

## **Allan MacRae: Isaiah 1-6: Lecture 16**

### **Biblical Theological Seminary, 1976**

I'm going to put the last two chapters under the heading I gave to you last time which covered the first few verses of chapter 65. That heading was "God's answer to the prayer." The answer covers chapters 65 and 66. But I think it will be better to study them together as a unit. This covers God's answer to the prayer that came in the previous chapter and a half. We noticed last time the contrast in verses one and two of chapter sixty five. And we noticed in Romans 10:20-21 how the apostle Paul said that the first of these verses describes the fact that God was going to call into his kingdom those who had not been known "by his name." Paul implies this was predicted by Isaiah. Isaiah is very bold and says "I was found of them that sought me not. I was made manifest to them who asked not after me." Now, of course, it would be all together reasonable if instead of saying, "I was found," to say, "I let myself be found," because, after all, anything that is done to God is only done to him because he permits it to be done. As we noticed that's hardly reason enough to make up a new grammatical form and say that this is the "Niphal Tolerativum." Any verb form that is passive that is related to God must imply God's permission, but this is never true of anything any human being does. But God predicts that he will bring the gentiles into a relationship with Himself even though they had not been called by his name, and even though they have not sought him in the past. But Paul goes on and says in verse 21, "But to Israel," he says, "all day long have I stretched my hands onto a disobedient and gainsaying people." And thus Paul spoke from these first two verses of chapter 65 as being fulfilled in what was happening in his own day.

This brings up a very vital question: does the Old Testament tell us about Christ? Or is the Old Testament prophet only interested in events of his own day? Are the prophets only interested in the Jews and what will happen to the Jews? Or

are the Old Testament prophets looking forward and seeing that which will reach far beyond the Jews? Of course, if we study the New Testament with even the slightest amount of care, we see that the New Testament teaches that the Old Testament very definitely teaches about the cross. We must not take every verse in the Old Testament and try to find Christ in it in some way and twist it if necessary to put Him in it. But we must not be surprised if we find many things in the Old Testament that look forward to Christ. Jesus himself said in John 5:39, "search the scriptures," by which he means the Old Testament. That was all the scripture that was written when he said this: "Search the scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life and they are they which testify of me." He said that the Old Testament testifies of Him. ... I think that's a little of a broad statement but I think that it is true that everything the Lord says has some relation to His Son, there is no question of that. But there are many verses that very explicitly point to Christ and there are chapters probably that do not necessarily have to do with Christ. We don't want to go to one extreme or the other. A hyperbole that most people utter at one time or another is that "Christ can be found on every page of the Bible." I would say that a man reading every page of the Bible should be looking for Christ, and seeing whether he finds something that either explicitly points to Christ is a teaching that brings him closer to the Lord. But we should turn every page with the certainty that the Bible comes into connection with our relationship with God, and of course, Jesus Christ is God.

But now in Luke 24:25 when Jesus was talking to the men on the road to Emmaus, he said, "Oh fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Must not the Christ suffer these things before he enters into his glory". He there rebukes those who do not find Christ in the Old Testament. Now, I don't quite like that English translation; "Oh fools". The Greek word, anoesis is only this one time rendered "fool". Four times it's rendered "foolish", and once "thoughtless." He wasn't calling them fools, but he was saying "you are foolish"

in this particular case. He was saying that it is foolish not to see that the Old Testament, as a whole, points to Christ, and that there are many versus that very explicitly point to him.

Now, those who do not accept Christianity naturally cannot believe this about the Old Testament. When the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament came out, I was greatly pleased with many things in it. And even though it was a group of modernists who translated it, I could see that these men who were expert Greek Scholars, and who had studied the Bible all their lives, even though there was a darkness over them as far as the great truth of salvation was concerned; nevertheless, they could look at the New Testament and read those words and say, "These people two thousand years ago had some very crazy, foolish ideas, but here's what the ideas are" and they could accurately translate what they found. But when these same men went into the Old Testament, they could not believe that a man seven hundred years before Christ could possibly say something about Christ. That would go beyond a possibility for them, unless a man 700 hundred years before Christ was completely out of his mind, which none of them believe. The men, the Prophets, were greatly interested in their own people and their own situations, and the Revised Standard Version has got many excellent translations of passages in the Old Testament dealing with contemporary situations, and dealing with the things that were at the time the Prophets spoke. But whenever the prophet said something that the New Testament says is fulfilled in Christ, the translators could not take that. So they worked out various theories of grammar, various theories of meanings of words, and various other approaches. This was done a century ago by various unbelieving scholars in Europe, and they wrote up these theories, just like this idea of the "Niphal Tolerativum." They wrote up these theories, and today, those who want to study the Bible in a scholarly way have to take what they said as established fact. And the fact is that a great deal of study needs to be done on the Hebrew language because there is

much more to understand, and much misinterpretation of it. I wrote a little booklet once on the Revised Standard Version, largely on the Old Testament. Some thousands of them were distributed at that time, and in it I pointed out fifteen or twenty pages where it specifically pointed to Christ. For example, right where it says in Micah 5:2, "he was the one whose goings forth were from of old," which describes Christ preexistence, and his appearance in Old Testament times, they changed it to "one whose genealogy goes way back to ancient times." And where Peter says that the grave could not keep Christ because David looked forward to him, and said "he would not see corruption (Ps. 16)." they translated it correctly in the New Testament, but in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament reference back to the words of Psalms, they say that "he would not see the pit." But that same word "pit," in the majority of cases in the Old Testament is translated as "corruption." So it appears that Peter was not correctly using Psalm 16 when he really was. And I could give many instances but this has affected the study of the Hebrew of many places in the Old Testament, and it needs further careful study.

Now, how about this concept in 65:2 of the calling of the Gentiles? Would this be contained in the Old Testament? Was God in Old Testament times only interested in the Jews? Would he say anything about the Greeks or about other people, other than Jews, except by way of condemnation? Well when Peter, who was at one time a very bigoted Jew, when Peter went to Cornelius, being led by the Spirit of God, we read in Acts 10:34 that Peter opened his mouth and said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that fears Him and works righteousness is accepted with Him." Peter doesn't say, "I see that God is now making a change. Up till now everybody except the Jew is headed for hell and there was nothing they could do about it, but now God has introduced a new method in which people other than Jews can also be saved. And so there's a change now." That's not what Peter said. Peter said, "God is no

respector of persons, but in every nation he that fears Him and works righteousness is accepted with Him.”

One of the great books of the Old Testament is the book of Job; and the book of Job has no mention in it of Israel, no mention in it of the law--the Sinaitic Law, no mention of those specific matters. These were people who were not Israelites but people with whom God dealt in a very definite way. God called Israel in order that He might prepare the way for the coming of Christ and in order that the word of Christ might go out through the whole world. But he did not cause it to go out into the world until after Christ had come and had laid down His life on the cross. During his earthly ministry Christ said, “Go only to the lost people of the house of Israel (Mat. 10:5, 6).” But after the actual crucifixion, then he said go to all the world and preach the gospel. But this was foretold in the Old Testament. In Isaiah 42 it is three times stated about Christ that “he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He will set judgment in the earth and the distant isles will wait for his law. I will give him for a light to the Gentiles (verses 1, 4, 6).” It’s stated in chapter 42 and 49 and 52 and in 56. “My house will be a house of prayer for all people (Isa 56:7).” And so it is not a strange thing that the Old Testament would predict many events connected with the coming of Christ and that it would particularly predict that the word of God would not be limited to the Jews. But that it would go out just as much as to the Jews, also to the Gentiles. In fact, it is not strange that the church would come to include more Gentiles than Jews, even though in every single generation since that time there have been Jews brought into the church and many of them have become leaders, have become Christian leaders.

As for the question: "How were people saved before Christ came?" Well, look at Hebrews 10:4, and in Hebrews 10:4 we do not find that the inspired writer says, “In past times people were saved because they made sacrifices, but now they are going to be saved through Christ.” He says in verse four, “For it is not possible

that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin.” These sacrifices simply look forward to Christ. But God is interested in our salvation through Christ. He also is interested in our earthly life, and in Old Testament times he took a particular interest in the earthly life of the people of Israel, and there is a great deal related to their earthly life in the Old Testament. Now there are those who go to the extreme of saying that Israel’s whole purpose was to bring Christ into the world and once that was done, God was through with Israel. But there are comparatively few who hold such a view. The most important thing in the Old Testament wasn’t whether the Israelites defeated the Philistines. It wasn’t whether a man lived a hundred years instead of living eighty, or lived eighty instead of living fifty on this earth. It was whether they were saved for eternity or whether they were lost, and there were the saved and the lost at every period, as there are today. God is interested in our salvation--in our eternal life,--but he is also interested in our life on this earth. And He set aside Israel for a very vital purpose. And He still has the purpose in Israel. And it is His purpose eventually that all Israel shall be saved. And so we have these two things from the prophets to look forward to in our own day and we are. We have the marvelous way they looked forward to the going out to the gospel, leading souls in Israel and in other nations to believe in Christ. We also have a wonderful promise relating to a continued purpose for Israel, and it is a great mistake to take one promise and not the other. To take one side of the truth and to neglect, or to overlook, or even to deny the second side as others do, is wrong.

But we were looking at these first two verses of chapter 65, and what I was just saying relates not merely to the interpretations of them, but the interpretation of the whole of these two chapters 65 and 66. I should say one further word to remind you of the fact that as the prophet looks forward, he does not necessarily understand everything that he sees any more than as you see a great range of mountains in the distance, you can tell what’s in the first one, what’s in the

second, what's in the third, what's in the fourth, and you certainly can't see what's after that. And so the prophet's vision of the future includes both. It includes God's will for all those who are to be saved through Christ, and it also includes God's specific will for the people of Israel. And sometimes we can be sure he's talking about one, sometimes we can be sure he's talking about the other, and sometimes we cannot be sure which it is. We will be sure when it happens. And I'm sure in the times of the apostles many were amazed when they saw what Jesus brought out into the open. They said "We never saw this before." He calls them foolish and slow of heart not to see it, but there are few of us who are wise enough and quick enough to see the will of God generally vis-a-vis Israel until Christ returns. And so we don't expect to understand everything in the rest of these two chapters, but there's a good deal we can understand.

In the outline call A, "The contrast in verses one and two of chapter 65," and B might just as well be included with this. These two headings summarize the situation clearly. I make B separate: "The contrast between the unfaithful people and God's chosen servant." Let's look at Isaiah 65: 3-15. Now I'm going to have to run a bit hastily through this, only touching on a few outstanding features. But as we do this, we will note that in verses 3-4 he is speaking about hypocrisy. People, while claiming to follow the Lord are doing that which is an abomination to Him. In verse 5, he speaks about pride and this is just as accurate for today as it was then. In verse 5, which says "Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day." God wants us to realize that we deserve nothing good from His hand; that it's only because in his wonderful goodness he caused the word of salvation to be brought to us. Now, this describes an attitude that wasn't only characteristic of Pharisees in Christ's day, but also characteristic of many Christians today. But God doesn't want us to say, "Oh, look how wonderful I am, aren't those people terrible." He wants us to say, "Isn't it wonderful what God has done in saving me, I should

bring this message to others, so that they also might receive the marvelous gift of salvation.” So we have this pride in verse 5.

Now, in verses 8-10 we have an expression of the true remnant: “Thus says the Lord: As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all. And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains, and my elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.” The "cluster" referred to here is the true remnant in Israel, the true remnant in our Christian circles, the true remnant in humanity whom the Lord is going to bless. You'd think I should see the wickedness here. Nations that were founded by people who love the Lord, turn away from the Lord, and you wonder why the Lord didn't just destroy them, and be done with them. But because of this wonderful mercy, he preserves a remnant, even in sinful nations, to be bearers of God's gracious gospel to others.

Then in verse 15, it's a striking verse. It is not translated, I believe, quite accurately in the King James. It is a beautiful translation, but unfortunately not exactly accurate. “And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen! For the Lord God shall slay thee and call his servants by another name.” Now the inaccuracies are rather minor in the translation, but that word "curse" never is translated "curse" anywhere else in the Old Testament. There are six words translated "curse" in the Old Testament. The word curse occurs in the King James Old Testament 52 times and this is the only case where this word is translated "curse". This word is translated "oath" 28 times so we can translate verse 15 as, “you shall leave your name for an oath unto my chosen. His people will say, 'Oh that God may bless us as he blessed Israel of old.'” The oath, the word, this word *shevuah* in Hebrew, is used for an oath of loyalty, of fidelity, of blessing, that sort of thing. Other words, not this one, carry the idea of execration, so "curse" is an unfortunate translation here in verse 15 should read, “You shall leave your name

for an oath to my chosen (or my elect),” and then it says, “For the Lord God shall slay thee” in the KJV. In modern English I don’t know whether we use ‘slay’ much. I never heard of soldiers going out and "slaying the enemy." We don’t use it much today. It’s become a slang word today. But the word ‘slay’ suggests to us violence, but the Hebrew term here has no violence associated with it. The Hebrew is simply ‘shall cause thee to die’. It can be taken that he will remove you as a nation from the center of blessing during that period in the sense that He will cause many of your members, the members of your race, to die. He will cause that you will not be the center of his revelation during the period that I believe means that which follows the coming of Christ. The latter part of verse 15 says, “He will call his servants by a different name,” and that, of course, is what happens seven hundred years after this prophecy when the center of God’s blessing passed to those who followed Christ, specifically as they were called "Christians," rather than being called "Israelites." So as the verse stands, it is inaccurate, but yet it has a very definite truth in it, namely, the changing of the name of the followers of God whom he is blessing for a time.

And right there should be, I believe, a break between verses 15 and 16. Now most people put the break a verse later verse 17, and I’m quite sure the King James translators did because they start verse 16, “That he who blesses himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth.” They see verse 16 as the reason for the statements in verse 15. This is why I’m going to do this. “That he who blesses himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth.” Now we don’t use that in that sense exactly today. Today, this suggests to us that it means ‘so that he who blesses himself’. But the Hebrew is simply *asher*, the relative pronoun, which means ‘that one’, ‘the one who’. And so it can just as well be the start of a new paragraph, which I believe it is here.

I believe we start a new paragraph here, which I call “Millennial Blessing Described”. Isaiah 65:16-25. “Millennial blessing described.” It starts not “in

order that (asher) he who.” I went through a considerable portion of Isaiah looking at all the occurrences of the word ‘that’ to see which might be purposed like this that is, translated "in order that." And in every one where the King James had translated it as ‘a purpose’, I found the Hebrew used the word *lema'an*, in order that, or if it was negative, it used the word *min*. This word *asher* is rarely, if ever-- and I’m trying to question if ever it was--used to show purpose. And so that should not be translated “That he who blesses himself.”

Let’s start a new section here and translate verse 16, "Whoever blesses himself," "the one who blesses himself in the earth," or "who is blessed." The word could be taken either way. So let's translate verse 16. "The man who is blessed in the Earth shall be blessed by the God of Amen," or "The one who swears in the Earth should swear by the God of Amen." Now the word "truth" in the Old Testament is usually the Hebrew word *emet*, and there’s many, many times where *emet* is rendered ‘truth’. Now this word here is "amen" and it is related to the word *emet*. But *amen* is never translated "truth" anywhere except in this one verse. Perhaps "faithfulness" would be better; I don’t know. But it inevitably reminds us of the passage, or maybe I should say the passage in 2 Corinthians 1:20 where it says “Where all the promises of God in him are 'yeah' and in him 'amen,' under the glory of God for us.” Surely the apostle there is thinking of this fact, the God of "amen." He is led by the God of "amen," a God who is dependable and faithful. Back to Isaiah 65:16. The phrase translated, “the former,” that’s feminine, “the former troubles are forgotten because they are hid from mine eyes so behold, I create a new heavens and a new earth (masculine), and the former (feminine) shall not be remembered nor come to mind.” At least the former troubles, not the former heavens and earth will not be remembered. The former troubles will not be remembered. He’s using the same feminine word, "former," exactly the same word as used in the previous verse.

He continues there then with this section of millennial blessing from verses 16-25, and to look at this passage, to really understand it, we look at the last verse first, verse 25. "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together and the lion shall eat straw-like a bullock and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain' says the Lord." Now when you read this you are immediately reminded of Isaiah 11, which uses the same figures in the same picture of a time when there is complete freedom from external danger, a time when even the animals are no longer destructive, and the serpent that led Eve into temptation and brought about her fall, the serpent will no longer be able to enter and Satan will bow down at that time. So I think the connection of this verse with the millennium is clear. You would not prove the millennium from this passage. Isaiah 2 and Isaiah 11 and Micah 4 definitely prove the coming of a new millennium, but this passage describes something about the millennium. Whether that is what is being described is proven by comparing this passage with the passages in Isaiah and in Micah that I just referred to.

So this passage looks forward to the millennium and gives us further light on it that was not given in previous passages. It is an interesting passage and if we had time, we could spend three or four hours on it, but all we will do now is draw your attention to a few points. If you start with verse 17, it says, "Behold I create new heavens and a new Earth." Someone can easily get convinced this is looking way beyond the millennium. But when you go on to the next few verses, it is perfectly clear Isaiah is not looking beyond the millennium, he is looking at the millennium. The word "I create" here is a participle best translated, "I am creating." It seems clear to me that here he is describing a change, a renewed heaven and earth, a heaven and earth from which the earth has the curses being removed. He is looking here at the millennium, not at something beyond the millennium. And then as he looks at the millennium here in this passage, we find in verse 19 it will be a time where there will be no more weeping, no more crying;

a time of universal joy. And verse 20 shows the great longevity of the time. "There will not be an infant of days, nor an old man that has not filled his years, for the child shall die 100 years old." It is a time of greatly increased longevity; it is not a time of immortality. There will still be death at that time. The end of the verse shows there will still be sinners at that time, though it will not be possible for sinners to work violence or destruction. There will be no external violence; and sinners will be in a very small minority. That is those who actually refuse to believe in the Lord will be in a great minority in that time. A sinner dying 100 years old shall be considered cursed, for most will live well beyond that. And so this is a time that is not a time of absolute perfection, but a time of complete removal of external danger, and a time of a renewed earth, like the earth in the days of the Garden of Eden.

In verse 22 the longevity is brought out further it says that "as the days of a tree are the days of my people." You see a tree that stood there for 100,150, 200 years, so will we, like at that time when people lived longer.

Then capital D: "Further rebuke and censoring formalism, chapter 66 verses 1 to 4." The great prayer was, "Our beautiful temple has been destroyed. Help us to rebuild our temple." That was the great prayer there in the prayer that just preceded this section. Well, the Lord says, "thus says the Lord, 'The heavens are my throne, The earth my footstool, where is the house you built for me? Where is the place of my rest?'" What this means is to rest like a book rests on a table, not that God had to rest or "to take it easy," but the place where he takes his station, where he takes his stand. And he is saying the temple had a great place in God's economy and continues with that, but the temple in itself is nothing. He wants them to go back and build His temple, yes. But the important thing is that the temple remind them of the truth he has given them, and that in the temple they perform the sacrifices to bring to their hearts the realization of the fact that sin requires atonement, and the realization of the fact that a perfect sacrifice must be

provided. That the Lamb of God must come to take away their sins. The temple is a figure, it is a picture, but when you make it primary then it is of no value. What is the temple of God? What are these earthly things in the temple? They are wonderful as pictures, but they are nothing in themselves. He fills all the universe, so here he rebukes them; he says what good are your sacrifices? He that kills an ox, is as if he sacrifices a lamb, he that sacrifices a lamb as if he cut off a dog's neck. In other words, he takes the animals that they thought of as unclean and likens them to their heart attitude when they make their sacrifices. He says, in effect, you bring a beautiful clean animal, a lamb, a perfect unblemished lamb, you sacrifice it, but if your heart isn't right before God, then it is absolutely no good at all. You might as well have brought a dog, or a pig as a lamb, if your heart is wrong. So the temple and sacrificial system are merely pictures of Christ is going to do. So these four verses were important for those people then, and they are important for us today because we can take the same attitude towards formal things as the unfaithful ones did then.

And now capital E is a very interesting section, But one in which we must say that we do not know exactly how much or what part of the future the prophet saw. We do not know exactly fully what it meant. I label E as: "A Nation born of the day. Isaiah 66:5 to 11," It begins, "Hear the word of the Lord, you that fear him, you that tremble at his word. Your brother that hated you, that cast you out for mine name sake said, 'let the Lord be glorified,' He shall appear to your joy and they shall be ashamed. A voice, a noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice from the Lord that renders recompense to his enemy. Before she travails she brings forth; before her pain she was delivered from a man-child. Who has heard of such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day, or should a nation be born in one day? For as soon as Zion travails, she brought fourth her children." This does not describe anything that has happened up to our time. And so it would seem, people would think mostly of this as a picture of the conversion of the Jewish nation as a whole.

Many individuals have talked about this: that they will view him whom they have pierced and there will be the great turning of Israel to God, which was predicted in the Old Testament. This will be so sudden, and so tremendous, that it will be like a nation being born in a day. I will not be dogmatic on that, but it is the most reasonable explanation.

There are some who have tried to make this passage refer to be the beginning of the Christian church. But certainly, it was not, in this sudden way, the beginning of the Christian church. The beginning of the Christian church began with twelve disciples, and then they went out and God brought three thousand and then they went a little further, a little further, and took three centuries that you have, maybe a fifth of the Roman Empire. They took three centuries to convert, but I don't think that that's what is described here in Isaiah.

Well, then, "F" is "The indestructible glory." This is verses 12 to 24. And here in these last verses of the chapter, the last verses of the book, the Lord gives a wonderful picture of a future glory that Isaiah saw as he looked far beyond his immediate situations. "Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream." Verse thirteen, "As one whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you, and you shall be comforted in Jerusalem." Is he looking way forward there, or is he looking for their return from exile? Or is he including both in these statements? "And when you see this your heart will rejoice and your bones will flourish like an herb." The picture here looks forward to great blessings in the future and includes many different things. Isaiah, the book, has more than any other book of the Old Testament in the way that it looks forward to the Messiah/Servant. It has twice in the amount that it tells about Christ. Yes, it was a book written for his contemporaries, and in his last words he has them very much in mind, as well as he looks forward to distant glories that God is going to bring. And we find in verse 22 on the permanence of the blessings he will have for his people. "For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall

remain before me', says the Lord, 'so shall your seed and your name remain. And it will come to pass from one moon to another, from one Sabbath to another, all flesh will come to worship before me', says the Lord.'" Here is a marvelous picture of the permanence of God's blessings on His people. His blessing on Israel, and His blessing on all who are saved through the provision that He gives. "Just as the new heavens and the new earth will remain before Him, so will your seed and your name remain."

Fredrick the Great, of Prussia, was once perhaps the greatest doers in the world's history, took a little region which was quite weak and he built it up into a strong and powerful force, and he did it with his brilliance and his ruthlessness. And he was great admirer of Voltaire, the French atheist, and invited Voltaire to his court, and Voltaire spent some time with him in his court. Fredrick liked to think he could write French poetry, and Voltaire flattered him by saying that his poetry was worth something when it probably wasn't. Fredrick wouldn't even bother to speak German except to his underlings. He thought French was much superior. Eventually, he and Voltaire got into a big fight and Voltaire left him. But Fredrick was ruling in a land where the teachings of Luther were widespread, and where the churches were supported by the state, and where there were many very faithful pastors. And Fredrick had a chaplain in his palace, and would have a form of religion, and doubtless, many of the people in his court were truly Christians. He was very much not a Christian he scoffed at it and ridiculed it. And one day he turned to his chaplain and he said, "Give me in one word some proof that Christianity is true." And the chaplain replied, "The Jews." And for giving a one word of proof of Christianity, I think that was a marvelous victory, because all the great nations of antiquity have disappeared. Egypt was overrun by the Arabs: the present-day Egyptians are Arabs. Mesopotamia has become very minor in power for the last many centuries. Rome is largely a pile of ruins. Greece has some beautiful ruins but is not much of a power. Those lands were

overrun by what they considered barbarians coming from the North, an overwhelming number of them, taking control and mixing with their people. Only the Jews have preserved an identity all through these years. And God has kept them as an identity that has been preserved in spite of being scattered throughout the world, persecuted, mistreated, but God has enabled them to preserve their existence to preserve their identity all this times. And it is a wonderful proof that the Bible is truth, for that it is exactly what was predicted would happen, that their seed would remain before God but that for their disobedience they would suffer persecution, they would suffer misery, and it's interesting that in this passage about the indestructible glory, we also have interspersed little references to God's vengeance on his enemies, to His vengeance, to His punishment of those who do not accept His marvelous offer of salvation and blessing to those who will truly turn to him.

So we note right in the 14<sup>th</sup> verse, "When you see that, your heart will rejoice and your bones will flourish, and the hand of the Lord will be known for His servant and his indignation for his enemies." And then it continues through verse 15: "For behold the Lord will come with fire and with his chariots like a whirl-wind to render his anger with fury and his rebuke with flames of fire, for by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh and the slain of the Lord shall be many." Christ said "I come not to give peace but the sword" (Mat. 10:34). We are not going to get any millennium by human effort, by wonderful plans of the United Nations, or a government taking care of everyone from birth to death, or by even the preaching of the gospel. Preaching the Gospel is going to result in calling out a people, in leading many individuals to salvation. But God has never promised that peace on earth will be by any human means, the victory will not be won but by His coming in supreme power.

And so we see that even with the great blessings, the great glory of these passages, we find that at the end in verse 24 we have that very strange verse: "And

they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me, for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.” With all His wonderful promises, and his great pictures of glory in the future, evil still remains a fact in this image. A fact that God must deal with, and He doesn’t want us to get so wrapped up in thoughts of the blessing that He’s given us, in thoughts of the glory, that we overlook the fact of wickedness, and sin and evil in the world.

Student Question: "What happens after the millennium?" The millennium will endure for a thousand years, and then Satan is loosed for a little season. What happens after that? Does the condition continue much like a reform on this Earth? Either the righteous will continue to live here, or does God move us to another place? Do we go to another galaxy? What happens? I don’t think we’re told. But I don’t think we have any reason to say that time will stop. There’s a place in Revelation where it says "time will be no more." That means "there’s no more time" left for other events. God is bringing things to a close. It doesn’t mean that time will be different or non-existent. And so I’m very skeptical that Isaiah is speaking of the eternal state altogether. That doesn’t mean that I don’t believe in it. As Isaiah looked forward and saw these things, all we can definitely say is that there will be a time on this Earth with wonderful blessing. And yet there still will be a certain amount of sin. But the exact fitting of these things together, I don’t think we can do. I think it’s a human tendency to try to explain everything. That’s why we have all sorts of theological systems worked out. But in my mind, the great thing we need to do is to take what’s clear in the Scripture. There are clear things we can stand on, but there are other things in the scripture that we’ll know only when the time comes. We can study these things but until we have the whole situation we cannot make definitive conclusions. Some things in the prophets sound "far out." But suppose somebody had said a hundred years ago that a man would have breakfast in London, lunch in New York, and supper in San Francisco,

you people would have said, "What silly nonsense! It takes two months to travel the ocean in a fast boat, and to go clear across this continent and do all that in one day--how utterly ridiculous!" But today it is possible. The Lord looks forward and gives us glimpses of many things that appear incredulous to us today, but in the future we will see they are accurate.

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