

THROUGH THE BIBLE

ISAIAH 25-28

Isaiah 24-27 has the nickname, “**The Little Apocalypse.**” After spending a dozen chapters judging the nations of his day, Isaiah sees into the distant future and God’s judgment in this world’s final days.

These four chapters in Isaiah eerily parallel the earth-rocking events found in Revelation 6-19.

Isaiah 24-27 foresees the time the Bible refers to as, “**The Day of the Lord.**” This is a time when the Lord has His say - gets His way - in world affairs...

It begins with the **rapture** of the church... It includes a **rampage** of plagues... and the **return** of Jesus... to **rescue** the Jews... it culminates with the **restoration** of God’s Kingdom... and the **reign** of Jesus in glory...

Isaiah 24-27 are breathtaking chapters!

Recall the ominous introduction to Isaiah 24, “**The Lord makes the earth empty and makes it waste, distorts its surface and scatters abroad its inhabitants.**”

In verse 2, Isaiah says God’s judgment doesn’t discriminate... At the end of the chapter Isaiah compares the planet to a drunken man, or a hammock reeling back and forth. Earth is knocked off its hinges...

Now in chapter 25 Isaiah’s emphasis is on how God will protect His people, the Jews, throughout the wicked Earth’s painful ordeal... The final judgments are intended to **punish the wicked**, but **purify the Jews.**

Chapter 25 begins, “O LORD, You are my God. I will exalt You, I will praise Your name, for You have done wonderful things...” While on His righteous rampage - the praise of God rises up among God’s people!

No one questions God’s fairness, or criticizes His harshness. Chapter 24 had made clear the reasons for God’s judgment... Verses 4-5 tell us that people will become prideful. They’ll defy God’s boundaries. They’ll doctor His laws. If God doesn’t judge their rebellion - that would be reason to question His righteousness.

For millenniums the earth below, and the heart of God above, have been tortured by the recklessness and wickedness of fallen humans. God’s punishment of sin will be a welcome relief. It’s reason to praise God!

This is why Isaiah refers to God’s judgments as “*wonderful things...*” And then He adds, “Your counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.” God’s laws though ancient are also as relevant as the morning news.

You ignore God’s Word, or twist it, at your own peril.

In Psalm 116:11 David cried, “I said in my haste, all men are liars.” One man responded: “I now have had a lot of time to think it over, and I still agree with David...”

Humans lie and deceive. God is faithful and true.

Verse 2 “For You have made a city a ruin, a fortified city a ruin, a palace of foreigners to be a city no more; it will never be rebuilt. Therefore the strong people will glorify You; the city of the terrible nations will fear You.”

God will go toe to toe with the mightiest of Earth's inhabitants, and prove Himself stronger than them all!

“For You have been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shade from the heat; for the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall. You will reduce the noise of aliens, as heat in a dry place; as heat in the shadow of a cloud, the song of the terrible ones will be diminished.” God will defend the poor and needy.

“And in this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all people a feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines on the lees.” As God's judgment reins down on Earth, He serves a feast in the mountain of the Lord.

His people will eat the “*choice pieces*” - *no ground round* for God's people - only *prime cuts, top sirloin*.

Revelation describes two very different scenes in the last days. On Earth terrible plagues will wreak havoc. Whereas, in heaven God throws a party. Revelation 19 calls it, [The Marriage Supper of the Lamb](#).

Jesus greets the Church that He's just raptured, or snatched up, and throws a party to welcome His Bride.

And notice what else is on God's party menu, “*fat things full of marrow.*” I read recently, where *bone marrow* - *the spongy tissue in the center of a bone* - is a great source of *protein*. It's high in *monounsaturated fat*, which helps reduced the risks of heart disease.

For those who know God, it's not a surprise that when His Kingdom comes He'll feed His people food that not only tastes delicious, but is healthy for them.

All that God does and commands is good for us.

Verse 7 **“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.”** The problem in the world today is that Satan has cast a veil of spiritual blindness over the eyes of men and of nations.

Only when Jesus returns will this satanic **“covering”** will be removed and folks will see unhindered.

Here again Isaiah speaks of how God will treat His people in the Kingdom Age. **“He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces...”** In 1 Corinthians 15:54 Paul quotes the first half of the verse. In Revelation 21:4 John quotes the latter half. Both NT passages speak of Messiah's ultimate triumph over sin and its consequences.

And here's what's so amazing, both Paul and John were looking into the future through the eyes of a prophet who lived 700 years prior to them. In other words, they were looking back in order to see forward.

And here's the lesson, *the key to understanding the future is often tucked away in the history of the past.* This is why the OT, Hebrew history, is vital to us today.

Isaiah also says of Jesus **“the rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken.”** On the cross Jesus took away our rebuke.

Our punishment ended. Judgment was satisfied.

Verse 9 “And it will be said in that day: "Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.”

Death has been swallowed up in victory. All tears will be wiped from our eyes. These are God’s promises to us, but inheriting those promises requires patience.

We live in the meantime - *the in-between time* -between the giving of these promises and the receiving of these promises. That’s why every Christian needs patience. Ecclesiastes 3:11 encourages us to wait on God, “He has made everything beautiful in its time.”

Here’s a good definition. "Patience is letting your motor idle when you feel like stripping the gears.”

It’s tough to be patient. It requires patience.

Famous missionary to China, Hudson Taylor, noted three requirements for a successful missionary enterprise. His list, "Patience, patience, patience."

When Satan tempted Jesus, he took Jesus to a high mountain and offered Him the kingdoms of the world if Jesus would just bowed to Satan. Ironically, Jesus already owned those kingdoms. The temptation was to get them now - without the agony of the cross.

The Christian life is like a giant waiting room.

We’re praying, and hoping - and ultimately healing will come, but there’s a wait. I like what Henrietta Mears said, "The purposes of God may sometimes seem delayed, but they are never abandoned."

Chapter 25 closes with a judgment against Moab.

“For on this mountain the hand of the LORD will rest, and Moab shall be trampled down under Him, as straw is trampled down for the refuse heap.

And He will spread out His hands in their midst as a swimmer reaches out to swim, and He will bring down their pride together with the trickery of their hands. The fortress of the high fort of your walls He will bring down, lay low, and bring to the ground, down to the dust.” God’s hand is protecting Zion, while Moab will be trampled under God’s foot. And here’s your choice...

Which would you prefer, in His hands or under His foot? In a sense, these prophecies are for us.

Chapter 26, “In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: “We have a strong city; God will appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks. Open the gates, that the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter in. You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.” Here’s one of the most beautiful verses in Scripture. God promises “*perfect peace*” to “the stayed mind or the fixed faith.”

The phrase translated, “*perfect peace*,” is literally “shalom, shalom.” “*Peace*” in Hebrew is “shalom.” This is a double peace, or peace to the nth degree.

Author FB Meyer comments, “It is your privilege to live inside the double doors of God’s loving care. He says to you, ‘Peace, peace.’ If one assurance is not enough, He will follow it with a second and a third.”

And how does one experience this peace - *and not for just a moment, but how do we live in this peace?*

It's a matter of the "*mind*" - not *emotions*, or *heart*, or *willpower* - but we "*stay our minds.*" We "*lean*" our thoughts toward Jesus. We refuse to indulge in the "*what ifs.*" We muffle our "*doubts.*" Stop entertaining "*vain speculations.*" We park our minds in God's lot!

Remember peace is not the absence of conflict - it is the poise and confidence in the midst of a conflict.

There's a seascape entitled, "*Peace.*" Waves are crashing - the storm is raging - circumstances are anything but peaceful. Yet in the center of the painting tucked away under a rock is a tiny bird totally at rest...

God gives us peace in the midst of the storm.

You can be mindful of the storm, but peace is unattainable when our mind is stayed on the storm. We need to anchor our minds to God and to His Word.

Verse 4, "*Trust in the LORD forever, for in YAH, the LORD, is everlasting strength.*" The Hebrew phrase "*everlasting strength,*" is literally, "*rock of ages.*" Here's the inspiration for the hymn by that same name.

Yahweh, Lord of all the earth, never weathers or wears out. He's a shelter, a hiding place for His people.

"For He brings down those who dwell on high, the lofty city; He lays it low, He lays it low to the ground, He brings it down to the dust. The foot shall tread it down - the feet of the poor and the steps of the needy."

Recall the third beatitude in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount? *Who inherits the Earth?* "The meek" - *not the high and mighty!* The haughty occupy it for a time, but Jesus exalts the humble to rise up and rule the Earth.

Verse 7, "The way of the just is uprightness; O Most Upright, You weigh the path of the just. Yes, in the way of Your judgments, O LORD, we have waited for You; the desire of our soul is for Your name and for the remembrance of You. With my soul I have desired You in the night, yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early; for when Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

Let grace be shown to the wicked, yet he will not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness he will deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD." God's grace gives second chances, but an unrepentant person won't take advantage of grace.

Men don't always gravitate toward grace. It can be resisted. Pride can harden a heart to God's grace.

Verse 11 "LORD, when Your hand is lifted up, they will not see. But they will see and be ashamed for their envy of people; yes, the fire of Your enemies shall devour them. LORD, You will establish peace for us, for You have also done all our works in us."

The accomplishments of God's people are always the result of God's work *in us* and *through us*.

O LORD our God, masters besides You have had dominion over us; but by You only we make mention of Your name. They are dead, they will not live; they are

deceased, they will not rise. Therefore You have punished and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.” Israel of old was ruled by many foreign powers, but God ultimately defeat His enemies.

Verse 15, “You have increased the nation, O LORD, You have increased the nation; You are glorified; You have expanded all the borders of the land.”

Here Isaiah is speaking of God's blessings to the nation Israel. When God called Abraham He promised Him the land from the Euphrates to the Nile. Israel has never fully ruled over her territory, but one day she will.

The Arabs are in for a shock. Rather than drive Israel into the sea, one day Israel will rule over their lands.

The whole Middle East will be the land of Israel. God has not replaced Israel with the Church. All His promises to Israel will one day be literally fulfilled.

But a purging also awaits God's people... Verse 16 “LORD, in trouble they have visited You, they poured out a prayer when Your chastening was upon them.

As a woman with child is in pain and cries out in her pangs, when she draws near the time of her delivery, so have we been in Your sight, O LORD.

We have been with child, we have been in pain; we have, as it were, brought forth wind; we have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth, nor have the inhabitants of the world fallen.” Before God's Kingdom comes a time of trouble is ahead for Israel.

God “*chastens*” - or corrects - Israel! The Great Tribulation will *punish the wicked*, but *purify the Jews*.

Verse 19 is a mind-blowing verse. Tucked away in the heart of the OT, is an amazing NT truth. **“Your dead shall live; together with my dead body they shall arise.”**

It’s often said, **“The NT is in the Old concealed. And the OT is in the New revealed.”** Eyes on the future are often found in the wisdom of the past. Here’s a great example - a statement of our identification with Christ.

Spiritually, believers have died with Jesus. We are crucified with Him, so that one day we’ll live with Him.

Romans 6:5 states the same truth, **“If we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.”**

Isaiah celebrates, **“Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; for your dew is like the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.”** The NT calls the risen Lord Jesus **“the first fruits of the resurrection.”**

Christians are the remainder of the harvest. Jesus paved the way for His followers to also be resurrected.

Notice the progression in this chapter... Grace is shown - God works in His people - He chastens them - they die and rise with Him. *What would you think comes next? In the NT what’s our added hope?*

How about the rapture! We’ve been promised an escape from the tribulation God sends on an evil world.

And from Isaiah’s ancient perch we see clearly this very event! It’s mind-boggling, Isaiah living 700 years before Christ, *not to mention His Church*, sees an event in the end times when Jesus takes us home.

Verse 20, “Come, My people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation is past.”

Isaiah invites God’s people to escape His judgments.

God’s desire is to punish evildoers, not His own people - so rather than subject us to friendly fire - He takes the Church out of harm’s way. He airlifts us.

In verse 20, God has prepared His people *safe chambers*. Remember what Jesus said to His disciples on the night before He was crucified, “In My Father’s house there are many mansions... I go to prepare a place for you.” Then He says, “I will come again and receive you to myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” Here Jesus invites His people to “*come.*”

Read Revelation 6-19, the cataclysms God hurls at Earth in the Great Tribulation are so devastating there’ll be no hiding place. No corner of the planet will be safe.

The only refuge will be heaven itself. Thus, “before God’s judgment *come down*, the Church *goes up.*”

Our sin has already been judged - on the cross of Jesus it was paid in full. Thus, Christian believers aren’t *looking for judgment*, we’re *looking for Jesus*.

But as the Bride of Christ spends those last seven years behind closed doors - in her chambers - with her groom - an avalanche of horror will fall on planet Earth.

Verse 21, “For behold, the LORD comes out of His place (it’s the Day of the Lord) to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will also disclose her blood, and will no more cover her slain.”

Chapter 27, “In that day the LORD with His severe sword, great and strong, will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan that twisted serpent; and He will slay the reptile that is in the sea.”

There was once a little old lady who had a reputation for never saying a bad word about anyone. One day she was challenged, “What do you think of the devil?”

Surely, she wouldn't have a nice word for the Old Serpent Lucifer. The lady thought for several minutes, “Well, I guess you have to admire his persistence.”

Well, it's true the devil has been persistent. From the opening act of creation to the final curtain closes, Satan remains the chief nemesis of God's plans.

Here he's called “*Leviathan that twisted serpent.*” This is how Satan appeared to Adam and Eve in Eden.

Revelation 12:9 calls him, “the great dragon... that serpent of old...” In Revelation 13 the Antichrist, Satan's agent in the last days, is seen as a beast rising from the sea. Isaiah 27 calls him a “*reptile in the sea.*”

In the Bible the sea is associated with evil. You can't drink seawater. The sea is unpredictable. Sudden storms pop up. When Jesus confronted a rowdy sea He rebuked it, as if it were inspired by a demon. In the new heaven and new earth there'll be no more sea.

Satan slithers among the vast sea of sinful humanity.

The whole Bible is the story of a battle between God and this serpent, Leviathan. Job 26, Psalm 74, Psalm 89, Daniel 7, and Revelation 13 record the skirmishes.

The climax occurs in Revelation 12 when the “*twisted serpent*” becomes the “*fleeing serpent.*” Satan is booted from heaven, and is ultimately defeated.

In the end **Genesis 3:15** is finally fulfilled. On the cross the serpent inflicted Jesus with a heel bruise. But when Jesus returns He crushes the serpent's head.

Verse 2: "In that day sing to her, "A vineyard of red wine! I, the LORD, keep it, I water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I keep it night and day." Israel was God's vineyard. Isaiah used this imagery back in chapter 5.

God continues, "Fury is not in Me. Who would set briers and thorns against Me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together." When God judges, His emotions are not what ours would be. I'd be thinking, "I'll show them. I'll rub their nose in it."

God isn't so insecure. He doesn't *have* to show anyone anything. And He never stops loving the people He judges. He cares about justice, what's right, truth and humility. Sadly, those who refuse to humble themselves, and accept His truth, *He has to humble.*

Verse 5 "Or let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me." Rather than God take hold of you in His anger, it's better if you take hold of God by faith.

"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." Here God reveals His intentions for His people, Israel. He will prosper the nation.

This prophecy is already being fulfilled.

Today, "Eretz Israel," or "The Land of Israel" is the size of New Jersey - 1/7th the size of Georgia, yet it's the Middle East's largest agricultural producer. It's one of

Europe's leading citrus providers. As Isaiah foretold, Israel is *"filling the face of the world with fruit!"*

Verse 7 "Has He struck Israel as He struck those who struck him? Or has He been slain according to the slaughter of those who were slain by Him? In measure, by sending it away, You contended with it. He removes it by His rough wind in the day of the east wind."

God will judge Israel, but not to the same extent He brings judgment on Israel's enemies - other nations.

Verse 9, "Therefore by this the iniquity of Jacob will be covered; and this is all the fruit of taking away his sin: when he makes all the stones of the altar like chalkstones that are beaten to dust, wooden images and incense altars shall not stand." God will purge Israel of all traces of idolatry. He'll grind them to dust.

"Yet the fortified city will be desolate, the habitation forsaken and left like a wilderness; there the calf will feed, and there it will lie down and consume its branches. When its boughs are withered, they will be broken off; the women come and set them on fire.

For it is a people of no understanding; therefore He who made them will not have mercy on them, and He who formed them will show them no favor." Before Jesus returns Israel will be the scourge of Earth. Their enemies will show them no pity. It's God's judgment.

“And it shall come to pass in that day that the LORD will thresh, from the channel of the River to the Brook of Egypt (from the Euphrates to the Nile); and you will be gathered one by one, O you children of Israel.

So it shall be in that day: 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.” When Israel reaches the brink of annihilation, and are scattered around the globe, God will defeat her enemies and call His people home.

Isaiah foresees a final exodus. Today 6 million Jews live in Israel - out of a worldwide population of 13-14 million Jews. More Jews live in America than in Israel.

Only 40% of Jews actually live in Israel. The Jewish return predicted by the prophets is far from complete. It's still future, and will be fulfilled at the end of the age.

Chapter 28 begins a new section of Isaiah.

Six woes or warnings are announced to the southern kingdom of Judah. And again it's a blend of both local and future judgments. Think of it this way, all God's judgments are “warm ups” for the final judgment.

Anytime God judges locally it's a shot across the bow. It's a wake-up call to someone. God hopes man repents, so He can spare them the end-all judgment.

Verse 1 “Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower which is at the head of the verdant valleys, to those who are overcome with wine!” Ephraim or the hills of Samaria are known for plush, fertile, “verdant valleys.”

Today, this is West Bank, Palestinian territory. One year we visited Shiloh. It's a beautiful, lush, fertile land.

And it's where God's people grew their grapes and made their wine - *which became their nemesis.*

Isaiah says they ended up, "*overcome with wine!*"

Let me say upfront, except for pastors and elders, the Bible never calls for an absolute abstinence.

On Earth, Jesus turned water into fermented wine.

Jesus drank wine... Paul told Timothy to drink a little wine for his stomach sake... There's nothing wrong with a glass of wine with your meal if you aren't overcome. The Bible allows alcohol **in moderation.**

But what the Bible does prohibit is drunkenness. Not everyone can drink in moderation. It's estimated, one of every six people have an alcohol problem. If you can't stop with one glass, or one beer, you shouldn't drink.

If you're "*overcome*" when you drink - then it's a sin.

And "*overcome*" doesn't just mean fall-down, sloppy drunk. *If your judgment gets impaired - if you're a little fuzzy - if you're under alcohol's control.* God wants you and I dominated by the *Holy Spirit* not *distilled spirits.*

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:12, "*All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.*" If your life is under the power of alcohol - *if you think about it often - or plot your next opportunity - if you cover up the influence it has...* you're "*overcome.*"

I know my personality. I'm a compulsive person.

This is one of many reasons I don't drink at all.

I don't want to take a chance of becoming addicted - or as Isaiah says - "*overcome with wine!*" God judged Ephraim because they were overcome with wine!

Verse 2, "Behold, the Lord has a mighty and strong one, like a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, like a flood of mighty waters overflowing, Who will bring them down to the earth with His hand.

The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, will be trampled underfoot; and the glorious beauty is a fading flower which is at the head of the verdant valley, like the first fruit before the summer, which an observer sees; He eats it up while it is still in his hand."

Twice now "*the drunkards of Ephraim*" are accused of pride! Alcohol and pride go hand in hand. Wine lessens our inhibitions. We get cocky. Feel invincible.

Yet the beauty fades. The alcoholic gets toppled.

I'll never forget my hospital visit to a man dying of cirrhosis of the liver. He was jaundiced. His skin was ashen and shriveled. His eyes sunk back into his head.

He prayed with me to receive Christ. It was a true, deathbed conversion. *He and I rejoiced together!*

But I'll never forget his funeral. Only three people showed up - the man's mom, sister, and her daughter.

How do you live for 35 years and in the end nobody cares if you lived or died? It was alcohol that wasted his life. It alienated everyone. A life "overcome" with alcohol is like a "fading flower" "trampled underfoot."

“In that day the LORD of hosts will be for a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty to the remnant of His people, for a spirit of justice to him who sits in judgment, and for strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate. But they also have erred through wine, and through intoxicating drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through intoxicating drink, they are swallowed up by wine, they are out of the way through intoxicating drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.” The Lord wanted to bring glory, but Israel “*erred through intoxicating drink.*”

It was Shakespeare who said, “O thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee devil!” Alcohol is a depressant. *It depresses our decision-making ability, inhibitions, emotions, balance, clarity.* You’re less of a person under its influence.

In contrast, the Holy Spirit sharpens our capacities.

And notice who erred through intoxicating drink? It was the priest and prophet - men who were suppose to listen to God. Instead they ended up “*out of the way.*”

They “*err in vision... stumble in judgment.*” Their love for God, their commitment to God, was eroded by alcohol. As Isaiah puts it, “*swallowed up by wine.*” This is why I don’t drink, and I don’t believe a pastor should.

Alcohol takes its toll not only on individuals, but on society at large. Recently, a researcher at Columbia wrote, “*Contrary to conventional wisdom and popular myth, alcohol is more tightly linked with violent crimes than crack, cocaine, heroin or any other illegal drug.*”

Understand, 16,000 people die every year on America's roads due to alcohol related accidents.

The FBI says over half of all rapes involved alcohol.

Yet why is it our culture glorifies the use of intoxicating drink? By the time a child turns 18 years old they've watched over 100,000 beer commercials.

Here's what people don't see, verse 8, **"For all tables are full of vomit and filth; no place is clean."**

The Hollywood drunk is the life of the party. You don't see him with his head in the toilet throwing his guts out.

Isaiah says drunkenness was rampant in Judah.

Even the priests and prophets err by **"intoxicating drink."** And Isaiah is concerned. 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 breasts?"** People were into booze not the Bible. Alcohol had killed all spiritual passion for God. It had caused a spiritually numbing.

Verse 10 **"For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little."** This is why a hunger for God's Word is strategic - you grow spiritually by thirsting for the Word.

You engage your mind with all its faculties. You can't be clouded. You should study the Bible line by line, verse by verse, thought by thought... You take a systematic, methodical approach to learning Scripture.

Here's our problem - we live in a presto society. Fast food, drive throughs, microwaves, ATMs, email, instant messaging - it's all at our fingertips. We don't even have to wait for photos to be developed anymore. And we want the same instant approach to spiritual growth.

I hate to burst your bubble, but such a thing doesn't exist. There're no short-cuts. Romans 10:17, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

George Mueller once said, "The vigor of our spiritual life will be in exact proportion to the place held by the Bible in our life and thoughts." It's so true.

Isaiah tells us how God's Word should be studied. Get into it line upon line, precept upon precept. Take a *text* and seek to understand it in its proper *context*.

If I wanted a bigger crowd on Sunday nights I would advertise, "Seven Steps to Financial Freedom," "Winning over Worry," "Keeping Romance Alive."

But that's not how to build a solid Christian life.

Sadly, there's not a lot of appetite for taking a book and plowing through it chapter by chapter.

Isaiah even says, "*Here a little, there a little.*"

Folks like nice headings and topical arrangements, but that's not how God organized His book. Military experts will tell you that in wartime communications you spread the important information across the entire bandwidth of your signal. Just in case one segment gets intercepted the message can still get through.

And this is what God has done in the Bible. Rather than a section on the Trinity, followed by a chapter on salvation - God spreads the vital subjects over all 66 books,

so if one part of the Bible were missing you'd still get the main message. In other words, God sprinkles out His truth, "*Here a little, there a little.*"

Verse 11 tells us, "*For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people...*"

Isaiah is being sarcastic. The Jews were too stunted by wine to study God's Word appropriately, so God will speak to them through a foreign army who will invade their land and talk to them in a foreign language. The unknown "*tongue*" was a sign of God's judgment.

Cleverly, Paul quotes this verse in 1 Corinthians 14:21. He uses it in his discussion on *the gift of tongues*. He says the spiritual gift is not for the public assembly of the Church since it's a sign of judgment.

He applies it to the Church by saying an unbeliever might hear the strange language and freak out. Since he's unfamiliar with the things of God it scares him.

When the Church opens its doors to unbelievers you want people to be receive hope, *not be judged*.

Thus, this is why tongues should be used in small groups of informed believers - *not the public assembly*.

He continues the thought in verse 12, "*To whom He said, "This is the rest with which You may cause the weary to rest..."* Both God's Word and the gifts of His Spirit should cause God's people to rest - not stress.

"And, "This is the refreshing"; yet they would not hear. 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 and snared and caught." To the haughty, intellectual crowd this "*precept upon precept*" was too simple. It was beneath them.

Because of the pride and stubbornness of the Jews it became a stumbling block to them. It caused their fall.

Verse 14 "Therefore hear the word of the LORD, you scornful men, who rule this people who are in Jerusalem, because you have said, "We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol we are in agreement." Isaiah is probably speaking of a protection treaty the Jewish king at the time struck with Egypt.

But Bible teachers see in verse 14 a future treaty.

Daniel 9 teaches that the final seven years of Great Tribulation begins when Israel signs a covenant with the Antichrist. Here Isaiah refers to that treaty as "*a covenant with death*" - "*an agreement with Sheol.*"

And over the last 40 years Israel has signed numerous treaties. Sadly, the Jews are so desperate for peace they'll eventually sign a treaty with hell.

In the beginning this treaty gives a false confidence.

They say, "When the overflowing scourge passes through, it will not come to us, for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood we have hidden ourselves. 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." Sadly, the Jews in the last days will act hastily. They'll trust in the Antichrist, and watch him betray them. They should've entered into a covenant with Jesus Christ. For He can be trusted!

Jesus is *“the stone God laid in Zion,” “the tried and tested stone,” “the precious cornerstone,” “the sure foundation.”* He’s a foundation on which they can build.

And Jesus is our rock! 1 Peter 2:6 applies this passage in Isaiah to Jesus. He is the *“cornerstone”* on which believers - **the living stones** - can rest their lives.

“Also I will make justice the measuring line, and righteousness the plummet; the hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters will overflow the hiding place.”

Recall, a flood is an idiom for an army.

The armies of the Antichrist will turn against Israel.

“Your covenant with death will be annulled, and your agreement with Sheol will not stand; when the overflowing scourge passes through, then you will be trampled down by it.” Daniel 9 tells us at the midpoint of the Great Tribulation the Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel. He’ll claim to be god, and demand that the world worship him. And this brazen power grab causes God to say *“enough is enough.”*

Revelation 12 says that God will kick Satan out of heaven. His days will be numbered, thus he’ll set out to annihilate Israel. A final holocaust begins. Isaiah calls it *“the overflowing scourge”* that *“passes through.”*

Talk to the Israelis today, and they’ll say, **“Never again!”** Never will the Jews allow another holocaust.

Yet sadly, there will be one more.

Six million Jews died in German death camps, today six million Jews live in Israel. And when the Antichrist unleashes his armies many of them will perish.

Verse 19 “As often as it goes out it will take you; for morning by morning it will pass over, and by day and by night; it will be a terror just to understand the report.

For the bed is too short to stretch out on, and the covering so narrow that one cannot wrap himself in it.”

Israel tried to feel secure in their covenant - but the bed was too short, the blanket too small. Finally, their partner revealed his true colors. They were betrayed.

“For the LORD will rise up as at Mount Perazim, He will be angry as in the Valley of Gibeon - that He may do His work, His awesome work, and bring to pass His act, His **unusual act.**” Perazim is a mountain four miles northwest of Jerusalem - on the way to Gibeon.

The reference here is to Joshua 10, *the Battle of Beth Horon*. This was when God tinkered with the Earth’s rotation to supply Joshua more daylight to defeat his enemies. Isaiah refers to it as an “**awesome work**” - God’s “**unusual act.**” Recall, God even rained hailstones on the enemy as they tried to escape.

During Joshua conquest of the land, God employed other unusual acts to win the victory, and take the land.

Of course, the name “**Jesus**” is Greek for the Hebrew “**Joshua.**” And when Jesus returns to take the land, or planet Earth, like the Joshua before Him, He too will command the sun, and do some very “**unusual acts.**”

Verse 22, “**Now therefore, do not be mockers, lest your bonds be made strong; for I have heard from the Lord GOD of hosts, a destruction determined even upon the whole earth. Give ear and hear my voice, listen and hear my speech. Does the plowman keep plowing all day to sow? Does he keep turning his soil and breaking**

the clods? When he has leveled its surface, does he not sow the black cummin (cummin was a spice - a leafy herb - like parsley.) And scatter the cummin, plant the wheat in rows, the barley in the appointed place, and the spelt in its place?" The farmer doesn't prepare forever. He eventually takes action...

And so will God when He judges the whole earth.

“For He instructs him in right judgment, his God teaches him. For the black cummin is not threshed with a threshing sledge, nor is a cartwheel rolled over the cummin; but the black cummin is beaten out with a stick, and the cummin with a rod. Bread flour must be ground; therefore he does not thresh it forever, break it with his cartwheel, or crush it with his horsemen. This also comes from the LORD of hosts, Who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in guidance.”

As a farmer beats the leafs into spice, so the Lord knows how to discipline His kids. Whom He loves, He disciplines. And you're never too old for God to spank!