe and strengthen him with your belt; I will commit your responsibility into his hand. He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.” Shebna's job and position will be given to Eliakim. The man who promoted himself gets demoted.

And “The key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder; so he shall open, and no one shall shut; and he shall shut, and no one shall open.” This was the King’s key. “*The key of the house of David*” was a symbol of royal authority - *like the king’s ring*. The official who possessed the keys had absolute authority.

It’s interesting that when Jesus writes to the church of Philadelphia in Revelation 3:7, He quotes from Isaiah 22, and applies this passage to Himself. Isaiah was actually speaking of Jesus when he said, “He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens.”

Eliakim’s royal keys and authority, were eventually taken by Jesus. Today, Jesus has ultimate authority!

Here’s an exciting truth about serving Jesus, He can open doors closed to us - *doors of opportunity, doors of blessing, doors of new ventures*. He also closes doors, no one can open. He can seal and secure His people.

In Revelation 3 the church in Philadelphia was said to have “*little strength,*” but they used what they had - *faith enough to walk through the doors God opened*.

Verse 23, “I will fasten him as a peg in a secure place, and he will become a glorious throne to his father's house.” This “*peg*” is a tent-peg. A stake that holds the tent so it doesn’t blow away in a stiff wind.

And this passage is also prophetic about Jesus.

The survival and longevity of the Jews is ultimately based on the faithfulness of their Messiah Jesus.

Jesus is the peg on which the future of the nation hangs. Israel has seen its share of storms, but the promises of Jesus hold the nation steady and secure.

And likewise, I hope Jesus is your tent peg?

Are you hanging all your hopes and dreams and aspirations and future on His will and His words?

Chapter 22 closes, 'They will hang on him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the posterity, all vessels of small quantity, from the cups to all the pitchers. In that day,' says the LORD of hosts, 'the peg that is fastened in the secure place will be removed and be cut down and fall, and the burden that was on it will be cut off; for the LORD has spoken.'

Here's a prophetic picture of the cross and Jesus' atonement. He is the tent peg, but not only do our hopes hang on Jesus, so does our sin and forgiveness.

For three days Jesus was removed from His place.

He was hung on a Roman cross, and the burden of our sin hung on Him. Jesus was cut off so we could be reattached to God and His family. *Is your life fastened to the tent peg? Is your sin attached to the tent peg?*

Chapter 23 is "The burden against Tyre." Not *Firestone*, or *Goodyear* - not that kind of Tire - but the city of Tyre. It was a Phoenician town 15 miles north of Israel's current border with Lebanon. It was a port city.

Tyre and Sidon were "the glory of the Phoenicians."

These two cities were the maritime powers of the ancient world. They were expert navigators, and skilled shipbuilders. They sailed the seas for commerce.

Yet Isaiah cries out, "Wail, you ships of Tarshish! For it is laid waste, so that there is no house, no harbor; from the land of Cyprus it is revealed to them." Ships of

Tarshish sailed from the eastern Mediterranean. But when they came near to Tyre they saw her destruction.

Recall Jonah boarded a boat for Tarshish. It was the farthest destination east you could travel out of Joppa.

Ezekiel 27:12 mentions that Tarshish traded in tin.

That's caused some folks to speculate Tarshish and Britannia (*or England*) are one in the same. History teaches us the Phoenicians traded in the British Isles.

Wherever they're from, the ships from Tarshish will see the judgment of Tyre as far away as Cyprus - 140 miles east of Phoenicia. To see a city's destruction that far out to sea, assumes some serious damage.

Remember when Jesus judged His hometown of Capernaum, He said in Matthew 11:21, "If the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the Day of Judgment than for you." The Phoenician cities were never made privy to Jesus' miracles, as were the cities of Galilee.

And "with privilege comes responsibility." As colossal as the destruction of Tyre and Sidon will be, what happens to the Israel that rejected Jesus will be worse.

Verse 2 "Be still, you inhabitants of the coastland, you merchants of Sidon, whom those who cross the sea have filled. And on great waters the grain of Shihor, the harvest of the River, is her revenue; and she is a marketplace for the nations."

The "*Shihor*" was the Nile River in Egypt.

“Be ashamed, O Sidon; for the sea has spoken, the strength of the sea, saying, “I do not labor, nor bring forth children; neither do I rear young men, nor bring up virgins.” The sea has no family or allegiances. Thus, it has no protection. Sidon and Tyre are on their own.

Verse 5 “When the report reaches Egypt, they also will be in agony at the report of Tyre. Cross over to Tarshish; wail, you inhabitants of the coastland!

Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is from ancient days, whose feet carried her far off to dwell?”

Tyre was an ancient city - founded in 2000 BC. It reached its zenith 1000 years later around the time of David. The Phoenicians established “*crown colonies*” around the world - including Carthage in North Africa.

This is why Isaiah says, “Who has taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traders are the honorable of the earth?” The Phoenician influence was everywhere in the world.

“The LORD of hosts has purposed it, to bring to dishonor the pride of all glory, to bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth. Overflow through your land like the River, O daughter of Tarshish; there is no more strength. He stretched out His hand over the sea, He shook the kingdoms; the LORD has given a commandment against Canaan to destroy its strongholds. And He said, “You will rejoice no more, O you oppressed virgin daughter of Sidon. Arise, cross over to Cyprus; there also you will have no rest.”

The residents of Tyre can board their boats and sail to Cyprus, but God’s judgment will follow them.



You can't run from God.

“Behold, the land of the Chaldeans (or Babylonians), this people which was not; Assyria founded it for wild beasts of the desert. They set up its towers, they raised up its palaces, and brought it to ruin.”

Ancient Tyre was actually two cities. An inland city and a island city. The inland city was conquered twice.

By the Assyrians in the 8th century BC - then by the Chaldeans or Babylonians, in the 7<sup>th</sup>. The island city was defeated by Alexander the Great in the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

Ezekiel 26 predicts Alexander's conquest.

Verse 14, “Wail, you ships of Tarshish! For your strength is laid waste. Now it shall come to pass in that day that Tyre will be forgotten 70 years, according to the days of one king.” When Babylon defeated Judah they took the Jews to Babel - into captivity for 70 years.

Perhaps Tyre's abandonment correlates somehow.

Isaiah continues, “At the end of 70 years it will happen to Tyre as in the song of the harlot: “Take a harp, go about the city, you forgotten harlot; make sweet melody, sing many songs, that you may be remembered.” The merchants of Tyre prostituted her. She built commercial ties by worshipping false gods.

And it shall be, at the end of 70 years, that the LORD will visit Tyre. She will return to her hire, and commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world on the face of the earth. Her gain and her pay will be set apart for the LORD; it will not be treasured nor laid up, for her gain will be for those who dwell before the LORD, to eat

sufficiently, and for fine clothing.” In the end Tyre will be conquered and her wealth distributed among God’s people. There’s more on Tyre in Ezekiel 26-27.

Isaiah 24-27 is known as “The Little Apocalypse.”

These judgments are more global in scope. Isaiah no longer directs His prophecies toward specific nations, but to the world. These chapters parallel Revelation.

Verse 1 sets the tone, “Behold, the LORD makes the earth empty and makes it waste, distorts its surface and scatters abroad its inhabitants.” I believe Isaiah 24 has in view a period the NT calls “Great Tribulation.”

It’s a week of seven years just prior to Jesus’s return to Earth, and in it God judges this wicked world.

Just as water has a boiling point - 212 degrees F - so does God’s anger. His fury also reaches a boil where it leaves the pan by spilling over the sides of the bowl.

And Revelation 6-19 describes this future period.

Twenty-one plagues are unleashed on the rebel planet... Seven seals are broken. Each seal releases a plague... Seven trumpets blow, and with each blast comes a judgment... Finally, seven bowls are emptied on the earth. God pours out devastating destruction.

Isaiah notes during this time “*the Lord makes the earth empty*” - the word means “depopulate.”

That’s what we see in Revelation. The 4<sup>th</sup> seal kills a quarter of the global population. The 6<sup>th</sup> trumpet annihilates a third - the net result is the death of half the population. At today’s count that’s 3 billion people.

Isaiah also says God “*distorts its surface.*”

God wrenches the earth’s crust. The 6<sup>th</sup> seal describes a “great earthquake” and cosmic cataclysms.

Verse 2 continues the judgment. “And it shall be: as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the creditor, so with the debtor.” God’s judgments will impact equally.

“The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered, for the LORD has spoken this word. The earth mourns and fades away, the world languishes and fades away; the haughty people of the earth languish. The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.”

This is the world we live in today. It’s trying to rewrite laws that have applied to all people in all times.

For example, they’re trying to change “*the ordinance*” of marriage to include homosexual unions. This is unprecedented. Even in cultures where homosexuality has been tolerated, no one has ever suggested it should be given the status of marriage. The world is tinkering with laws of which it knows nothing about.

“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.” Revelation 16:8-9 read, “Then the 4<sup>th</sup> angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire and men were scorched with great heat...” The strongest sun block won’t help.

Perhaps an explosion on the sun's surface - a solar flare - sends out a pulse of radiation Earthward. It's a solar tsunami. And there's no defense for its burning.

In the Great Tribulation Mother Nature will have a severe case of PMS - she'll go nuts - cosmic disasters, and geological cataclysms become daily occurrences.

What triggers are used to set off these calamities we're not sure. *Meteor strikes, run-away comets, near-fly-bys of a neighboring planet, nuclear detonations...*

What modern science refuses to talk about is that all these phenomena have occurred before - frequently.

Evolution assumes the Earth has operated for billions of years, just as it does today. That's just not true. On the Moon and on the Earth we find craters.

We've been struck in the past by cosmic projectiles.

All the ancient cultures had a 360 day year - twelve 30 day months. The Earth hasn't always had a wobble.

Something knocked it off axis! Noah's flood - the Exodus - Joshua's long day - were all irregularities of nature. And I believe the Earth will be struck again.

Verse 7, "The new wine fails, the vine languishes, all the merry-hearted sigh. The mirth of the tambourine ceases, the noise of the jubilant ends, the joy of the harp ceases. They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink is bitter to those who drink it."

Happy Hour isn't going to last forever. It won't always be Miller Time. Soon, God will crash man's party.

“The city of confusion is broken down; every house is shut up, so that none may go in. There is a cry for wine in the streets, all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone. In the city desolation is left, and the gate is stricken with destruction.” Think of the chaos in the streets when ruin comes to the largest metropolises.

When calamity strikes LA, New York, Paris, London.

“When it shall be thus in the midst of the land among the people, it shall be like the shaking of an olive tree, like the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done.

They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing; for the majesty of the LORD they shall cry aloud from the sea.

Therefore glorify the LORD in the dawning light, the name of the LORD God of Israel in the coastlands of the sea. From the ends of the earth we have heard songs: "Glory to the righteous!" But I said, "I am ruined, ruined! Woe to me! The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously, indeed, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously." In the Great Tribulation some people will turn to God and praise Him. Others will mourn their own collapse. *"I am ruined! Woe to me!"*

“Fear and the pit and the snare are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth.” Notice Earth’s enemies: *“fear,” “the pit,” “the snare.”* Jesus spoke often of a bottomless pit - a place called **“Hades”** - a pit of eternal torment.

In Revelation 9 we see terrible creatures - demonic creatures - rising from this pit to torture mankind.

Men try to blow their brains out, but can’t die. Death takes a holiday. This may also be what Isaiah sees.

Verse 18 “And it shall be that he who flees from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit, and he who comes up from the midst of the pit shall be caught in the snare; for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth are shaken.

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, and shall totter like a hut (or literally a *hammock*); its transgression shall be heavy upon it, and it will fall, and not rise again.”

The Earth will literally get knocked off its hinges.

Verse 21 “It shall come to pass in that day that the LORD will punish on high the host of exalted ones, and on the earth the kings of the earth.” The day is coming with God will judge *fallen angels* and *prideful kings*.

“They will be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and will be shut up in the prison; after many days they will be punished. Then the moon will be disgraced and the sun ashamed; for the LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before His elders, gloriously.” All nature - the moon and sun - were defiled by man’s sin. Yet our fallen world will one day be redeemed. Jesus will return in glory.

He’ll reign from the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

That’s why I love to go to Israel and stand on the sacred spot where one day Jesus will rule the world.

Today, Temple Mount is under the Muslim authority, but very soon that will change. Jesus will return and from that mountain He’ll reign over all the universe.

For now God's kingdom is spiritual. Jesus is the King of hearts. But soon, His reign will be physical, visible, mighty. At last, the prayer He taught us to pray will be answered. "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Come quickly, Lord Jesus!