

Through the Bible

ISAIAH - 1

Zac Poonen



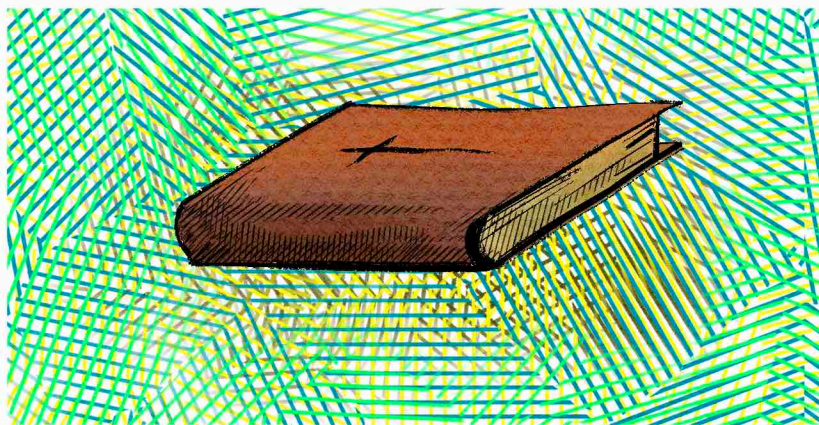
Illustrations by Vinay Kuruville

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CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

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Isaiah



ISAIAH IS THE FIRST OF 17 BOOKS IN THE PROPHETICAL SECTION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT (ISAIAH TO MALACHI).

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH IS DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS. ISAIAH DID NOT DIVIDE HIS BOOKS INTO CHAPTERS. IT WAS ONLY A FEW CENTURIES AGO THAT SOMEONE DIVIDED THE BIBLE INTO CHAPTERS AND VERSES SO THAT WE COULD REFER TO THE BIBLE MORE EASILY. SO THERE IS NOTHING INSPIRED ABOUT THE CHAPTER DIVISIONS.

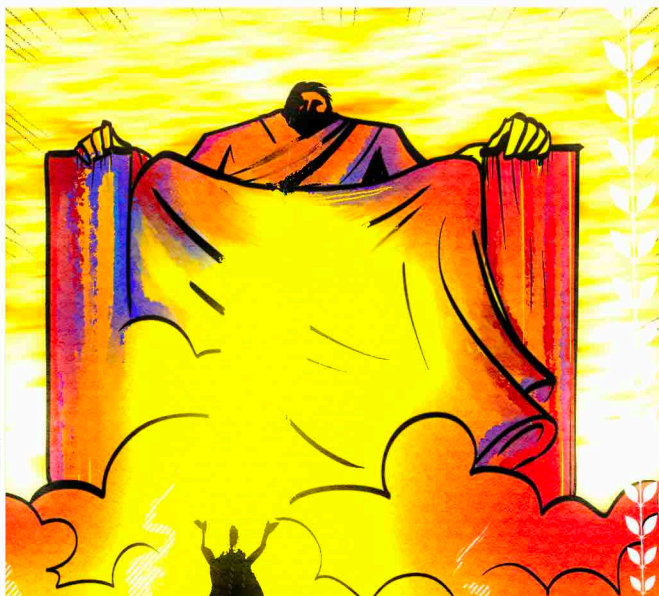
BUT IT IS **INTERESTING** NEVERTHELESS TO NOTE THAT ISAIAH HAS 66 CHAPTERS -- JUST LIKE THE BIBLE HAS 66 BOOKS. AND JUST AS THE OLD TESTAMENT HAS 39 BOOKS, AND THE NEW TESTAMENT HAS 27 BOOKS, EVEN SO, THE FIRST SECTION OF ISAIAH HAS 39 CHAPTERS AND THE SECOND SECTION HAS 27 CHAPTERS! AND ISAIAH'S FIRST SECTION DEALS WITH **OLD** TESTAMENT PROPHECIES, AND HIS **SECOND** SECTION DEALS WITH NEW TESTAMENT PROPHECIES.



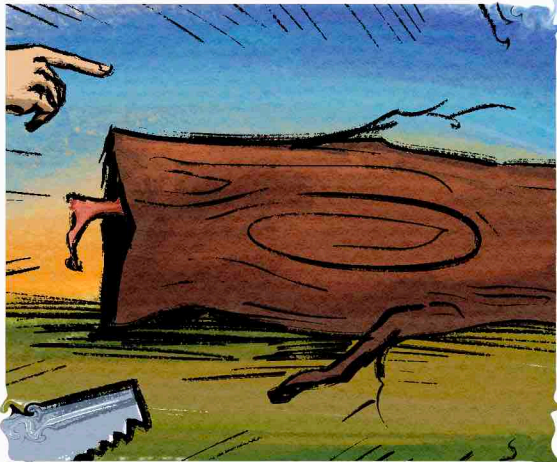
THE MOST IMPORTANT CHAPTER IN THE **FIRST** SECTION IS CHAPTER 6. THERE ISAIAH SAW THE LORD ON HIS **THRONE** FIRST, AND ONLY THEN WAS HE COMMISSIONED TO SERVE HIM. HE SAW GOD THERE AS A **HOLY** GOD WHO **HATED** SIN AND WHO HAD TO **JUDGE** IT. IF WE ARE TO SERVE GOD **EFFECTIVELY**, WE TOO MUST SEE THIS TRUTH CLEARLY.

THE MOST IMPORTANT CHAPTER IN THE **SECOND** SECTION IS CHAPTER 53. THERE WE SEE THE **LAMB** THAT WAS LED BEFORE THE SHEARERS, SHEARED AND SLAUGHTERED. THESE TWO TRUTHS ABOUT THE **THRONE** AND THE **LAMB** ARE BROUGHT TOGETHER IN REVELATION 5, WHERE WE SEE THE LAMB IN THE **MIDST** OF THE THRONE.

AS A MAN, JESUS LIVED ON EARTH AS A **SERVANT** OF GOD AND AS A SERVANT OF ALL PEOPLE BEFORE HE WENT TO THE CROSS. IN ISAIAH TOO, WE SEE JESUS AS THE SERVANT OF **JEHOVAH** IN THE CHAPTERS IN THE SECOND SECTION BEFORE CHAPTER 53 (THE CHAPTER OF THE CROSS). WE ARE TO SERVE **GOD AND MAN** AS JESUS DID.



TWO TITLES OF GOD OCCUR FREQUENTLY IN THIS BOOK: 'THE LORD OF HOSTS (JEHOVAH **TSABAOTH**)' OCCURS 62 TIMES AND 'THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL' OCCURS 30 TIMES. THE FIRST REFERS TO GOD AS THE GOD OF THE **ARMIES** OF ANGELS, WHO **SOVEREIGNLY** RULES OVER ALL THINGS IN HEAVEN AND EARTH. THE SECOND EMPHASISES HIS **HOLINESS**



ISAIAH PROPHESED FOR ABOUT 50 YEARS TO THE NATION OF JUDAH. TRADITION TELLS US THAT HE WAS FINALLY "**SAWN IN TWO**" (HEBREWS 11:37). HE SUFFERED LIKE THE MESSIAH HE PROPHESED ABOUT. HE HAD HIDDEN HIMSELF IN A **HOLLOW LOG**, TO ESCAPE CAPTURE. BUT HE WAS DISCOVERED, AND THEY SAWED THE LOG IN TWO AND KILLED HIM. ISAIAH WAS KILLED BECAUSE HE WAS A **FEARLESS** PROPHET, WHO SPOKE GOD'S TRUTH IN STRONG WORDS. WHEN HE SPOKE TO THE LEADERS IN JERUSALEM, HE CALLED THEM "**RULERS OF SODOM**" (ISAIAH 1:10). THOSE WERE STRONG WORDS -- AND I AM NOT SURPRISED THAT THE LEADERS SAWED HIM **ASUNDER**!



A PROPHET IS **NEVER** POPULAR -- AND THAT IS WHY THERE ARE VERY FEW PROPHETS IN THE WORLD TODAY. ISAIAH DID NOT SEEK TO PLEASE PEOPLE OR TO **IMPRESS** THEM (AS MOST PREACHERS DO TODAY). HE WAS A PROPHET WHO SPOKE WHAT GOD WANTED HIM TO SPEAK, EVEN IF PEOPLE WERE **OFFENDED**, HURT, OR UPSET BY WHAT HE SAID. THEY **REJECTED** HIS WORD AND EVEN THREATENED TO KILL HIM. BUT THAT DIDN'T FRIGHTEN HIM. HE WAS **FAITHFUL** TO HIS GOD.

THE VERY FIRST VERSE OF THE BOOK INDICATES THAT ISAIAH WAS PROPHESYING **PRIMARILY** CONCERNING THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM OF **JUDAH**. THERE ARE, HOWEVER, A NUMBER OF REFERENCES TO ISRAEL TOO. THE NORTHERN KINGDOM OF ISRAEL HAD BACKSLIDEN TERRIBLY AND WAS SOON TO BE TAKEN CAPTIVE BY THE ASSYRIANS; AND ISAIAH WAS SENT BY GOD TO **SAVE** JUDAH FROM A SIMILAR FATE.



AN OX KNOWS ITS **OWNER**, THE DONKEY KNOWS ITS MASTER'S MANGER, BUT **ISRAEL** DOES NOT KNOW" (1:3). ISRAEL DID NOT KNOW HER MASTER AND OWNER. EVEN ANIMALS KNEW BETTER. WHAT A **TRAGEDY** WHEN GOD'S PEOPLE SINK LOWER THAN ANIMALS.



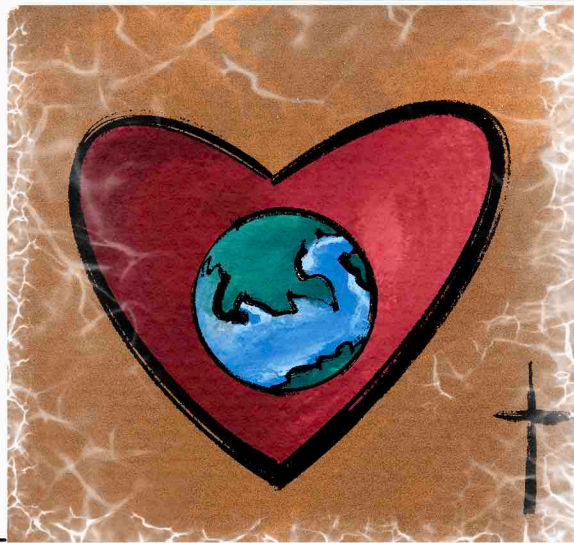
ISRAEL HAD NOT ONLY ABANDONED THE LORD, BUT DESPISED HIM AS WELL (1:4). THE LORD DESCRIBES THEIR CONDITION THUS: "FROM THE SOLE OF THE FOOT EVEN TO THE HEAD THERE IS NOTHING SOUND IN IT" (1:6). THAT IS A PERFECT PICTURE OF THE CONDITION OF SINFUL MAN TOO.



A PARAPHRASE OF 1:11--15 WOULD READ, "WHAT IS THE USE OF ALL YOUR PRAYER MEETINGS? I AM NOT INTERESTED IN THEM. I **HATE** YOUR SPECIAL MEETINGS AND YOUR BIBLE-STUDY MEETINGS. I WILL NOT LISTEN TO YOU, BECAUSE THERE IS SIN IN YOUR LIFE."

A LOT OF PRAYER MEETINGS ARE A WASTE OF TIME BECAUSE THOSE WHO PRAY DO NOT HAVE A CLEAR **CONSCIENCE**. THERE IS **UNCONFESSSED SIN** IN THEIR LIVES. WHEN YOUR CONSCIENCE IS **CLEAR**, A PRAYER MEETING CAN BE VERY **POWERFUL**. BUT IF YOUR CONSCIENCE IS **NOT CLEAR**, IT IS ACTUALLY BETTER **NOT** TO PRAY -- FOR PRAYER BECOMES A **WASTE** OF TIME, BECAUSE **GOD DOESN'T LISTEN** TO SUCH PRAYERS.

JERUSALEM, THE ONCE-FAITHFUL CITY HAD BECOME A **HARLOT** (1:21). JAMES USED WORDS SIMILAR TO ISAIAH'S, WHEN WRITING TO CHRISTIANS IN HIS DAY: "YOU ADULTERESSES, DON'T YOU KNOW THAT FRIENDSHIP WITH THE WORLD IS **HOSTILITY** TOWARD GOD" (JAMES 4:4). JAMES TOO WAS A **PROPHET** LIKE ISAIAH TELLING THE CHURCH WHAT IT NEEDED TO HEAR BUT WITH **LOVE** AND **COMPASSION**.



IN CHAPTER 2, ISAIAH SPEAKS ABOUT THE DAY WHEN THE KINGDOM OF GOD WILL BE ESTABLISHED ON THIS EARTH AND "THE WORD OF THE LORD WILL GO FORTH FROM JERUSALEM, AND HE WILL JUDGE BETWEEN THE NATIONS" (2:1--4). IN THAT DAY, "THE **PROUD** LOOK OF MAN WILL BE ABASED AND THE LORD ALONE WILL BE EXALTED" (2:11). GOD'S GREATEST **CONFLICT** HAS ALWAYS BEEN WITH THE **PROUD**. PRIDE IS THE VERY **OPPOSITE** OF GOD'S NATURE AND SO GOD **RESISTS** THE **PROUD** 24 HOURS OF EVERY DAY -- WHETHER THEY BE **BELIEVERS** OR UNBELIEVERS. EVERY **PROUD** PERSON WILL BE **HUMBLED** -- SOONER OR LATER. PRIDE SENDS **MORE** PEOPLE TO **HELL** THAN ANY OTHER SIN. IF YOU WANT TO LIVE A WISE AND USEFUL LIFE ON EARTH, HUMBLE YOURSELF BEFORE GOD CONSTANTLY, AND WALK IN **HUMILITY** TOWARDS YOUR **FELLOWMEN** AT ALL TIMES.



CHAPTER 3:12 SPEAKS OF THE **PATHETIC** STATE OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL: THEY WERE GOING ASTRAY BECAUSE THEIR LEADERS WERE **IMMATURE** ("CHILDREN") AND **EFFEMINATE** ("WOMEN"). THIS, UNFORTUNATELY, IS TRUE OF MUCH OF TODAY'S CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP AS WELL. IF YOU ARE CALLED TO BE A LEADER, DETERMINE THAT YOU WILL ALWAYS LIVE FOR THE THINGS OF **ETERNITY** AND BE READY AT **ALL** TIMES TO FIGHT THE **LORD'S BATTLES**.

MAN IS A CREATURE "WHOSE BREATH IS IN HIS NOSTRILS" (2:22). GOD IS THE ONE WHO GIVES MAN HIS BREATH EVERY DAY. SO, IF WE **FEAR GOD**, THERE IS **NO** NEED FOR US TO **FEAR** ANY **MAN**. WHENEVER YOU ARE TEMPTED TO FEAR MAN, REMEMBER THIS VERSE. IF SOMEONE IS PLANNING TO HARM YOU IN ANY WAY, REMEMBER THAT GOD CAN TAKE AWAY HIS BREATH IN A MOMENT. AS A YOUNG MAN, I WAS SHY AND RESERVED BY TEMPERAMENT AND FOUND MYSELF **NERVOUS** WHENEVER I HAD TO PREACH GOD'S WORD. BECAUSE I WAS NOT **SECURE** IN GOD, I WANTED TO **IMPRESS** PEOPLE WITH MY PREACHING. THEN THE LORD SPOKE TO ME THROUGH THIS VERSE. I THEN BEGAN TO LOOK AT THE PEOPLE IN FRONT OF ME AS MERELY **DUST**, WITH BREATH IN THEIR NOSTRILS. THE COLOUR OF THEIR DUST WAS DIFFERENT -- SOME WERE MADE OF BROWN DUST, SOME OF BLACK DUST, SOME OF WHITE DUST AND SOME OF YELLOW DUST!! BUT THEY WERE ALL STILL DUST! THIS REVELATION SET ME FREE FROM SEEKING TO **IMPRESS** PEOPLE. THEREAFTER I COULD **LOVE** THEM AND SEEK TO **HELP** THEM INSTEAD OF TRYING TO **IMPRESS** THEM.



THE LORD SAYS, "THE PLUNDER OF THE POOR IS IN YOUR HOUSES. WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY GRINDING THE FACE OF THE POOR?" (3:15). MOST PREACHERS TODAY ASK PEOPLE FREQUENTLY TO "GIVE MONEY FOR THE LORD'S WORK". THEY EVEN PRESSURISE PEOPLE TO GIVE THEIR TITHES -- AND MANY POOR PEOPLE RESPOND AND SACRIFICIALLY GIVE THESE PREACHERS THEIR HARD-EARNED MONEY. BUT WHAT DO THESE PREACHERS DO WITH IT? MOST OF THEM USE IT TO LIVE IN GRAND STYLE THEMSELVES! THIS IS WHAT IT MEANS TO "GRIND THE FACES OF THE POOR". IF YOU ARE A PREACHER AND YOU RECEIVE A GIFT OF MONEY FOR YOUR PERSONAL USE, MAKE SURE THAT YOU USE IT TO LIVE AT A LOWER STANDARD THAN THE PERSON WHO GAVE YOU THE MONEY. THAT WAS THE PRINCIPLE BY WHICH JESUS USED THE MONEY THAT HE RECEIVED.

MOST PREACHERS TODAY (LIKE THE FALSE PROPHETS OF OLD) CARE MORE FOR THE RICH PEOPLE IN THEIR CONGREGATIONS THAN FOR THE POOR. THEY SPEAK SWEET WORDS TO THE RICH AND HARD WORDS OF REBUKE TO THE POOR. GOD HAS, HOWEVER, "CHOSEN THE POOR OF THE WORLD RICH IN FAITH AND TO BE HEIRS OF HIS KINGDOM" (JAMES 2:5). AND SO TRUE PROPHETS ARE ALWAYS CONCERNED FOR THE POOR.



THE LORD THEN HAD SOMETHING TO SAY TO THE WOMEN IN ZION -- NOT TO UNCONVERTED WOMEN, BUT TO "THE DAUGHTERS OF ZION." ALL YOUNG SISTERS SHOULD READ ISAIAH 3:16--26 AND BE WARNED. DOES THE LORD OBSERVE SUCH MINUTE DETAILS IN A WOMAN'S ATTIRE? HE CERTAINLY DOES. GOD IS VERY INTERESTED IN THE WAY HIS DAUGHTERS DRESS. HE WANTS CHRISTIAN WOMEN TO DRESS MODESTLY AND NEVER IN SUCH A WAY AS TO TEMPT MEN. THE HOLY SPIRIT EXHORTS WOMEN TO BE "SENSIBLE IN THE WAY THEY DRESS. CHRISTIAN WOMEN SHOULD BE NOTICED FOR BEING KIND AND GOOD AND NOT FOR THE WAY THEY FIX THEIR HAIR OR BECAUSE OF THEIR JEWELS OR FANCY CLOTHES" (1 TIMOTHY 2:9, 10 - LIVING).

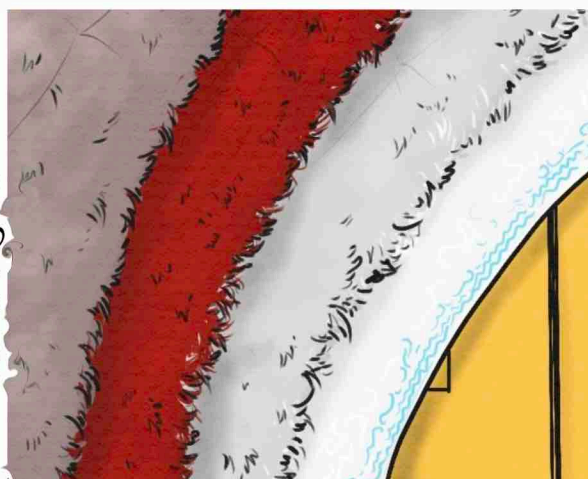


IN CHAPTER 4, JESUS IS CALLED "THE BRANCH OF THE LORD" (4:2). THIS CHAPTER DESCRIBES THE DAY WHEN THE KINGDOM OF GOD WILL BE ESTABLISHED



CHAPTER 4 VERSES 4 AND 5 CAN BE INTERPRETED AS FOLLOWS -

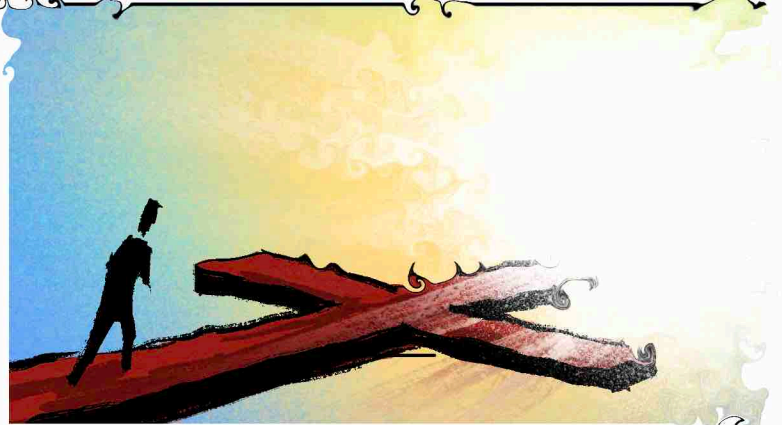
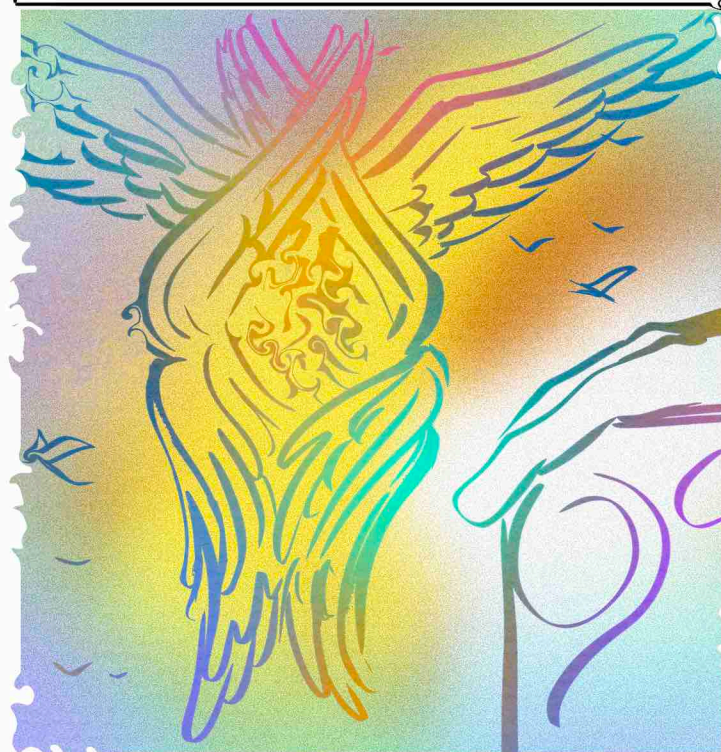
THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD THAT HAS GOT INTO THE CHURCH AND ESPECIALLY INTO THE "DAUGHTERS OF ZION" HAS TO BE CLEANSED AWAY BY FIRE. THEN THE GLORY OF GOD WILL BE SEEN IN THE CHURCH AS IT WAS SEEN OVER THE TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS.



IN THE OLD TESTAMENT TABERNACLE, THE **BEAUTIFUL** CURTAINS WERE ON THE INSIDE. THE OUTER COVERING WAS A DIRTY, BROWN COVERING MADE OF ANIMAL-SKINS. IN THE CHURCH ALSO THERE SHOULD BE A GLORY ON THE INSIDE THAT OTHERS CANNOT SEE.



IN CHAPTER 5:8--23, WE FIND ISAIAH PRONOUNCING A "WOE" (A CURSE) ON SIX GROUPS OF PEOPLE. WE SEE JESUS ALSO USING THIS WORD "WOE" IN LUKE 6:24-- 26. ISAIAH PRONOUNCES A CURSE ON "THOSE WHO **EXPLOIT** THE **POOR** BY BUYING UP PROPERTY SO EXTENSIVELY SO THAT THE POOR HAVE NO PLACE TO LIVE; THOSE WHO SPEND THEIR TIME IN **SENSUAL** PLEASURES (DRINKING AND PARTYING) WITHOUT ANY **THOUGHT** FOR **GOD**; THOSE WHO KEEP ON **SINNING** AND DEFY GOD TO PUNISH THEM; THOSE WHO CALL **EVIL** GOOD AND **GOOD** EVIL; THOSE WHO ARE **PROUD** OF THEIR OWN **CLEVERNESS**; AND THOSE WHO TAKE **Bribes** TO CONDEMN INNOCENT PEOPLE". ALL SUCH HAUGHTY AND **PROUD** PEOPLE WILL BE **HUMBLED** BY GOD ONE DAY. WHAT A NEED THERE IS TODAY TO SEE THAT GOD **HATES** AND CURSES THESE THINGS.



WORSHIP INVOLVES **RECOGNISING** GOD'S **HOLINESS** AND **GREATNESS**, AND ACKNOWLEDGING HIM AS LORD OF LORDS AND KING OF KINGS. THESE SERAPHS WHO HAD **NEVER** SINNED COULD NOT EVEN **LOOK** AT GOD. THEY COVERED THEIR FACES BEFORE HIM. THAT TEACHES US SOMETHING ABOUT THE "**UNAPPROACHABLE** LIGHT" OF GOD'S HOLINESS (1 TIMOTHY 6:16). WE MUST NOT THINK **LIGHTLY** OF GOD'S HOLINESS. IT IS A **TREMENDOUS PRIVILEGE** THAT WE ARE ALLOWED TO COME BEFORE HIM, THROUGH THE **BLOOD** AND THE **RIGHTEOUSNESS** OF JESUS CHRIST.

CHAPTER 6 IS THE CENTRAL CHAPTER OF THIS FIRST SECTION OF ISAIAH. HERE ISAIAH DESCRIBES A VISION HE HAD OF THE LORD THAT HUMBLING HIM. HE SAW THE LORD SEATED ON A LOFTY THRONE AND A NUMBER OF ANGELIC BEINGS CALLED **SERAPHS** ('SERAPHIM' IS THE PLURAL OF 'SERAPH') WORSHIPPING HIM. EACH **SERAPH** HAD SIX WINGS, AND THEY COVERED THEIR BODIES WITH FOUR WINGS AND FLEW WITH TWO. IN OTHER WORDS, THEY USED FOUR OF THEIR WINGS TO **WORSHIP** GOD AND TWO WINGS TO **SERVE** HIM. NOTICE THERE THAT WORSHIP MUST PRECEDE SERVICE. BUT WE MUST ALSO WORSHIP GOD **MORE** THAN WE **SERVE** HIM. THE MORE WE **WORSHIP** GOD, THE MORE **EFFECTIVE** OUR SERVICE FOR HIM WILL BE.



WHEN ISAIAH SAW ALL THIS, HE WAS **DEEPLY** CONVICTED. THE MAN WHO HAD JUST BEEN PRONOUNCING "WOES" ON OTHERS, PRONOUNCES ONE ON HIMSELF NOW -- "WOE IS **ME...**" (6:5) THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE SEE THE **GLORY** OF GOD. WE WILL STILL SEE THE WRONGS IN **OTHERS** AND SPEAK AGAINST THEM WHEN LED BY THE LORD TO DO SO. BUT WE WILL SEE THE SIN IN OUR **OWN FLESH** FIRST.



ISAIAH WAS PARTICULARLY CONVICTED ABOUT HIS SPEECH. HE SAID, "LORD, I AM A MAN OF **UNCLEAN LIPS**" (6:5). THEN ONE OF THE SERAPHS TOOK A COAL FROM THE ALTAR IN A PAIR OF TONGS AND **CLEANSED** ISAIAH'S LIPS IMMEDIATELY. THE SIN WHICH ISAIAH CONFESSED WAS IMMEDIATELY FORGIVEN. THE **FIRE** THAT AN ANGEL COULD **NOT** TOUCH (BUT NEEDED A PAIR OF TONGS TO TAKE) COULD TOUCH THE LIPS OF **ISAIAH**. MAN CAN **RECEIVE** AN **ANOINTING** FROM **GOD** THAT **NO ANGEL** CAN RECEIVE.

ISAIAH HAD A VISION OF BOTH THE THRONE AND THE ALTAR HERE. THEN THE LORD ASKS, "WHOM SHALL I SEND? WHO WILL GO FOR US?" (6:8). ISAIAH REPLIES, "HERE AM I. SEND ME." WE NEED TO SEE BOTH THE **THRONE** AND THE **ALTAR** CONSTANTLY. WE NEED TO BE **STRUCK DOWN** TO THE DUST FIRST WITH A VISION OF GOD'S HOLINESS, AND THEN WE NEED TO BE **LIFTED UP** BECAUSE THE BLOOD FROM THE ALTAR HAS **CLEANSED** US. ONLY THEN CAN WE GO FORTH AND SERVE THE LORD. WE CAN'T GO FORTH IF GOD DOESN'T SEND US. IF WE GO WITHOUT GOD SENDING US, THEN WE WILL **LABOUR IN VAIN**.

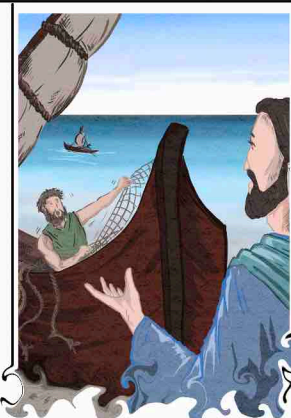


WE SEE FURTHER (6:13). A HOLY SEED WOULD COME FORTH FROM THE CORRUPT NATION OF JUDAH. A REMNANT WILL BE RAISED UP FOR THE LORD THROUGH OUR SERVICE.

THE LORD SAYS, "YOU ARE NOT TO **FEAR** WHAT THEY **FEAR**. BUT HE SHALL BE YOUR FEAR." THIS VERSE IS QUOTED IN 1 PETER 3:14, 15. THE LIVING BIBLE PARAPHRASES IT THUS: "IF YOU FEAR GOD, YOU NEED FEAR **NOTHING** ELSE." MORE THAN 40 YEARS AGO, I GOT THIS VERSE WRITTEN ON A LARGE WOODEN PLAQUE AND PLACED IT **PROMINENTLY** IN THE FRONT-ROOM OF MY HOUSE.



ISAIAH 8:18 IS YET ANOTHER VERSE QUOTED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT -- IN HEBREWS 2:13 -- "BEHOLD, I AND THE CHILDREN WHOM THE LORD HAS GIVEN ME ARE FOR A **SIGN** AND A **WONDER**". THAT SHOULD APPLY TO US AS FAMILIES TOO. WE MUST BRING UP OUR CHILDREN IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY ARE **DIFFERENT** FROM OTHER CHILDREN IN THE WORLD IN THEIR MORAL **CHARACTER** AND IN THEIR **AMBITIONS**.



CHAPTER 9:2 IS ALSO QUOTED IN MATTHEW 4:16: "THE PEOPLE WHO WALK IN **DARKNESS** WILL SEE A **GREAT LIGHT**". THIS REFERS TO **JESUS**. THIS VERSE ALSO APPLIES TO **US**, FOR IT IS GOD'S WILL THAT WE ALSO SHOULD BRING LIGHT INTO THE DARKNESS, WHEREVER WE GO.

He will be called
 "Wonderful,
 Counselor,
 Mighty God,
 Prince of Peace
 and
 Eternal Father."

Is 9:6,7

"The
 government
 will rest on
 His
 shoulders."

Is 9:6



THE PHRASE 'ETERNAL FATHER' HERE JUST MEANS 'FATHER OF ETERNITY' AND IS NOT A REFERENCE TO GOD THE FATHER.

The yoke shall be
 destroyed because of the
 anointing⁹⁹

Is 10:27



THIS VERSE HAS BEEN A TREMENDOUS HELP TO ME IN MY MINISTRY. DURING THE PAST 40 YEARS, WE HAVE OFTEN FACED **PROBLEMS** IN THE CHURCHES THAT THE LORD HAS PLANTED THROUGH OUR MINISTRY IN INDIA -- PROBLEMS SIMILAR TO THAT WHICH ALL PARENTS FACE WITH GROWING CHILDREN. WHENEVER I AM TOLD OF A PROBLEM IN ONE OF OUR CHURCHES THAT Baffles ME, I HAVE USUALLY **FALLEN** ON MY FACE BEFORE GOD AND SAID, "LORD, THIS IS NOT **MY** WORK. IT IS YOURS. THESE ARE NOT MY CHURCHES. THEY ARE YOURS. THEIR GOVERNMENT IS ON YOUR SHOULDERS. THE RESPONSIBILITY IS YOURS. IF YOU WANT TO CLOSE DOWN A CHURCH, CLOSE IT DOWN. THAT'S YOUR BUSINESS. I AM ONLY YOUR SERVANT. TELL ME WHAT TO DO AND I'LL DO IT." A **PROPRIETOR** HAS EVERY **RIGHT** TO CLOSE DOWN HIS SHOP IF HE SO WISHES. I WILL NEVER TRY TO KEEP SOME WORK OPEN THAT THE LORD WANTS TO SHUT DOWN. SO MANY CHRISTIAN WORKERS ARE CONSTANTLY **STRUGGLING** TO PROP UP A WORK THAT THEY STARTED, LONG AFTER IT HAS BECOME EVIDENT THAT GOD IS **NOT** IN IT. THIS IS BECAUSE THEY HAVE TAKEN THE **GOVERNING** OF GOD'S WORK ON THEIR **OWN** SHOULDERS.

VERSE 3 STATES THAT THE **SPIRIT** WOULD MAKE JESUS SO **SENSITIVE** TO THE FEAR OF THE LORD THAT HE WOULD **NEVER** JUDGE ANYTHING BY WHAT HIS EYES SAW OR WHAT HIS EARS HEARD, BUT IN **RIGHTEOUSNESS** BY THE SPIRIT'S **VOICE WITHIN**. JESUS IS OUR EXAMPLE HERE.



CHAPTER 10 PROPHESIES THE DESTRUCTION OF ASSYRIA, WHICH WAS THE WORLD'S ONLY SUPERPOWER, AT THAT TIME. THE KING OF ASSYRIA IS A TYPE OF THE ANTICHRIST. 10:27 READS, "THE YOKE SHALL BE DESTROYED BECAUSE OF THE ANOINTING" (KJV). IT IS THE **ANOINTING** OF THE HOLY SPIRIT THAT BREAKS AND DESTROYS THE YOKE OF **SIN** AND **SATAN** -- IN OUR **LIFE**, OUR **HOME** AND OUR CHURCH. IN CONTRAST TO THE REIGN OF THE ANTICHRIST PICTURED IN CHAPTER 10, WE HAVE THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST PICTURED IN CHAPTER 11. THE **SEVENFOLD** HOLY SPIRIT MENTIONED IN REVELATION (THAT WILL REST ON CHRIST) IS CALLED HERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD, OF WISDOM, OF **UNDERSTANDING**, OF **COUNSEL**, OF **STRENGTH**, OF **KNOWLEDGE** AND OF THE **FEAR OF THE LORD**.

The wolf will lie down with the lamb

Is 11:6



THE TIME WILL COME WHEN THE LION AND THE WOLF AND THE LAMB WILL LIE DOWN TOGETHER (VERSE 6) -- IN THE MILLENNIUM, WHEN CHRIST REIGNS ON EARTH; AND A LITTLE **CHILD** WILL LEAD THEM ALL (VERSES 6, 7). THIS WILL BE LITERALLY FULFILLED WHEN CHRIST SETS UP HIS KINGDOM ON EARTH AND GOD-FEARING CONDITIONS PREVAIL EVERYWHERE. BUT **SPIRITUALLY** SPEAKING THIS IS TRUE EVEN **NOW** IN THE **CHURCH**. THE WOLF-LIKE BROTHER NOW **FELLOWSHIPS** WITH THE LAMB-LIKE BROTHER WITHOUT TRYING TO EAT HIM.

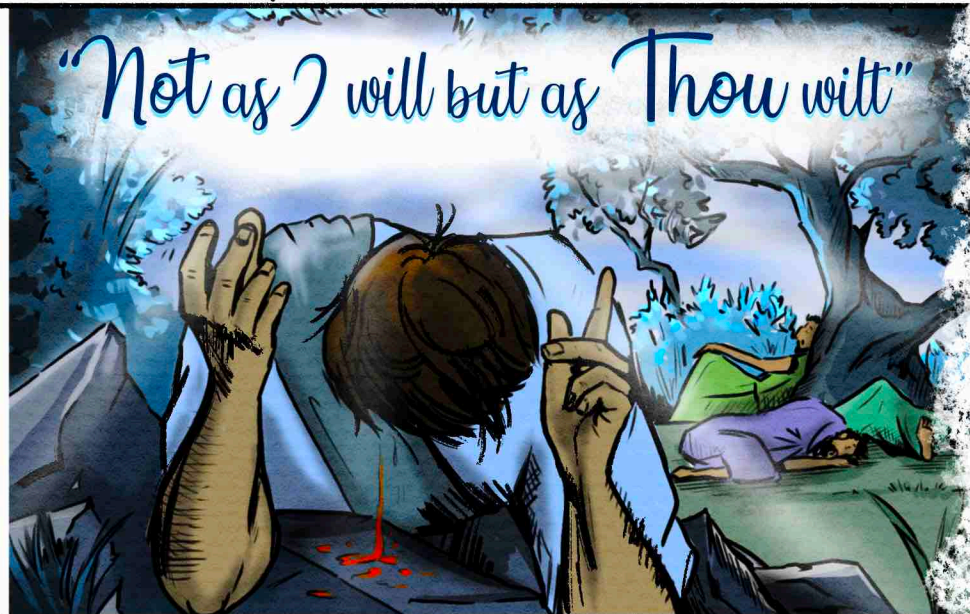


CHAPTER 12 SPEAKS OF THE JOY OF **SALVATION**. "GOD IS MY SALVATION. WITH **JOY** I WILL DRAW **WATER** FROM THE **SPRINGS** OF SALVATION. CRY ALOUD AND **SHOUT** FOR **JOY**, BECAUSE THE ONE IN THE **MIDST** OF YOU, THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL, IS GREAT" (VERSES 2, 3, 6).



CHAPTERS 13 TO 23 ARE **PROPHECIES** RELATING TO MANY OF THE NATIONS IN THE MIDDLE-EAST. THEN FOLLOWS 12 CHAPTERS FULL OF PROPHECIES OF **JUDGEMENT** AND **BLESSING** -- UP TO CHAPTER 35.

CHAPTER 13 IS ABOUT THE FALL OF **BABYLON** -- A PICTURE OF WHAT IS DESCRIBED IN **REVELATION** 17 AND 18.



CHAPTER 14 CONTINUES TO DESCRIBE THE FALL OF **BABYLON**. WHO IS THE RULER OF **BABYLON** -- OF THIS VAST **RELIGIOUS** AND **COMMERCIAL** SYSTEM? IT IS ONE WHO WAS ONCE IN HEAVEN WHO IS CALLED "THE **SHINING** ONE AND THE STAR OF THE MORNING" (VERSE 12). HE IS COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS **LUCIFER**, BECAUSE THE KJV TRANSLATION USES THAT NAME HERE. FIVE TIMES, WE READ HERE THAT HE SAID IN HIS **HEART**, "I **WILL**." THAT IS HOW HE BECAME THE **DEVIL** (VERSES 13, 14); AND THAT IS HOW **SIN** FIRST CAME INTO THE **UNIVERSE**.

SIN CAME WHEN A CREATED BEING SAID, "I **WILL**." AND **SALVATION** CAME WHEN **JESUS**, THE SON OF **GOD**, CAME TO EARTH AND SAID, "NOT AS I WILL BUT AS **THOU** WILT" -- NOT JUST ONCE, BUT **ALL** HIS **LIFE** -- AS HE HIMSELF SAID IN **JOHN** 6:38: "I CAME FROM HEAVEN **NOT** TO DO MY OWN WILL BUT THE WILL OF **HIM** WHO **SENT** ME". REMEMBER THIS ALL YOUR LIFE THAT WHENEVER YOU DO YOUR OWN WILL, YOU ARE ON THE PATH OF **SIN**; AND WHENEVER YOU DENY YOUR **OWN** WILL TO DO THE WILL OF **GOD**, YOU ARE ON THE PATH OF TRUE **HOLINESS**. THAT IS THE WAY OF THE **CROSS** THAT **JESUS** HAS CALLED US TO WALK IN. THE **CROSS** CUTS OUT OUR **OWN** WILL SO THAT WE DO THE WILL OF **GOD**. ALL OF US ARE FOLLOWING EITHER **LUCIFER** OR **CHRIST** EVERY DAY. **SELF-WILL** IS WHAT BUILDS **BABYLON** FINALLY.



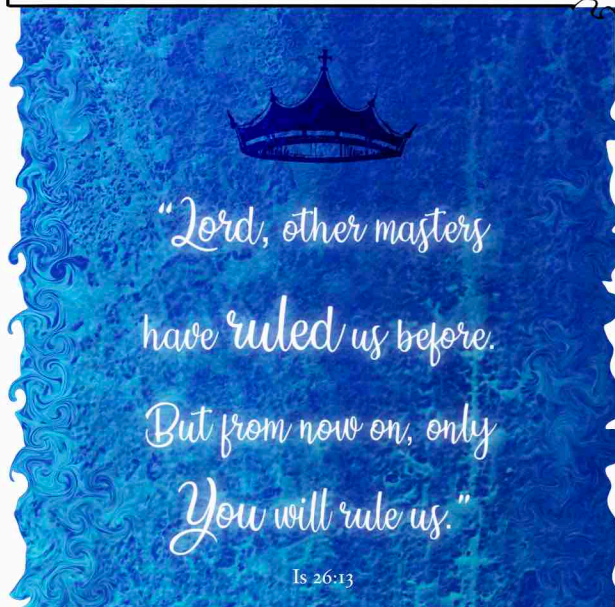
IN CHAPTER 19, VERSES 24 AND 25, WE HAVE THE BEAUTIFUL PICTURE OF THE DAY WHEN JEWS AND GENTILES WILL BE **UNITED** TOGETHER, WHEN PEOPLE FROM EGYPT, ASSYRIA AND ISRAEL WILL ALL BE BROTHERS AND SISTERS TOGETHER IN ONE **CHURCH**.



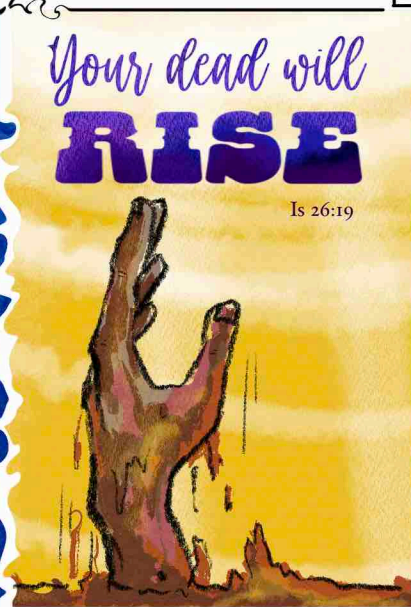
IN CHAPTER 22:13 WE READ OF PEOPLE WHO SAY, "LET US EAT AND DRINK FOR TOMORROW WE **DIE**," -- BECAUSE THEY HAVE **NO** THOUGHT FOR **ETERNITY**.



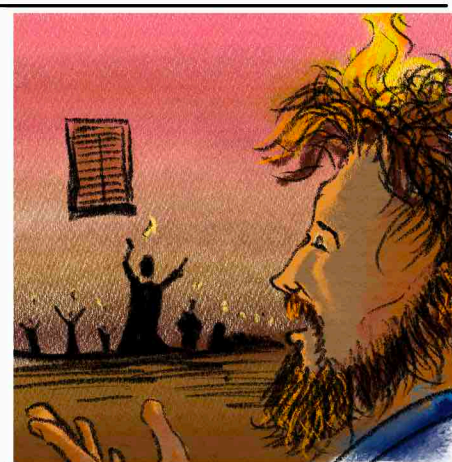
IN CHAPTER 22 WE READ OF TWO MEN:
1. SHEBNA, KING HEZEKIAH'S FINANCE MINISTER, A GREEDY, SELFISH MAN AND A TYPE OF THE **ANTICHRIST**.
2. ELIAKIM, A GODLY MAN, A TYPE OF **CHRIST**.



THIS IS A GOOD VERSE OF TOTAL **SURRENDER** TO THE LORD.



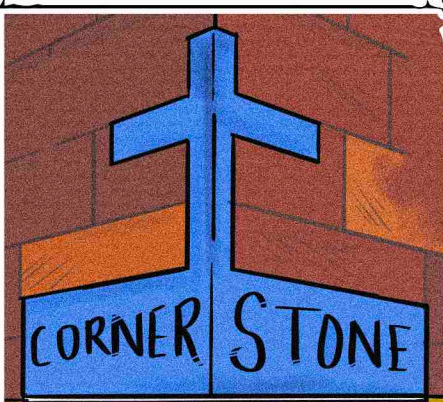
VERSE 19 IS A PROPHECY OF THE **RESURRECTION**



CHAPTER 28 HAS SOME VERSES IN IT THAT ARE QUOTED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. VERSE 11 IS QUOTED IN 1 CORINTHIANS 14:21 AS A PROPHECY ABOUT THE TIME WHEN PEOPLE WOULD SPEAK IN **TONGUES**, WHICH WAS FULFILLED ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST.



CHAPTER 27 THEN SPEAKS ABOUT THE **DESTRUCTION** OF THE **SERPENT**, SATAN, AND OF HOW THE VINEYARD OF THE LORD WILL BE **RESTORED**.



VERSE 16 SPEAKS ABOUT CHRIST THE **CORNERSTONE** OF THE CHURCH. "THOSE WHO **TRUST** IN THIS CORNERSTONE WILL NEVER BE **SHAKEN** OR **DISTURBED**. THEY WILL NEVER BE IN A HURRY. THEY WILL BE **SOLIDLY FOUNDED**."

The bed is too **SHORT** to stretch out on
Is 28:20



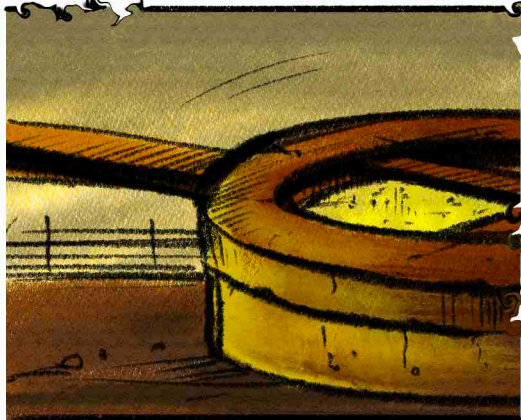
ISAIAH 28 VERSE 20 SPEAKS IN PICTURE LANGUAGE OF HOW **HUMAN RIGHTEOUSNESS** IS INCAPABLE OF **COVERING** MAN COMPLETELY.

JUDGEMENT:
God's
UNUSUAL
act

Is 28:21



VERSE 21 TELLS US THAT **JUDGEMENT** IS AN "**UNUSUAL TASK**" FOR GOD. HE IS **RELUCTANT** TO **JUDGE** PEOPLE.



VERSES 28 AND 29 TELL US HOW GOD BREAKS US IN HIS GREAT **WISDOM**, IN ORDER TO BLESS US. HE WILL NEVER ALLOW US TO BE TESTED BEYOND OUR ABILITY AND HE KNOWS WHEN TO STOP THE CHASTENING.



29 VERSES 11 AND 12 SHOW US THE NEED TO HAVE **DIVINE** REVELATION TO UNDERSTAND GOD'S WORD.



IN 30:9--11, WE READ OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL TELLING THE PROPHETS AND SEERS: "DON'T PROPHECY THE TRUTH TO US. SPEAK PLEASANT WORDS TO US. DON'T TELL US ABOUT THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL." WE FIND THE SAME ATTITUDE TODAY AMONG MANY CHRISTIANS TO THE MESSAGES OF THE **PROPHETS** IN THE CHURCH.

Your ears will hear a word behind you. This is the way, walk in it

Is 30:21



THOSE WHO **TURN** WILL SEE THEIR TEACHER, JESUS (VERSE 20) AND HEAR THE VOICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (VERSE 21) CORRECTING THEM WHEN THEY GO **ASTRAY** FROM THE RIGHT PATH.

WOE to those who take counsel but not of **GOD**

Is 30:1



CHAPTER 31 REFERS TO THE **CURSE** THAT LIES ON THOSE WHO GO TO **MAN (EGYPT)** FOR **HELP**

A King will reign in righteousness

CHAPTER 32 SPEAKS ABOUT THE COMING **REIGN OF CHRIST**.

Who can
dwell with
GOD, a
consuming
fire

Is 33:14

IN CHAPTER 33:14--16, ISAIAH ASKS THIS VERY SEARCHING QUESTION: "WHO CAN DWELL WITH GOD? WHO CAN DWELL WITH A **CONSUMING** FIRE?" AND THEN HE ANSWERS IT HIMSELF: "THOSE WHO WALK RIGHTEOUSLY AND SPEAK WITH SINCERITY." BUT HE GOES ON TO SAY THAT SINNERS ARE TERRIFIED IN GOD'S PRESENCE AND **HYPOCRITES** TREMBLE BEFORE HIM.

The Lord has a day of
VENGEANCE

Is 34:8

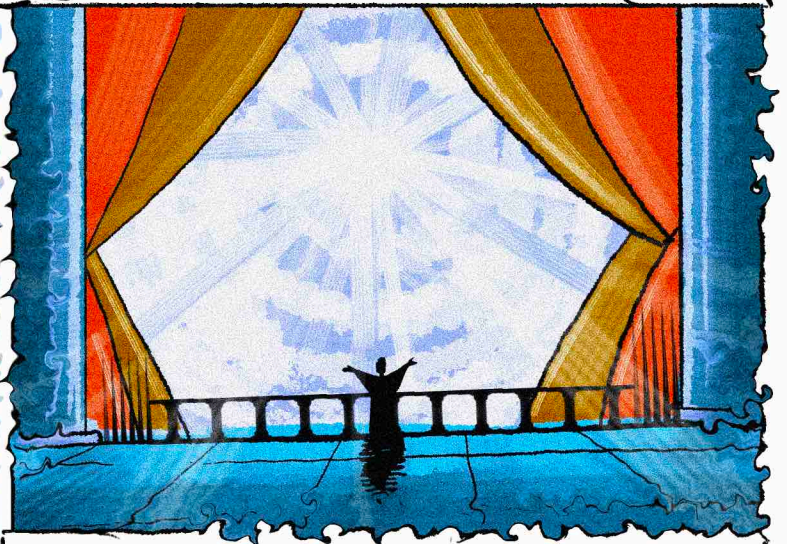
CHAPTER 34 SPEAKS OF THE LORD'S
VENGEANCE AGAINST THE NATIONS.

THE NEXT FOUR CHAPTERS (CHAPTERS 36 TO 39) ARE A HISTORICAL RECORD OF EVENTS THAT TOOK PLACE DURING THE REIGN OF KING HEZEKIAH. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF SPIRITUAL LESSONS THAT WE CAN LEARN FROM THESE CHAPTERS. THE FIRST LESSON WE LEARN IS THAT WE SHOULD **TURN** TO THE LORD, AS HEZEKIAH DID, WHEN SURROUNDED BY ENEMIES (CHAPTER 37) AND WHEN SICK (CHAPTER 38). GOD CAN DELIVER US AND HE CAN HEAL US.

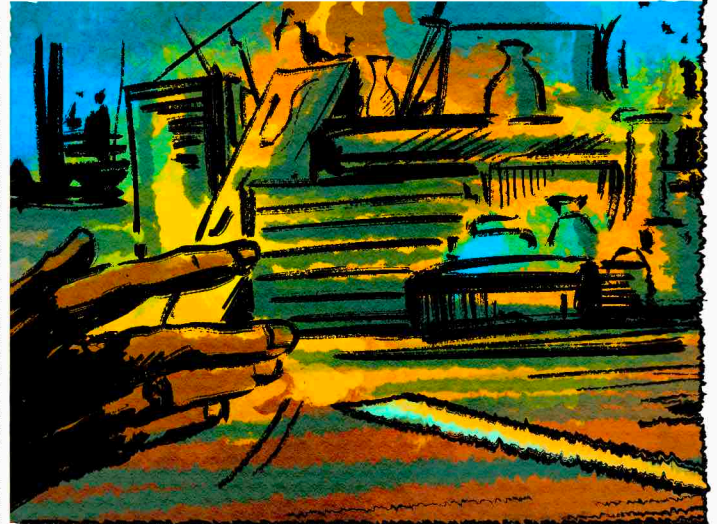
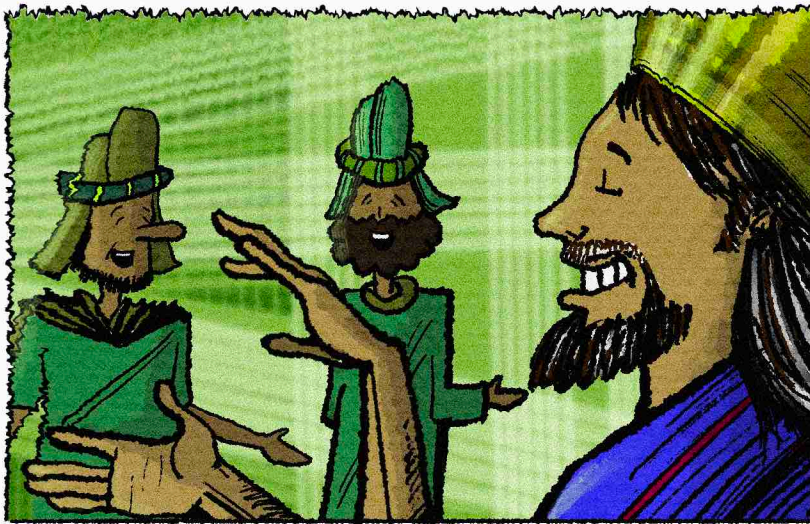
THE **REDEEMED** OF THE

LORD SHALL RETURN

IN CHAPTER 35, WE READ OF THE **NEW COVENANT** AND THE HIGHWAY OF **HOLINESS** WHERE THE **RANSOMED** WILL WALK (35:8, 10).



WE CAN ALSO LEARN LESSONS FROM HEZEKIAH'S MISTAKES. HIS FIRST MISTAKE WAS TO ASK GOD TO **LENGTHEN** HIS LIFE, WHEN GOD HAD TOLD HIM THAT HIS TIME ON EARTH WAS OVER (CHAPTER 38:1--5). CONTRAST PAUL AND PETER WHO WHEN THEY KNEW THAT THE TIME OF THEIR DEPARTURE HAD COME, DID **NOT** ASK FOR ANY **EXTENSION** OF THEIR LIFE ON EARTH (2 TIMOTHY 4:6; 2 PETER 1:14). BUT HEZEKIAH ASKED FOR THIS AND GOD GRANTED HIM 15 MORE YEARS. "HE GAVE THEM THEIR DEMANDS BUT SENT THEM LEANNESS IN THEIR SOULS" (PSALM 106:15 - LIVING). IT WAS DURING THAT EXTENDED PERIOD OF LIFE THAT HEZEKIAH PRODUCED A SON MANASSEH, WHO BECAME THE **WORST** KING THAT JUDAH EVER HAD (2 CHRONICLES 33:1--3). GOD KNOWS WHAT IS BEST FOR US AND WE MUST **ACCEPT** HIS **WILL** CONCERNING THE LENGTH OF OUR LIVES.



WHEN HEZEKIAH PRAYED THE SUN WENT **BACK** IN THE SKY ... MEANING THE EARTH STOPPED AND **REVERSED** ITS ROTATION FOR A WHILE! WHEN THE KING OF BABYLON SAW THIS MIRACLE, HE SENT MESSENGERS TO CONGRATULATE HEZEKIAH -- AND IN **PRIDE**, HEZEKIAH SHOWED OFF ALL HIS TREASURES TO THEM (CHAPTER 39). THIS RESULTED IN ALL OF THOSE TREASURES BEING TAKEN TO BABYLON LATER. WHENEVER WE TAKE THE GLORY FOR WHAT **GOD** DOES IN OUR LIVES, WE WILL, SOONER OR LATER, END UP IN SPIRITUAL **LOSS**. ISAIAH WAS A TRUE PROPHET WHO WAS IN TOUCH WITH GOD. BABYLON WAS AT THAT TIME A **WEAK** COUNTRY STRUGGLING FOR INDEPENDENCE FROM THE GREAT WORLD POWER, ASSYRIA. BUT ISAIAH PROPHESED ACCURATELY THAT HEZEKIAH'S TREASURES WOULD BE CARRIED AWAY TO **BABYLON**, AND NOT TO ASSYRIA. AND THAT WAS WHAT HAPPENED SOME YEARS LATER.



THIS SECTION OF ISAIAH BEGINS WITH A PROPHECY IN CHAPTER 40, OF THE MINISTRY OF **JOHN** THE BAPTIST.

- FIRST OF ALL, "THE VALLEYS MUST BE LIFTED UP" (VERSE 4). THERE IS NO PLACE FOR **DISCOURAGEMENT** UNDER THE NEW COVENANT. WE ARE NEVER TO SAY, "I AM GOOD FOR NOTHING, I AM USELESS." GOD IS A GOD OF ENCOURAGEMENT. HE HAS LIFTED US UP IN **CHRIST** AND GIVEN US DIGNITY. WE DON'T HAVE TO LIVE IN THE DUMPS -- IN THE VALLEYS -- ANY MORE. WE ARE CHILDREN OF THE KING AND HE LIFTS OUR HEADS UP.
- SECONDLY, "THE MOUNTAINS MUST BE BROUGHT LOW" (VERSE 4). ALL **PRIDE** IN US MUST BE BROUGHT DOWN.
- THIRDLY, THE ROUGH PLACES MUST BECOME SMOOTH. THERE IS A LOT OF **COARSENESS**, RUDENESS AND ROUGHNESS IN OUR LIVES. THESE HAVE TO BE SMOOTHENED OUT AND WE HAVE TO BECOME GRACIOUS AND **GENTLE**.
- FOURTHLY, THE CROOKED PATHS MUST BECOME STRAIGHT (THIS IS HOW THIS VERSE IS QUOTED IN LUKE 3:5). THERE ARE CROOKED AREAS IN OUR LIVES SUCH AS **UNRIGHTEOUSNESS** IN MONEY MATTERS. ALL OF THAT HAS TO BE MADE STRAIGHT.



CHAPTER 40:10, 11 SPEAK OF THE COMING OF THE LORD.

CHAPTER 40:6, 7 ARE QUOTED IN 1 PETER 1:24, 25: "ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS." WE HAVE ALREADY SEEN THAT ALL HUMAN BEINGS ARE LIKE DUST. HERE THEY ARE DESCRIBED AS **GRASS**. ALL THE HONOUR THAT YOU CAN GET FROM PEOPLE IN THE WORLD IS ONLY LIKE SOME SMALL FLOWER THAT GROWS ON THE GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS AND THE FLOWER **FADES** WHEN THE BREATH OF THE LORD BLOWS UPON IT. BUT PETER GOES ON TO SAY THERE, "BUT THE **WORD** OF THE LORD **ENDURES** FOREVER." SO THOSE WHO HAVE LIVED BY THE PRINCIPLES OF GOD'S WORD WILL REMAIN WHEN ALL THE GLORY OF MAN IS DESTROYED ONE DAY. EVERYTHING WE SEE AROUND US IS GOING TO **PERISH** ONE DAY. IF WE LIVE BY THE WORD OF GOD, WE WILL HAVE SOMETHING **ETERNAL**.