

ISAIAH'S LITTLE APOCALYPSE

By C. C. Morris

In two previous articles I have referred to "Isaiah's Little Apocalypse." In the article entitled *The Day of the LORD, Part 3: "In That Day" (The Remnant, July-August, 2015, page 10)*, I wrote:

Isaiah's chapters 24 through 27 have been called Isaiah's Little Apocalypse because those four chapters fairly well develop and summarize much of "the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ," which is the true, God-inspired name of the book of Revelation.

Apocalypse means a *revelation, an unveiling, a making plain or visible*. Then, again, in the article, "No `Pre-Tribulation Rapture,'" (*The Remnant, January-February, 2016, page 10*), I said:

Isaiah describes both Armageddon and the tribulation in the extended passage of Isaiah 24-27. To go into detail on these four chapters, which have been called a "Little Apocalypse," would take us too far afield for this article. If the Lord be pleased to have it so, we might look at those four chapters in another issue of *The Remnant*.

Some of our readers sent correspondence encouraging me to develop this theme, which I now feel constrained to honor.

Introduction

By way of introduction I will try to address some basic questions and make a few observations.

What does apocalypse mean? The word *apocalypse* is taken directly from the Greek New Testament word **apokalupsis** (pronounced *ap-ok-al-ooop-sis*), meaning a "*disclosure: appearing, coming, lightening, manifestation,*

be revealed, revelation" [Greek Dictionary in *Strong's Concordance*]. It is a compound word from two other Greek words: **apo**, meaning off, away, separation, or departure; and **kalupto**, meaning to cover, to conceal, or to hide. Combined, these two words mean **the removal of a covering, an unveiling**.

Apokalupsis is a singular noun, not plural. It is one **revelation**, singular, not **revelations**, plural; it is not a series of revelations. The entire book of Revelation constitutes one complete revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ (Revelation 1.1). It takes the entire book to make the one complete revelation of Jesus Christ. Anyone who refers to the final book of the Bible as "The **RevelationS** [plural] of Jesus Christ...." shows that they have not (and possibly cannot) read the first two words of Revelation with the comprehension of a schoolchild. God's word is not to be so abused.

What does apocalypse NOT mean?

Neither Science nor Hollywood knows what **the revelation/apocalypse of Jesus Christ** is all about. Many preachers, weighed down with the world's preconceived opinions, do not understand. These groups usually use "apocalypse" to mean something that has the potential of destroying mankind and/or the earth and every living thing upon it: the eruption of super volcanoes (Yellowstone, for example) that will blot out the sun and plunge us into an ice age; a collision of earth with a gigantic asteroid or another planet (they speak of Planet X, for example); earthquakes destroying entire cities and creating tsunamis large enough to wash away whole continents, which events they (ignorantly) dub *apocalyptic*. Television's science channels have programs almost every week predicting something with *apocalypse* in their titles.

Their misuse of "**Armageddon**" is just as bad. The words **Apocalypse** and **Armageddon** do not mean some deep, mysterious, symbolical, metaphorical, hidden allegory of church history or of anything else.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ is not a book of symbolism; there are symbols in it, of course, but Revelation is quite literal. When a symbol is used, God through John explains it.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ is not a mystery, for "in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, **the mystery of God should be finished** [not made more mysterious than ever!], as he hath declared to his servants the prophets (Revelation 10.7)." We expect from this that the Old Testament prophets, as well as the New Testament apostles, prophets, and elders, wrote of the end times, including Armageddon's war, and whatever else is contained in the book of Revelation.

The apocalypse is not a hiding, then; it is a REVELATION, the exact opposite of something being hidden. That's is why, of all things, it is called the **revelation**.

God called it a revelation for one reason: It is a **revelation!** Who would have thought it? Like Poe's *Purloined Letter*, for two thousand years it has lain out in plain sight, and the world's wise men cannot find it.

That is what stymies all the amillennial commentators, along with the scientists, entertainers, and a lot of the others who only use these words for their shock value.

In 1998, Hollywood produced a movie called **Armageddon**, starring Bruce Willis, Billy Bob Thornton, Ben Affleck, and narrated by Charlton Heston. Mr. Heston proclaims, as the film depicts what he is saying:

This is the Earth, at a time when the dinosaurs roamed a lush and fertile planet. A piece of rock just 6 miles wide changed all that. It hit with the force of 10,000 nuclear weapons. A trillion tons of dirt and rock hurtled into the atmosphere, creating a suffocating blanket of dust the sun was powerless to penetrate for a thousand years. It happened before. It will happen again. It's just a question of when. (Source: [Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.nm0000032?ref_=ttfc_fc_cl_t105](#))

The film develops this story line:

After discovering that an asteroid the size of Texas is going to impact Earth in less than a month, N.A.S.A. recruits a misfit team of deep core drillers to save the planet. (Source:

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120591/>)

This team flies up to the asteroid with the mission to divert its earthbound path or in some way neutralize its threat to destroy the earth and all life on it....

Armageddon (this word occurs only once in the KJV, in Revelation 16.16) has nothing to do with such misguided adventurism. **Armageddon is a war** between not the USA versus Russia or China, and not between any earthly super-powers, but between God and the combined armies of this world, united in their hatred of and rebellion against the Lord God Almighty.

Neither Apocalypse nor Armageddon is a cataclysm on the earth such as an atomic war, an earthquake, or a rain of comets and asteroids destroying the earth. The book of Revelation does indeed tell of earthquakes, comets, wars, and asteroids, but they are only part of *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* as **He** judges the earth-dwellers. Revelation in its entirety is focused on *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* and all of the book points to Him, not merely to the details.

But we hope to address "Isaiah's little apocalypse," not the book of Revelation proper, although we are constrained to link Isaiah's prophecy with that of John the revelator and other Scriptures. A rough outline of these four chapters in Isaiah is:

I. **World-wide, disastrous, cataclysmic judgments** on the earth/world as Jehovah begins judging mankind's rebellion in religious, political, and social sin: Isaiah 24.1-13; 24.16b-22; 25.2, 10, 12; 26.5-6;

II. **Anticipation** of better things during Christ's future literal, visible reign on earth, called the *Kingdom of Heaven* by John the Baptist and by the Lord Jesus Christ (often referred to as "the Millennium"): 24.14-16a; 24.23-25.1, 25.3-4; 25.6-11;

III. **Restoration of Judah** (Israel's two southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin): Isaiah 26.1-4, 26.7-9, 12-13, 15-18;

IV. **The resurrection of the saints, immediately preceding Armageddon**: Isaiah 25.8, 26.19-27.1

A. The resurrection of the saints: 26.19f

B. Armageddon: 26.20b-27.1. This includes the binding of Satan for the thousand years of Christ's earthly reign (Revelation 20.1-3)

V. **The War of Armageddon**: Men call it the "Battle" of Armageddon; God calls it WAR: Revelation 17.14, 19.11, 19.19.

VI. **Restoration of Israel** (the ten northern tribes of Israel): Isaiah 27.2-13. Israel is considered separately from Judah (chapter 26).

You will notice that many of the main points above are intermixed with each other. This is for the Lord's purpose and of His doing. In these chapters, the Lord often *contrasts* the destruction of the wicked with the preservation and restoration of God's people.

Again we must say we cannot go into a verse-by-verse commentary on these four chapters. At best, if the Lord be pleased, we can only comment on some of the highlights. For now, the major high points are:

1. World-wide judgments

2. Anticipation of Christ's kingdom on earth

3. Restoration of Judah

4. The [first] resurrection

5. Armageddon

6. Restoration of Israel

1. World-wide judgments

Isaiah 24:1-4 *Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it*

waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.. (3) The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the LORD hath spoken this word. (4) The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away....: God's end-time judgments finally begin to be unleashed in earnest. From Adam to the end of the church age, the history of the world has been one failure of mankind after another, from Genesis to Revelation, all rooted in the depravity, sin, and rebellion of mankind against his Creator. The timing of the beginning of the judgments is not given here in Isaiah's overview, but it is made more clear in other prophetic books and in the New Testament prophecies.

The reason for these judgments: (verse 5) *The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.* The laws and ordinance transgressed and changed are Jehovah's laws and ordinances, which He established with the descendants of Adam, and, later, with the descendants of Noah. Men have changed what they could and have ignored the rest.

God Made More Than One Everlasting Covenant

The **everlasting covenant** men have broken was not God's everlasting covenant between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, which no man can break because mankind is not a party to it; this covenant in Isaiah 24.5 is the everlasting covenant of Genesis 8.22 and continuing in Genesis 9: *While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease....*

(a) The seasons (including day and "the night seasons, " Psalm 16.7) will continue as long as the earth itself continues, which is forever;

(b) dietary laws were extended in Genesis 9.2-4; no longer would men and animals be restricted to a vegetarian diet as originally established in Genesis 1.29-30; they could now eat any animal that did not eat them first;

(c) capital punishment, the death sentence for murderers, was commanded;

(d) man was commanded *again* (as was Adam in Genesis 1.28) to multiply and RE-plenish (To fill up, to stock or supply) the earth, which tells us the earth was plenished at least one time before Adam and the events of Genesis 1.2-31; and,

(e) God promised to both man and beast that He would never destroy the earth with the waters of a flood. He set the rainbow as a token of this promise. From earth, we see a rainbow as having a beginning and an end, and man thinks God's promises likewise have a timely beginning and end. However, from a mountaintop or from an airplane, seen from above (as we think of "God looking down from heaven" and seeing it), a rainbow is a perfect circle, a halo, a ring having neither beginning nor end, speaking of God's eternal covenant promise, having neither beginning nor end, an everlasting covenant of which Isaiah speaks in 24.5. Mankind has tampered with every part of this covenant that he can.

The result of sin: (verse 6-13) *Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left. [but there are a "few" left!] The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth, all the merryhearted do sigh... When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done.*

We do not deny for an instant that there was a major judgment (the Babylonian captivity) on Judah in the near future from when Isaiah wrote. The captivity of that time, however, was not the complete fulfillment of these chapters, which will be worldwide and reach far into the future, even past our present day.

The Lord's TWO covenants with Israel: 1. The **unconditional**, eternal, gracious land grant, giving the Promised Land of Canaan, from the Nile to the Euphrates, to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel forever; and

2. The **conditional** covenant of Israel's actually occupying the Promised Land, which is tied to their obedience to Jehovah's laws and their worship of

only HIM.

Israel could not break the first covenant, because of God's nature and His graciously free promises, and she could not keep the second because of her own inherent depravity and rebellion.

The problem of the twin evil errors of Arminian/free-will doctrine and all Condition-alism (these two are the same) are many; I cite but three here:

1. The belief that if Israel sins then God will break His unconditional free-grace covenant gift of the Promised Land to His people and will never restore her to the Land (this charges God with being a promise-breaker);

2. The totally Arminian/free-will belief that God will not restore Israel to her Promised Land unless and until she accepts Jesus as their Messiah, repents, confesses her sins, etc. (which denies both (a) the total depravity of man and (b) the absolute necessity for the sovereign Lord to regenerate and save those who cannot save themselves).

This sick Arminian Conditionalism finds traction among many professedly free grace believers (proving they are yet Conditionalist Arminians in their heart), mainly because of their *amillennial* beliefs of

(a) "God is forever through with Israel as a nation" because of their rejection of Christ;

(b) "Replacement Theology": the notion that the church has replaced Israel, and

(c) the Old Testament promises are now to be applied "spiritually" or "figuratively" to the church.

Ezekiel 36.24-29 makes it abundantly clear and plain that God will FIRST **restore** Israel to her land while she is still in unbelief, which we believe He has already begun; and

THEN, SECOND, in that order, He will **cleanse** her, **place His Holy Spirit in their hearts**, and **save** them:

For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. THEN will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. (26) A new

heart also will I give you, and **a new spirit** will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. (27) And **I will put my spirit within you**, and **cause you to walk in my statutes**, and **ye shall** keep my judgments, and do them. (28) And **ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers**; and **ye shall be my people**, and **I will be your God**. (29) **I will also save you** from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you (Ezekiel 36.25-29). And,

3. The Satanic belief that the ***conditional blessings of actually occupying the Land, with all of God's attendant promised blessings*** (abundant crops, rain and harvest in due seasons, keeping Israel's enemies from invading, etc.), somehow carry over into the New Testament Gospel church era and is to be applied to the church. This drags the Old Testament conditional covenant into the New Testament, into the church, destroying

(a) the doctrine of salvation by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection;

(b) His effectual intercession for His people; and

(c) the sanctification of the Lord's elect by His indwelling Holy Spirit.

The conditional covenant was given to demonstrate that **no one, however blessed, can or will keep God's commandments**, short of God's working in them both to will and to do of His good pleasure (Philippians 2.13). Yes, **BOTH** the **willing** AND the doing are by God's working in His people, and neither the working nor doing is of themselves. These are essential components of **salvation by grace!**

(Isaiah 24.13) *When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done: Israel is typified by both the **vine or vineyard** ("For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant...."—Isaiah 5.1-7) and the **olive tree**: "The LORD called thy name, A green olive tree...(Jeremiah 11.15-17)."*

But to continue the fact that these judgments are **not** merely local, as only part of God's historic judgments on Israel: The remainder of these four

chapters make it plain that, before it is over, (a) the entire earth will be judged for the rampant wickedness of all mankind, and (b) Satan will be imprisoned and judged.

(24.15) *Wherefore glorify ye the LORD in the fires, even the name of the LORD God of Israel in the isles of the sea: "The fires" is a reference to the east, because of the fiery sun rising from that direction. With this reference to the east together with "the isles of the sea" (a westward thought) is one of the many proofs that this extended prophecy is not merely about Babylon and Judah, but it is of worldwide scope. From the rising of the sun to the uttermost islands of the sea, the Lord Jehovah will be glorified.*

(Isaiah 24.16) *...But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously. (17) Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, **O inhabitant of the earth**.* The "inhabitant of the earth" mentioned here is the person or persons who are called "**they that dwell on the earth**" and similar terms in Revelation.

"They that dwell on the earth"

This does not at all refer to God's children, although for their allotted time the saints must reside here below; these confess they are only strangers and pilgrims passing through this dreary land. "They that dwell on the earth" are those who are settled here, they who love the world and the things that are in it—"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world (1 John 2:15-16)"—its religions, its politics, its money-system or economics, its sports and entertainment, its fun, frivolity, its drunkenness, its glory, its **sin**.

The world, or world system, is distinct from the earth; the Lord has no dislike for the earth itself, which He pronounced "very good (Genesis 1.31)." Later, He placed a curse upon it *for the sake of Mankind* (Genesis 3.17).

That curse will be removed from the earth: "And there shall be **no more curse**: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: (Revelation 22.3)."

Again this text shows that the New Jerusalem described in Revelation 21 and 22 is not "in heaven" ("heaven" *never* bore the curse of God) but the New Jerusalem will be on the renewed earth, as He said (Revelation 21.3).

These earth-dwellers are spoken of at least eleven times in Revelation, and it's all bad: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on **them that dwell on the earth?**" "Woe to **the inhabitants of the earth** and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you...." "And **all that dwell upon the earth** shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." "...and **causeth the earth and them which dwell therein** to worship the first beast...." "...And deceiveth **them that dwell on the earth** by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast...." "**they that dwell on the earth** shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world."

*(24.18) And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake. (19) The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. (20) The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and **the transgression** thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again: **The** "it" that shall fall and not rise again is **the transgression**, not the earth itself, which will endure for ever. "Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon **the earth, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, for ever** (Deuteronomy 4:40)." "And he built his*

sanctuary like high palaces, like **the earth which he hath established for ever** (Psalms 78:69)." "**Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever** (Psalm 104.5)." "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: **but the earth abideth for ever** (Ecclesiastes 1.4)."

(24.21) *And it shall come to pass **in that day**, that the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.*

"The high ones that are on high" are not merely earthly kings and rulers. These "high ones that are on high" are the fallen angels associated with Satan (Revelation 12.7-9), the "spiritual wickedness in high places" (literally, in the heavenlies: Ephesians 6.12; see margin or Greek). The doom of earthly kings, presidents, and rulers are addressed in the last phrase of this verse: "**AND** the kings of the earth upon the earth."

Who Shall Be "Gathered"?

(22) *And they shall be **gathered** together, as prisoners are **gathered** in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited.* First they are **gathered**: "I will also **gather** all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for MY people and for MY heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted MY land (Joel 3:2)."

"The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world [eon, age]; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are **gathered** and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world [age]. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall **gather out of His kingdom** all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. **THEN** shall the righteous shine forth as the sun **in the kingdom of their Father**. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear (Matthew 13:38-43)." Christ will not remove His

people from the earth; he will remove the wicked, that His people might possess the earth in peace. "...those that wait upon the LORD, **they shall inherit the earth...**But **the meek shall inherit the earth**; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of **peace...and their inheritance shall be for ever...**For such as be blessed of him **shall inherit the earth**; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off...**The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever...** "Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee **to inherit the land**: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it (Psalm 37.9, 11, 18, 22, 29, 34)." "Blessed are the meek: **for they shall inherit the earth** (Matthew 5.5)."

"And before Him shall be **gathered** all nations (Matthew 25 .32)"; note that they do not "gather" themselves. God will do the **gathering**! At that time, Isaiah says, "*And He shall spread forth His hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim...* (25 .11)." The motion of spreading one's hands to swim (the breast stroke) is the same gesture a shepherd uses when he separates his sheep from the goats: "And before Him shall be **gathered** all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats (Matthew 25:32)."

They shall be visited, "**after**" how many days? One thousand years, to be exact—"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished (Revelation 20.5, 12)."

"*For thou hast made of a city an heap; of a defenced city a ruin: a palace of strangers to be no city; it shall never be built* (Isaiah 25 .2)." Possibly a reference to Damascus. God prophesied the destruction of this city in Isaiah 17.1: "Isaiah 17:1 **The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap.**" One of the oldest cities in the world, capital of one of Israel's bitterest enemies, it was there when Abram passed through (Genesis 15.2). It was not destroyed in two world wars or any other time until recent years. On page 17 of the September-October issue of *The Remnant* for 2006, we had occasion to refer to the destruction of Damascus long before it reached the proportions of ruin and rubbish to which it has been reduced today.

2. Anticipation of Christ's Kingdom on Earth:

(verse 14) *They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the LORD, they shall cry aloud from the sea. (15) Wherefore glorify ye the LORD in the fires [read the east, a metaphor for the fires of the rising sun], even the name of the LORD God of Israel in the isles of the sea. (16) From **the uttermost part of the earth** have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous.* The Psalms and the Prophets teem with such references to the joy expressed by the Lord's people (and the peoples of the earth who remain after Armageddon) when He puts down all rebellion, rules this earth literally and visibly as its absolute monarch, and crowns His people with the glorification of His own holiness and righteousness:

"Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof. Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory unto the LORD, and declare his praise in the islands. The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies (Isaiah 42.10-13)."

"Sing unto the LORD; for He hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee (Isaiah 12:50)."

"And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and *everlasting* joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away (Isaiah 35.10)."

"Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession (Psalm 2:8)."

"**All the ends of the world** shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and **all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.** For the kingdom is the LORD'S: and **He is the governor among the nations** (Psalm 22.27-28)."

"He shall have dominion also **from sea to sea, and from the river unto**

the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: **the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.** Yea, **all kings** shall fall down before him: **all nations** shall serve him (Psalm 72.8-11)."

The reference to "*the kings of Sheba... shall offer gifts*" brings to mind Isaiah 60.6: "The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; **all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense;** and they shall shew forth the praises of the LORD." This does not refer to the kings who brought "gold, and frankincense, and myrrh (Matthew 2.11). " The kings of Sheba will only bring gold (which speaks of His deity) and frankincense (speaking of worship and praise), **but no myrrh.** Why? The myrrh brought to Him at His first coming spoke of His death, because myrrh was used in embalming (John 19.39). At His second coming, the tribute brought to Him **will have no myrrh,** because HE WILL DIE NO MORE.

(23) *Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously:* The sun and moon will be darkened, for one thing, because they have been the objects of man's idolatry (Deuteronomy 17.2-3), and the sun and moon will not help men in the day of judgment. "For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine (Isaiah 13:10)." "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come (Joel 2:31). "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken (Matthew 24:29)." "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come (Acts 2:20)." "And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise

(Revelation 8:12). "

Of Israel Isaiah says, "Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall **inherit the land for ever**, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified (Isaiah 60:20-21)."

"Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the **ordinances of the moon and of the stars** for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: **If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever** (Jeremiah 31:35-36)."

The sun and moon will not be the source of light for the glorified saints, however; Christ Himself will be their light: " "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory (Isaiah 60:19)." "And the city had **no need** of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof (Revelation 21:23)." Notice, this last verse does not say they sun and moon will no longer exist; it merely says that the **occupants of New Jerusalem** *will not need them*, as Christ Himself will be their light.

The sun and moon, so far from being destroyed, will be glorious during Christ's thousand-year reign and beyond, into eternity because of unpolluted atmospheric purity. "Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people [Israel], and healeth the stroke of their wound (Isaiah 30:26)."

The ancients are His ancient people, chosen in Christ Jesus the Son in eternity: "Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, **since I appointed the ancient people?** and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them (Isaiah 44.6-7)."

3. The Restoration of Judah

Judah is actually the southern two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, the latter having been associated with Judah since OT times:

(26.1) ***In that day** shall this song be sung in **the land of Judah**; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.* This text was Newton's inspiration for his verses,

Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Zion, city of our God;
He whose words can not be broken,
Formed thee for His own abode.
On the rock of ages founded,
What can shake thy sure repose?
With salvation's walls surrounded,
Thou mayst smile at all thy foes.

Newton wrote another verse that is not included in this hymn in the Lloyd, Gobel, Beebe, or Gadsby hymnbooks. In part it says:

Lord, the church is still Thy dwelling,
Still is precious in Thy sight,
Judah's temple far excelling,
Beaming with the gospel light....

The trouble with that is, the church is neither Zion nor Judah. Israel is Israel, Judah is Judah, Zion is Zion, and the church is the church. Newton wrote in agreement with the prevailing (Presbyterian's) politically correct, amillennial, sentiment of his day: The church, thought he and they alike, has replaced Israel ("replacement theology").

Baptists only bought into this error when they adopted, under the name of *The London Confession of Faith of 1689*, their modified version of the

combined Presbyterians' (Westminster, AD 1646) and Congregationalists' (Savoy, AD 1658) confessions of faith.

Back to the subject at hand: This is a prophecy of the restoration of Judah, a prevailing and recurring theme throughout the Old Testament. **"In that day"** usually refers to Armageddon and/or the great tribulation, sometimes the millennial kingdom—the context of its use usually makes plain what time is under consideration. In this case, it is the conversion of Judah at the return of Christ when they see Him face to face. The details are given in Zechariah 12 and 13 (more particularly, 12.7, **"The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first..."**, " through 13.6. Read all of Zechariah's chapters 12 through 14 to see the fuller picture. In these three chapters of Zechariah, **"in that day"** is found at least 16 times; chapter 14.1 shows that **that day** is the **day of the Lord**, a term here associated with **Armageddon** and its aftermath).

(Isaiah 26.2) *Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.* When Judah is converted and saved by their Messiah, they will be "the righteous nation," because they, as all saints, will be clothed with the righteousness of Christ Jesus, their newly-acknowledged Lord and savior.

(4) *Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:* The phrase, "in the LORD JEHOVAH [Hebrew, **JAHJHVII**] is everlasting strength," is the source of both Newton's "On the rock of ages founded" and Toplady's "Rock of Ages." In the Hebrew idiom, **everlasting strength** is the same as "rock of ages," where **rock = strength**, and **everlasting** is ("unto the) **ages**." Hence, "everlasting strength" is the "Rock of Ages."

(5) *For He bringeth down them that dwell on high; ...the lofty city, he layeth it low; he layeth it low, even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the dust* (See on Isaiah 25.2, page 9).

(6) *The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy.* This is possibly, probably, a reference to Mystery Babylon,

which will be destroyed at or immediately before Armageddon (Revelation, chapters 16-18).

(7) *The way of the just is uprightness: thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just*—a reference to the feet of the poor and needy in the previous verse.

(8) *Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O LORD, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. (9) With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early:* See on Isaiah 25.9, above. Israel, since Old Testament times, has waited for their Messiah; in sovereign judicial blindness, they did not recognize Him when He came in the fullness of time.

*...for **when thy judgments are in the earth**, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.* The earth-dwellers will be forced to learn righteousness by the iron rod of Christ and His people (Revelation 12.5 and 19.15, et al).

(10) *Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD.* Even though Christ is unspeakably gracious in sparing the nations and ruling righteously over them, that in itself does nothing to improve the unconverted hearts of men.

(11) *LORD, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.* This verse points up the difference between man's unconverted, obstinate will ("they **will** not see") and Christ's sovereign, all-prevailing will ("but they **shall** see").

(12) LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.

(13) *O LORD our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.* Men who think they work independently from God, according to their own will, know nothing. We cannot even mention His name, the name of God or of His Christ, without His working these and all our other "works" **IN** us.

(14) *They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased [**Raphaim**],*

they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish. The "they" who open this verse are the "other lords" of verse 13. **Raphaim** is a proper noun, the name of some demon-spirits probably kin to the "giants" (Hebrew: **Nephilim**) of Genesis 6.4. They possibly predate Genesis 1.2. They, being inhuman, are not part of Adam's race and will not be included in the final resurrection because Jehovah has already dealt with them, according to the rest of this verse.

(15) *Thou hast increased the nation, O LORD, thou hast increased the nation: thou art glorified: thou hadst removed it far unto all the ends of the earth.* The nation is Israel in general, Judah in particular. As of verse 1, Judah is increased, and Jehovah is glorified thereby. The Lord **had** ("hadst," past tense) scattered Israel among the nations, but, as of this prophetic time Isaiah envisions, they are (i.e., at that time will be) gathered back into their land and restored.

(16) *LORD, in trouble have they [Judah/ Israel] visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them.* For two thousand years, these chosen people have sought after Jehovah; however, it was in judicial blindness from the Lord, and therefore it availed nothing. "Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling-stone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed (Romans 9:32-33)."

Israel knows her commission, given by the Lord at the foot of Mount Sinai: "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And **ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.** These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel (Exodus 19:5-6)." As a **kingdom of priests** their testimony was designed to be a witness to the nations of the world as to the blessedness of serving the living and true God. As **priests**, they were to mediate between their God and the other nations. They miserably failed from the beginning, worshiping Aaron's golden calves and committing fornication in the wilderness before Moses descended from Mount Sinai.

Mankind—Israel, preachers, priests, and the like—cannot contribute one iota to the conversion of the nations. Israel's complaint:

(17) Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in thy sight, O LORD. (18) We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen. From Sinai until now their witness has done nothing for all the other nations. They have thought they would deliver (Gentile) children unto God, but they have not. They thought they were in labor-pains, but the pains they felt all that time were merely gas-pains.

(To be continued, Lord willing.)

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