

Isaiah the Gospel Prophet

Isaiah and His Book

Introduction

Aside from the book of Psalms, Isaiah is the largest book in the Old Testament and in the entire Bible. It was written by the prophet Isaiah, who was a prophet to the southern kingdom of Judah during the reigns of four kings: (1) Uzziah (called Azariah in II Kings); (2) Jotham; (3) Ahaz; and (4) Hezekiah (Isaiah 1:1). Having been called to the prophetic ministry by the Lord in the year of Uzziah's death (Isaiah 6:1), we can date his ministry from about 739 to 686 B.C.¹ Because of the circumstances of history, scholars can date the actual writing of Isaiah to the early seventh century B.C., from about 700 to 686 B.C.²

Isaiah was the son of Amoz (1:1), although we do not know anything about his father, who is mentioned elsewhere only in II Kings 19:2. Apparently, however, he was part of an important family because Isaiah had easy access to the king (7:3) and a close friendship with a priest (8:2). Isaiah's name means "the Lord is salvation" or "the Lord saves,"³ which is an appropriate name since his book focuses on Judah's spiritually dangerous condition and God's promise to restore her someday. He was a contemporary of the prophets Hosea and Micah, with the former a prophet to both the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah, and the latter principally a prophet to Judah.

Isaiah calls his book "the vision of Isaiah...which he saw" (v. 1). Although Isaiah 6:1 suggests that he saw a different vision in that chapter, the prophet evidently regarded the entire prophecy as a single vision. The book of Isaiah is quoted directly in the New Testament more than 65 times, far more than any other Old Testament book. And he is mentioned by name more than 20 times in the New Testament.

Historical Background

What follows is a brief summary of the four kings under which Isaiah served as a prophet.

Uzziah (or Azariah)

Uzziah reigned about 52 years from 792 to 740 B.C.⁴ Under his leadership Judah experienced a spiritual decline. His own decline began with his assumption of certain priestly duties, specifically burning incense on the altar of incense within the Holy Place of the Jerusalem Temple (II Kings 15:3-4; II Chronicles 26:16-19). For this act he was stricken with leprosy and never recovered.

Jotham

Jotham was Uzziah's son who was forced to take over his father's duties as king because of the latter's leprosy. He reigned from approximately 750 to 734 B.C., a period of 16 years (II Kings 1:32-33; II Chronicles 27:1). It was during Jotham's reign that Assyria, based to the northeast, became a world power in the Near East. Israel and Syria began to threaten Judah during this time as well. The spiritual decline begun under his father's reign did not abate (II Kings 15:34-35; II Chronicles 27:1-2).

Ahaz

Ahaz reigned 16 years in Judah (II Chronicles 28:1, 8), from about 734 to 718 B.C. The threat to Judah from Israel and Syria grew during his reign when those two nations formed a military alliance in an attempt to thwart the growing threat to all of them by Assyria. When Judah refused to join this alliance, Israel and Syria attacked the southern kingdom in 734 B.C. (II Kings 16:5-6). Ahaz responded by asking Assyria for help, which resulted in Assyria defeating the Israel-Syria coalition (II Kings 16:7-9). Unfortunately, however, a subsequent meeting between Ahaz and the king of Assyria resulted in a heathen altar being set up in the temple at Jerusalem (II Kings 16:10-18). It was during Ahaz's reign that the Assyrians defeated Israel in 722 B.C. and scattered its people all over the Near East (II Kings 17:6, 24). The northern kingdom of Israel was never restored, and its ten tribes became known in history as the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel.

Hezekiah

Hezekiah reigned in Judah for 29 years from 718 to 689 B.C. (II Kings 18:1-2). During Hezekiah's reign Assyria threatened to invade Judah. But Hezekiah's commitment to the Lord (II Kings 18:4, 22; II Chronicles 30:1) is the probable reason that the Lord prevented the Assyrians from defeating Judah. When Hezekiah became deathly ill in 701 B.C., he prayed earnestly for deliverance, and the Lord promised him another 15 years of life (II Kings 20; Isaiah 38). During these extra 15 years, Babylon approached the Jewish king, probably in an attempt to form an alliance against Assyria (II Kings 20:12 onward). Unfortunately, Hezekiah showed the emissaries from Babylon all the treasures in the Jerusalem Temple, resulting in Isaiah telling him that Babylon would eventually return and take all those treasures (Isaiah 39:1-8). That occurred in 605 B.C., when Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem and stole the treasures from the Temple in Jerusalem (Daniel 1:1-2). If Hezekiah had instead told the Babylonian emissaries about the God of heaven as the secret of Judah's success, how different her history might have been.

Jewish tradition says that Isaiah died when King Manasseh had him sawed in two with a wooden saw (cf. Hebrews 11:37).⁵

Prophetic Foreshortening

Scholars recognize that neither Isaiah nor any of the other Old Testament prophets delineated the details of the timing of events associated with the Messiah. For example, there is no distinction between His first and second comings and no time sequence involving the resurrection of the dead, the last judgment, destruction of the wicked, and the recreation of the New Earth. These things are taught in various New Testament books, but even then only the book of Revelation outlines all of those events in their precise sequence. This Old Testament tendency is sometimes called “prophetic foreshortening,” an effect that brings the far future into the near future like a telescope does for distant objects.⁶

Key Themes in Isaiah

There are at least three key themes contained in the book of Isaiah. The first is God’s holiness. In fact, the expression “the Holy One of Israel” occurs 25 times in the book of Isaiah and only six times outside of Isaiah in the Old Testament.

A second theme is God’s sovereignty, His ability to do as He pleases. God demonstrates His sovereignty by declaring that He alone can predict the future. See Isaiah 44:7. He even names the Persian King Cyrus (Cyrus the Great) in Isaiah 24-45:25 and predicts God would use him to defeat Babylon and allow the Jewish people to return to Jerusalem.

Perhaps the most important theme is God’s covenant with Israel/Judah. After a brief introduction in Isaiah 1:1, the book immediately gives us its covenant context with the words, “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the Lord has spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, And they have rebelled against Me” (v. 2). The Lord is calling witnesses to hear His case against the nation of Judah. This fits the pattern common in ancient times in which covenant lawsuits were depicted as a trial in which a nation’s god was suing his people for violating the terms of the covenant with him.⁷

In this covenant lawsuit context, the book of Isaiah is actually a plea for God’s people to turn away from their covenant with death (Isaiah 28:15, 18) and to enjoy the blessings of the covenant with Him. As always with God’s covenant with His people, it is a two-way covenant, which means the fulfillment of the promised blessings of the covenant is conditional upon the people’s obedient response to Him. This principle is first explicitly taught in Deuteronomy 28 as part of Moses’ farewell address. Moses warned the Israelites to maintain their obedient relationship with the Lord in order to receive the blessings of the covenant. If they turned away from Him, He would withdraw His protection from them, and they would receive the curses of the covenant from foreign enemies. This conditionality of the covenant is explicitly repeated by the Lord Himself at the

formal covenant-making ceremony with the nation of Israel at Mt. Sinai and by the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah, as noted below:

Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. (Exodus 19:5-6)

If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land. But if you refuse and rebel, You shall be devoured by the sword. (Isaiah 1:19-20)

Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. (Jeremiah 7:23)

‘And it shall be, if you heed Me carefully,’ says the Lord, ‘to bring no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work on it, then shall enter the gates of this city kings and princes sitting on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their princes, accompanied by the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and this city shall remain forever.’ (Jeremiah 17:24-25)

‘Return to Me,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘and I will return to you.’ (Zechariah 1:3)

Even those from afar shall come and build the temple of the Lord. Then you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you. And this shall come to pass if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God. (Zechariah 6:15)

This principle of conditional promises also applies to all the other nations as well. Jeremiah 18:7-10 explicitly teaches that God will not deliver a promise of glory to a nation who turns away from Him and will not deliver a promise of doom to a nation who turns toward Him. It is important to note that this covenant context means that the conditionality does not have to be explicitly stated in order to be present. If God makes a promise of either a blessing or a curse to anyone, if they change their spiritual status with God, He will not do what He promised.

The problem with the people of Judah was not so much their actual disobedience to God’s Law as such, but their mistreatment of people. Note that Isaiah 1:17 calls on Judah’s people to “Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow.” Because they were not doing these things, God did not accept their worship of Him (Isaiah 1:11-15). It was not that God had changed His mind and no longer desired sacrifices, the Sabbath, the New Moon celebrations, or the annual feasts (Isaiah 1:11-15), but that in the context of Judah’s guilt in neglecting social justice, these worship activities were an “abomination” to Him (Isaiah 1:13).

This should be a lesson for Christians as well. If we treat other people badly, and do not behave as Christians toward others, then He will regard our worship of Him as an *abomination*. That is strong language, but it is the Lord's not ours. Remember that Jesus was crucified by those who worshiped God each Sabbath and performed the religious rituals in the right way. No wonder Jesus once declared that there will be believers in the judgment to whom He will declare that He never knew them (Matthew 7:21-23)! Church attendance and Sabbath-keeping are no guarantees of salvation. The heart must also be right with God, which will be reflected in our Christian treatment of our fellow man.

Outline of Isaiah⁸

Part I: Denunciation—1:1-39:8

- A. Denunciation of Judah—1:1-12:6
- B. Call of Isaiah—6:1-13
- C. The Coming Messiah—7:1-12:6
- D. Denunciation of Other Nations—13:1-23:18
 - 1. Babylon—13:1-14:23
 - 2. Assyria—14:24-27
 - 3. Philistia—14:28-32
 - 4. Moab—15:1-16:14
 - 5. Syria (Damascus) and ally Israel—17:11-14
 - 6. Ethiopia—18:1-7
 - 7. Egypt—19:1-20:6
 - 8. Babylon—21:1-10
 - 9. Edom—21:11-12
 - 10. Arabia—21:13-17
 - 11. Jerusalem—22:1-15
 - 12. Tyre—23:1-18
 - 13. Whole World—24:1-23
- E. God's Judgments and Salvation—25:1-35:10

Historical Parenthesis—36:1-39:8

Part II: Consolation—40:1-66:24

- A. Comfort for Future Exiles and the Good News of Salvation—40:1-41:29
- B. The Messiah/Servant's Mission—42:1-55:13
- C. Salvation for Gentiles—56:1-58:14
- D. Final Restoration of All Things—59:1-66:24

The book of Isaiah is a kind of microcosm of the entire Bible. Just as the Bible is divided into two parts, the Old and the New Testaments, so Isaiah is divided into two main parts, which we have labeled “Denunciation” and “Consolation.” And just as there are 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New Testament, so there are 39 chapters in the first section and 27 chapters in the second section of Isaiah.

In the Presence of the Lord (Isaiah 6:1-13)

The Heavenly Sanctuary

Isaiah chapter 6 discusses the calling of Isaiah by the Lord to be a prophet for Him. The setting for this vision is the sanctuary in heaven. Note that verse 1 describes the Lord sitting on His throne in the “temple.” The existence of an actual sanctuary or temple in heaven is attested to by the books of Hebrews and Revelation in the New Testament. Note particularly Hebrews 8:2, 5; 9:11; and Revelation 4:1-2; 8:2-5; 11:19; and 15:5-8.

Isaiah 6:2 tells us that more than one seraphim stood above the throne of God, each with six wings, and they cried out “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!” (v. 3). The seraphim are evidently an order of angels. Note also that Revelation 4:8 speaks of four living creatures each having six wings who sing “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty” in the throne room in heaven (4:1-2). Thus, both are pictures of the heavenly sanctuary. In Isaiah’s description note that it was *not* the temple itself that was filled with God’s glory but the “whole earth.” What is God’s glory? In Exodus 33:18, when Moses asked the Lord to show him His glory, the Lord told him that His “goodness” will pass before Moses (v. 19), also defined as God’s “glory” (v. 22). Then when the Lord showed Moses His glory the next morning, the Lord spoke of His character traits—“merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth” (34:5-7). Therefore, the glory of the Lord is His righteous character.

In Isaiah 6:4 it is said that “the house [temple] was filled with smoke.” Note that Revelation 15:8 says the temple in heaven will be filled with smoke so that no one could enter it just before the Seven Last Plagues are poured out on the earth at the end-time. Therefore, this picturesque language denotes the great power of God.

Isaiah Reacts to being in the Presence of God

When Isaiah is introduced to the character and power of God, note that his reaction was one of great consternation and humility: “Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips” (6:5). Two things happen simultaneously as we behold God’s character. First, we should react like Isaiah, who instantly recognized that he was a sinner who could never measure up to the heights of God’s character. Second, we gradually

become changed as our character is being transformed into a godly character (II Corinthians 3:17). Note that these two reactions continually occur in this life, for the closer we come to the Lord, the more sinful we shall appear in our own estimation.

According to Genesis 3:7, after Adam and Eve sinned in eating from the forbidden Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Garden of Eden, they both knew they were naked. Of course, surely they knew they did not wear clothing before they sinned. This implies that they lost something visible that they had had before they sinned. The suggestion has been made that they had been covered with a “garment” of light. When they sinned they lost that innocent light and were exposed to their spiritual nakedness. In other words, they lost their *glory* they had when they had been sinless. Note that spiritual nakedness is spoken of in Revelation 16:15. When they lost their spiritual light Adam and Eve attempted to cover their spiritual nakedness with literal fig leaves (Genesis 3:7). But when the Lord came to them in the Garden of Eden, He clothed them with animal skins (Genesis 3:21), which means that the first animal had to be sacrificed. After that, *physical* clothing and *outward* adornment became a *spiritual* issue in the Holy Scriptures. See Job 29:14; Isaiah 61:10; Ezekiel 16; 23; I Timothy 2:8-10; I Peter 3:3-4; Revelation 3:5; 7:14; and 22:14 (textual evidence favors the reading “wash their robes”). Our outward appearance either reflects our humility in accepting the righteousness of Jesus or it reflects the self-glory of righteousness by works.

The solution to our condition of “Woe is me” is the righteousness of Jesus, just as it was for Adam and Eve after they sinned. This is also reflected in the solution that the Lord provided Isaiah in Isaiah 6. Notice in verses 6-7 one of the seraphim touches Isaiah with a live coal from the altar in the temple in heaven. This would be the altar of incense, which had live coals to which incense was added. This incense would ascend over the veil between the Holy and Most Holy Place in the temple to God’s throne as represented by the ark of the covenant in the Most Holy Place (Exodus 30:1-9). In Revelation 8:3-4 the incense at this altar figuratively was mixed with the prayers of the saints. Incense is something that gives off an odor that enhances the environment. If incense figuratively mingles with our prayers, then it must represent that which makes our prayers acceptable to God. In the Biblical context, what makes our prayers—and everything else that we do that is good—unacceptable is our sinful nature, which would naturally warp or contaminate even our good works. Note that Isaiah 64:6 explicitly teaches that “all our righteousnesses [righteous works] are like filthy rags.” This does not mean they are unimportant, but only that they do not merit the believer anything with God.

Since even the believer still has a sinful nature until glorification at the Second Coming of Jesus (Galatians 5:17-18; Philippians 3:12-14, 20-21), the fact that makes us acceptable to God is the righteousness of Jesus which we have by faith alone (Romans 3:21-22, 28; 4:2-3). Therefore, the incense represents the righteousness of Jesus. So when the angel touched Isaiah’s lips with a coal from heaven’s altar of incense, some of that incense must have touched his lips as well. This

denoted the fact that Isaiah was now capable of speaking righteously for God. Likewise, the Gospel Commission has been given to the Church (Matthew 28:19-20). When we go in the righteousness of Jesus, God has anointed our lips to speak righteously for Him.

Our favorite Christian author outside the Bible itself wrote eloquently about the need for the incense of Christ's righteousness being necessary to make our prayers and other good works acceptable to God:

The religious services, the prayers, the praise, the penitent confession of sin ascend from true believers as incense to the heavenly sanctuary, but passing through the corrupt channels of humanity, they are so defiled that unless purified by blood, they can never be of value with God. They ascend not in spotless purity, and unless the Intercessor, who is at God's right hand, presents and purifies all by His righteousness, it is not acceptable to God. He holds before the Father the censer of His own merits, in which there is no taint of earthly corruption. He gathers into this censer the prayers, praise, and the confessions of His people, and with these He puts His own spotless righteousness. Then, perfumed with the merits of Christ's propitiation, the incense comes up before God wholly and entirely acceptable.⁹

Isaiah Responds to God's Call

When the Lord asked who He could send to speak for Him, Isaiah immediately responded with the words, "Here am I! Send me" (v. 8). What a wonderful example for us that when the Lord gives us a specific opportunity to speak for Him, we should respond the way Isaiah did! No hesitation; no negativity. As subordinate to God as Isaiah knew himself to be, yet he humbly obeyed the call of God and spoke up. Isaiah knew the secret that all of God's callings are His enablings. In other words, if He calls us to do something He will enable us to do it—"not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit" (Zechariah 4:6).

The Origin of Sin

In Isaiah 14:3-23 we find a fascinating story about the origin of sin in the universe. It begins in verse 3 as a proverb against the king of Babylon, and it ends with explicitly mentioning Babylon's destruction (vv. 22-23). However, in verses 12-15 it is obviously speaking about someone other than the king of Babylon, someone who is called Lucifer. We are told that Lucifer had "fallen from heaven" (v. 12) and "weakened the nations" (v. 12). His downfall was caused by the fact that he exalted himself "above the stars of God" (v. 13) in an attempt to be equal to "the Most High" (v. 14). This interruption in the condemnation of the king of Babylon to this once heavenly being named Lucifer means that the king of Babylon was a type of Lucifer. Indeed, the very name *Babylon* in the Chaldean (or Babylonian) language means "gate of God/gods," indicating that

Babylon and Lucifer both claim to be the right path to God. But the end result does not lead to God but to spiritual "confusion," which is the Hebrew meaning of the word *Babylon*.¹⁰ How poetic is the Word of God!

Ezekiel 28 is a similar passage as Isaiah 14 because they both speak of a being once in heaven who exalted himself ("lifted up," v. 17) and was therefore cast out of heaven (v. 16). Ezekiel 28 gives us more details about this being. From Isaiah 14 we know his name is Lucifer. From Ezekiel 28 we know that he was definitely and originally in heaven, for it says he was "in Eden, the garden of God" (v. 13). That is not the Garden of Eden on the earth because verse 14 calls him "the anointed cherub who covers...on the holy mountain of God." Cherubim represent an order of angels, which as covering angels, were associated with the throne of God (Exodus 25:17-22; Psalm 80:1; 99:1). Finally, God's "holy mountain" is symbolic language indicating God's kingdom, which is in heaven (Daniel 2:35, 44-45). He certainly was not the king of Tyre, for verse 15 says that this being was "perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you." Therefore, we conclude that Lucifer was a perfect angel who rebelled against God in heaven.

Verse 17 tells us that the source of lifting himself up was his own beauty. The result of his self-exaltation was to engage in *trading* (v. 18) and thus becoming *violent* within himself and a *profane* being (v. 16). The Hebrew word for "trading" refers to regular economic trade when the context is commercial activity, but it refers to "slander" when the context is trading outside an economic setting.¹¹ Therefore, this means that this angel began to engage in slandering God Himself by spreading lies about God to the other angels in heaven. The word for "profane" is the opposite of "holy." This is the reason that we speak about people using *profanity* in their speech; it means they speak of *holy* things in a very *unholy* way.

Finally, a comparison with Revelation 12:7-9 identifies an angel who led a war in heaven against God, a war that he lost. The result of his defeat was that he was cast out to the earth, where he continues to deceive the whole world (v. 9). Comparing verse 7 and 9 with verse 4 tells us that this angel convinced about one-third of the angels in heaven to side with him in his war against God. Verse 9 also further identifies him as "that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan." The reference to "that serpent of old" points back to the story of our first parents' fall into sin in Genesis 3. Speaking through a serpent, Satan tempted Eve to doubt God and to eat the fruit of the forbidden Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. When Adam consented to eat of that same fruit, mankind's fate was sealed, and Satan has had control over this planet ever since, within the limits God has set for him, of course.

Let us examine the story in Genesis 3's Garden of Eden in order to discover more about Satan's method of operation. First, please note that the name *Satan* means "adversary" or "accuser"¹² and that he is called "the accuser of our brethren" (Revelation 12:10). Make no mistake about it; he is

the enemy of all humans, and particularly of faithful Christians. Therefore, although we need to guard against too much focus on Satan, nevertheless it is always useful to know something about one's enemies.

Notice the very first thing Satan said to Eve at the forbidden tree: "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'" (Genesis 3:1). His question was a subtle but real attempt to plant the seed of doubt in Eve's mind about God's instructions. Eve should have fled from that tree at that moment, but instead she answered Satan's question. After Eve's reply, notice what Satan said next: "You will not surely die" (3:2). In this he flatly called God a liar. Unfortunately, this specific lie he has managed to convince a super majority of people of—that the dead are not really dead, but are alive in some other form or location. With some he has used this lie to make them afraid of ghosts and other alleged spirits of dead people. Others he has hooked into the evil supernatural, or occult world of the paranormal, attending séances, going to fortune-tellers, and so on. He has invented numerous false theories that all reflect his lie that the dead are not really dead, including reincarnation, the existence of purgatory, or the false teaching that the dead go either directly to heaven or hell at their death.

In Genesis 3:5 Satan went in for the "kill" by tempting Eve to buy into what he himself wanted in heaven: "For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." There it is: "you will be like God." That is exactly what he wanted to be in heaven—not like Him in character but in power and authority. But there is simply no way that any creature could be equal to his Creator-God.

So we can summarize Satan's method of operation based on his temptation of Eve in Genesis 3. First, he plants the seed of doubt in our minds. Second, he directly contradicts God's Word. Finally, he appeals to our desire to become equal with God Himself, in other words, to be our own god. In doing so, Satan ensnares a person into his trap, resulting in his subservience to himself. Instead of worshiping God, in reality the person is now worshiping Satan. Through sin he has obtained the worship of others, which has been his desire from the moment that sin entered his heart.

Beware, for Satan knows the Bible better than any of us does. Although he hates God's Word, he sometimes quotes it as part of his temptation in order to deceive people. This was illustrated in his second temptation of Jesus in the wilderness right after Jesus' baptism (Matthew 4:6). Finally, it is imperative that Christians understand that Satan and his demonic angels can work miracles (Revelation 16:13-14) and can transform themselves into angels of light (II Corinthians 11:14). This means that we cannot trust our senses to discover what is true or false. Only reliance on the Bible's teachings is the safe guide. "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20).

Messiah's Nature

The word *Messiah* is from the Hebrew word for “anointed”¹³ and appears 39 times in the Jewish Scriptures (Old Testament) and numerous times in its Greek equivalent for *Christ* in the New Testament. The word was used for three purposes: (1) anointing for hygienic purposes; (2) anointing for medicinal or healing purposes; and (3) anointing to the office of prophets, priests, and kings.

The Hebrew Scriptures contain numerous prophecies about a coming Messiah, who would be (1) a male descendant of King David (from the tribe of Judah), (2) both a man and God, and (3) a king who would restore the Davidic kingdom, defeat Israel's enemies, and bring great glory to the nation. We will later look at other things the Messiah will do. But here we are interested in what the Messiah is rather than on everything that He will do.

A Male from the Tribe of Judah

The first identifying mark of the Messiah is that he would be a male descendant of Judah, great-grandson of Abraham, which means he would be from the tribe of Judah. That is the name for which the nation of Judah or Judea gets its name.

The Jewish Talmud, Sanhedrin 98b, describes Genesis 49:10's reference to Shiloh as being the Messiah.¹⁴ It reads in part, “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes...” Although linguists cannot agree on the precise meaning of *Shiloh* in Hebrew, it might reflect the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, and the Jewish Targums, as meaning “He whose it is” or “that which belongs to him.”¹⁵ If so, it would refer to a royal descendant of Judah, who will come “into his own,”¹⁶ which would indicate the most important royal descendant of Judah.

A Royal Male Descendant of King David

Not only would the Messiah come from the tribe of Judah, but he would specifically be a male descendant of King David. In II Samuel 7:16-17 the prophet Nathan told King David that his “kingdom shall be established forever...Your throne shall be established forever.” Psalm 89 repeatedly states that the royal dynasty of David would last forever. In verse 4 the Lord says that David's “seed I will establish forever, And build up your throne to all generations.” Verses 27-29 state that God will make David “My firstborn, The highest of the kings of the earth” and “will make to endure forever.” Finally, verses 36-27 tell us that David's “seed shall endure forever, And his throne...shall be established forever.”

Messiah will be a King

Many other Biblical passages speak of the Messiah as a king. For example, Genesis 49:10, which we already looked at, uses the word for “scepter,” which is a symbol of royal authority. Numbers 24:17 also refers to a “scepter” that would arise from Jacob/Israel and destroy the wicked.

Psalms 2 speaks about the Lord and His “Anointed” (v. 2, Messiah). The Messiah is the Lord’s “King” and “Son” (vv. 6-7) in whom all are blessed “who put their trust in Him” (v. 12). There are two beings called “Lord” in Psalm 110:1-4. Although it is a psalm of David, he is not one of them because the second “Lord” is called “my Lord” in contrast to “The Lord.” This second Lord will “Rule,” signifying a king.

Jeremiah 23:5-6 is identified as a Messianic prophecy in the Jewish Talmud.¹⁷ This text refers to a Davidic king who will save Judah: “Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

The Messiah Will be Born in Bethlehem

Micah 5:2 says that a “Ruler in Israel” will come out of Bethlehem, which is the city of David. Note that the word “Ruler” indicates that he is a king. This king will reunite the “remnant...of Israel” (v. 3) and “shall be great To the ends of the earth” (v. 4). This therefore must be the Messiah. Thus the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem.

The Messiah will be a God-Man

The Virgin Birth

The fact that the Messiah will be both a man and God is taught indirectly by Isaiah 7:14, which declares that a son would be born to a “virgin.” The Hebrew word for *virgin* in Isaiah 7:14 means a *young woman* who may or not be married; the Hebrew had a word that specifically meant a *virgin*, but that is not used in that prophecy.¹⁸ A later inspired writer must agree with earlier inspired writers (Isaiah 8:20), which means the earlier prophecies must either require or at least allow for the newer fulfillment. When you examine Isaiah 7’s prophecy in context, the emphasis is not on the *nature* of the birth of that son but on his *name* and the *time* of his birth. Judah was facing an invasion from Samaria and Syria, and the Lord told Judah’s King Ahaz through the prophet Isaiah that He will save Judah from this threat. A sign of that future salvation was a son named Immanuel in 7:14 and named Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz in 8:3. The name Immanuel means *God with Us*, and the name *Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz* means *Speed the Spoil, Hasten the Booty*.¹⁹

Apparently, the two names refer to one son, and the first name (Immanuel) could not be used because Ahaz did not respond positively to the promised son's name and thus Judah could not be spared the wrath, which later came from Assyria itself. This fact at least allows for a later Immanuel to fulfill the prophecy in a typological manner when God's people need to be saved. And a type does not have to embody *all* aspects of its antitype. Matthew 1:22-23 applies that later Immanuel to Jesus, whose name means *Savior*. This means that the emphasis is on the names *Immanuel* and *Jesus* rather than on His virgin birth. The virgin birth is required by the nature of the Savior as the God-Man, but that virgin birth is not actually the emphasis of Isaiah 7:14's prophecy, although the Hebrew word in Isaiah 7 *can* refer to a virgin.

This is confirmed by the prophecy of another *son* in Isaiah 9:6-7, which is still in the context of Assyria's invasion of Israel (see Isaiah 8). This son is clearly a Divine Being since He is called "Mighty God" and "Everlasting Father" whose kingdom "will be no end" (9:6-7) on "the throne of David" (9:7). The *Jewish Targum on Isaiah* identifies Isaiah 9:6-7 as a prophecy of the Messiah.²⁰ Any attempt to say these terms were borrowed by the inspired writer from the Egyptian practice of calling their rulers gods without actually meaning that the Messiah is God is simply dishonest. The Scripture is too plain for that.

This is strong evidence that the Messiah will be a God-man. And since the birth of a son implicitly means He will have a human mother, then His "father" must be God Himself. Thus, the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14 is a dual prophecy, and the use of the generic Hebrew word to describe the mother enables it to apply both to Isaiah's wife and to the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus. Therefore, the Messiah's human mother would have to be impregnated supernaturally (not physically, of course) by God.

Other Evidences that the Messiah is a God-Man

The first promise in Scripture that God would deal with Satan and the sin problem is in Genesis 3:15 immediately after Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. The curse of sin involved a promise in that the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent (Satan, Rev. 12:9) would be at war against each other. Obviously, these two sets of seeds are spiritual, not physical, descendants—the woman representing God's people and the serpent's seed representing the devil's followers. Suddenly the text shifts to first person singular pronouns: "He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel." This is the first promise of a male spiritual leader who would crush Satan fatally (in the head) even though Satan would strike a blow on His heel. Therefore, this is the first mention, albeit oblique, to the Messiah. Moreover, since only a Divine Being could fatally wound Satan, the Messiah will be both God and a man.

Psalm 2:2 mentions the Lord and His Anointed (*Messiah*). The Messiah is the Lord's "King" and "Son" (vv. 6-7) in whom all are blessed "who put their trust in Him" (v. 12). If people can put

their trust in the Messiah, then the Messiah must also be God because the Hebrew Scriptures explicitly declare not to put our trust in human princes (Psalm 118:9).

There are two beings called “Lord” in Psalm 110:1-4. Although it is a psalm of David, he is not one of them because the second “Lord” is called “my Lord” in contrast to “The Lord.” This second Lord will “Rule,” signifying a king. The only “Lord” who could possibly be higher than King David would be a Divine Messiah.

We just saw above that Micah 5:2 says that a “Ruler in Israel” will come out of Bethlehem, which is the city of David. Note that the word “Ruler” indicates that he is a king. This king will reunite the “remnant...of Israel” (v. 3) and “shall be great To the ends of the earth” (v. 4). This therefore must be the Messiah. The end of that verse declares that this “Ruler” is “from of old, From everlasting.” Only God is from everlasting.

We saw above that Jeremiah 23:5-6 is a Messianic prophecy. In verse 6 the Messiah is called “THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” Plainly He is a Divine Being as well as a human being.

Messiah’s Mission

A Prophetic Ministry

According to Deuteronomy 18:15-18, God will raise up a prophet like Moses; in other words, he will not be an *ordinary* prophet. His prophetic ministry is described in Isaiah 61:1-3, where an individual is said to be “anointed” (v. 1), which of course is the word for “Messiah.” Scholars recognize that Isaiah 40-66—the book ends at the end of chapter 66—is a large section of the book that concerns the restoration of Judah. The word “servant” is used in Isaiah 42 to refer to an individual; note the pronouns “Him” and “He” in verses 1-9. This individual, also called God’s “Elect” (v. 1), “will bring forth justice to the Gentiles” (v. 1), “justice in the earth” (v. 4), and will be a “covenant [promise] to the people, As a light to the Gentiles, To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the prison house” (vv. 6-7). [Note: In other parts of this section of Isaiah, God’s “servant” is the entire nation of Judah (Isaiah 43:10; note the plural “witnesses” is equated with the singular “servant.”] In Isaiah 61:1-3 the “anointed” individual (singular “Me” in v. 1) is also to open the “prison to those who are bound” (v. 1). This person is therefore the same as the “servant” in chapter 42, and both are the Messiah, for no one else in the Hebrew Scriptures could do what he will do.

According to these two passages in Isaiah, the Messiah’s prophetic ministry is summed up in 61:2: “To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” This language speaks of the jubilee in ancient Israel. Leviticus 25:8-55 is the major passage that outlines what was to happen in that year. The Year of Jubilee would be every 50th year in Israel and would begin on the Day of Atonement (in

the fall) on that year (vv. 8-10). In that year the land would not be cultivated, but people would eat from whatever grows naturally in the fields (vv. 11-12). All property, which may have been lost due to indebtedness, was to be restored to its original family owners, and all slaves would be set free (vv. 10, 13, 23-24, 39-41). Since the Year of Jubilee occurred *every* 50th year in ancient Israel, the Jubilee proclaimed by the Messiah would be a spiritual Jubilee—release from captivity to sin, to open the spiritually blinds’ eyes, and to “preach good tidings to the poor.” In other words, the Messiah’s prophetic mission will be to proclaim God’s salvation to those who are eager to receive it.

The Four Messiah/Servant Songs

Isaiah 42:1-9 is the first of four Messiah/Servant Songs in the book of Isaiah. Although here the word *Messiah* is not used, the focus of the song is called God’s “Servant” and His “Elect One” (v. 1). In Isaiah 41 Israel (technically Judah) is called God’s “servant” (vv. 8-9). But in chapter 42 it is clearly the Messiah because the pronouns referring to this “servant” are singular masculine pronouns (“Him,” “He,” and “You,” vv. 1-6) and it is said that “He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles” and “in the earth” (42:1, 4) and be a “light to the Gentiles” (42:6). In other words, the Messiah’s mission will be a global mission that will include salvation and justice for Gentiles as well as Jews. The Messiah would not be exclusive by ministering only to the Jewish people.

Isaiah 49:1-13 is the second of four Messiah/Servant Songs in the book of Isaiah. Again the singular masculine pronouns are employed (“Me,” “My,” and “You,” vv. 1-6) to describe God’s “Servant, O Israel” (v. 3). He will “restore the preserved ones of Israel,” be a “light to the Gentiles,” “be My salvation to the ends of the earth” (49:6) and will “restore the earth” (49:8). Therefore, this is a prophecy concerning the Messiah. Note that the Messiah is also called *Israel* (49:3), indicating that the *ultimate* Israel is not the nation but the Messiah Himself. Part of His mission is to release the prisoners and feed and comfort all people (vv. 9-13). Since the Messiah will be a “light to the Gentiles,” the reference to *prisoners* and those in *darkness* (v. 9) especially pertains to those who had been spiritual prisoners of Satan and who walked in spiritual darkness.

Isaiah 50:4-11 is the third of four Messiah/Servant Songs. This concerns the Messiah/Servant because this is an individual (pronouns “Me” and “My,” vv. 4-9) who “was not rebellious” (v. 5) but is not the Lord (see vv. 4-5, 7, 9). The Messiah will know how to “speak A word in season to him who is weary” (v. 4). In verses 10-11 those who are in spiritual darkness will walk in the light of a fire they create, meaning that they will invent their own religion to walk by. However, the Messiah will be responsible for their being eternally lost.

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is the last in a series of four songs in Isaiah concerning the “Servant,” spoken of with singular pronouns “He” and “Him” who will restore Israel. A Jewish prayer book acknowledges this to be a Messianic prophecy.²¹

The following bulleted points describe what this Messianic/Servant Song says about the Messiah:

- In the end this Servant “shall be exalted and extolled and be very high” so that He will astonish and startle the nations and kings (52:13-15). [Note: Given the other specifications of the prophecy, this must occur at some point after the other events.]
- He would be “despised and rejected by men” and a “Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief” (53:3). The Messiah will not be widely accepted.
- He will have “borne our griefs And carried our sorrows,” “wounded for our transgressions” (not His), “bruised for our iniquities” (not His), “by His stripes we are healed,” and “the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (53:4-6). In other words, He will suffer for other people’s sins, not His.
- In His suffering He will be like a sacrificial “lamb” without protesting (53:7).
- He will be “cut off” [executed] “For the transgressions of My people” (53:8).
- He will be buried as a wicked person although He would be innocent (53:9).
- The Lord caused Him to become an “offering for sin.” Yet “He shall prolong His days.” That is, He will be resurrected (53:10). The offering for sin means that all of the sacrificial animals under the earthly sanctuary system represented the Messiah.
- He will “justify many For He shall bear their iniquities” (53:11). Justification, a legal term denoting a “not guilty” verdict,²² will come from the fact that the Messiah will die for other people’s sins. See Deuteronomy 25:1 for this use of the word for “justify.”
- Because “He bore the sin of many,” He will “make intercession for the transgressors.” Again, resurrection is implied in order for Him to become the intercessor for sinners (53:12). This means His death and resurrection will enable Him to become a priest for His people.

The Relationship between Jews and Gentiles

In Isaiah 56:1-8 God makes it clear that He offers future salvation to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews. According to Exodus 12:43 and Deuteronomy 23:1, 3, foreigners and eunuchs were excluded from full participation in the Israelite religion. But in the Messiah’s kingdom this will not be the case. This is the reason that Isaiah 56:3-4 refers to both foreigners and eunuchs to specifically include them in the Messiah’s kingdom. Note that verse 4 mentions the conditions for

the inclusion of eunuchs in the Messiah's salvation as being (1) the keeping of the Sabbath and (2) keeping God's covenant. Verse 6 says the very same thing for foreigners.

This departure from the original Mosaic Law makes God's house "a house of prayer for all nations" (Isaiah 56:7) as the Lord gathers Gentiles as well as Israelites into His kingdom (v. 8). When Jesus came as the Messiah, the Church came to recognize this principle that it was time for the full inclusion of Gentiles into God's salvation and His new official body, the Church. The following passages are representative examples of this truth:

- Acts 10:9-16, 28, 34-35—The apostle Peter received a vision of a sheet filled with numerous examples of unclean animals. The heavenly voice told him to kill and eat, but Peter protested that he had never eaten anything unclean. While pondering the meaning of his vision, Peter received an invitation to visit a Gentile named Cornelius. When he visited Cornelius' home, Cornelius and his household accepted the gospel and were baptized. Then it was that Peter testified that the vision meant that God did not consider Gentiles to be unclean, as most Jews so regarded them. The vision had nothing to do with food but with God's full acceptance of Gentile believers.
- Acts 17:26—God "has made from one blood every nation of men." This means there should be no division or discrimination based on ethnic or racial differences because every human being has been created by God as belonging to one race, the human race.
- Romans 3:28-30—The apostle Paul emphatically declared that "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. Or is he the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith."
- Ephesians 2:11-22—In discussing the relationship between Jews and Gentiles, Paul states that at the cross Jesus broke down what separated the two groups in order to "create in Himself one new man from the two" (v. 15). "Now, therefore, you [Gentiles] are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (v. 19).

Since keeping God's covenant includes following *everything* that God requires, the separate specific mention of the Sabbath in Isaiah 56:3-6 signifies there is something special about the Sabbath. Indeed, the seventh-day Sabbath is not only the day God set aside for rest and worship, but it is also the very symbol of the covenant relationship between God and His people. Exodus 31:13 says the Sabbath is a "sign" that the Lord "sanctifies" His people (cf. Ezekiel 20:12) and a "sign" that a person belongs to God (Ezekiel 20:20). Therefore, the Sabbath is a sign or symbol of sanctification *and* of the relationship with God. Profaning the Sabbath is specifically listed as

a major reason for Judah going into the Babylonian Captivity in the sixth century B.C. in Daniel's day, according to Ezekiel 20:13-16, 21-24.

This means that the seventh-day Sabbath is not just a symbol for Jews who belong to God but also to Gentiles who belong to Him. This makes it clear that the Sabbath is definitely not the Jewish Sabbath but, as the commandment itself says, "the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God" (Exodus 20:10). Moreover, "the Sabbath was made for man" (Mark 2:27), not the Israelites or Jews.

In the Messiah's kingdom no one will be there who eat "swine's flesh," which the Lord compares to eating "the mouse" (Isaiah 66:17). Since His kingdom is designed for Gentiles as well as Jews, the prohibition against eating pork applies to Gentiles as much as it does to Jews. In turn this suggests that the issue is not ceremonial but physical health, which applies to all human beings.

The Fall of Babylon

Isaiah 13 is a prophecy predicting the destruction of Babylon because verse 1 says it is about Babylon, and verse 17 says the Lord "will stir up the Medes against them," which historically happened when a combined Media and Persian army conquered the city of Babylon in 539 B.C.²³ Verse 19 repeats the fact that it is Babylon which will be defeated in this prophecy. And verses 20-22 prophesied that when Babylon was destroyed, it would never be inhabited by people again. Despite efforts to rebuild the ancient city, it has never been rebuilt (see also Jeremiah 50:3). The word of the Lord is completely accurate.

Isaiah 45:1 makes a remarkable prediction: "Thus says the Lord to his anointed, To Cyrus, whose right hand I have held—To subdue nations before him And loose the armor of kings, To open before him the double doors, So that the gates will not be shut." By calling him "His anointed," the Lord is saying that Cyrus was a type of the Messiah, for the word "anointed" means Messiah. Of course, this was Cyrus the Great, the Persian king who along with the Medes, conquered the city of Babylon. Note that the prophecy states that "the gates will not be shut." Just two verses previous to 45:1, 44:27-28 speaks in the context of Cyrus and says "Be dry! And I will dry up your rivers." Secular history records that on the night the Medes and Persians captured the city of Babylon, the gates on the Euphrates River that flowed through the city were left opened. When Cyrus had his troops dig several channels branching off that river north of the city, the river water was diverted and stopped flowing through the city. Then when the river gates were left open, the Medes and Persians simply marched through the dry river bed and took the city in one night.²⁴ Isaiah's prophecy came true even in this detail. What makes this all the more remarkable is that Cyrus was here named about 100 years before he was even born!

At the same time, the destruction of Babylon in the sixth century B.C. is also said to occur in “the day of the Lord” (vv. 6, 9), resulting in the destruction of the “world” and the “wicked” (v. 11) when the Lord “will shake the heavens, And the earth will move out of her place” (v. 13). This means that the destruction of Babylon is a type of the destruction of all the wicked at the end-time.

In the book of Revelation, Babylon is the name of the power that will help lead the whole world into apostasy against the God of heaven. See Revelation 14:8 and 17:1-5. Not only is Babylon a city but she is also depicted as a woman sitting on a beast (17:1-5). This woman is called “MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT” (17:5). The Greek word for *mystery* is used in the New Testament to describe a truth once hidden that is now revealed to Christian believers.²⁵ The fact that Babylon is unknown to unbelievers, as well as that the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah prophesied that the destruction of literal Babylon would leave her uninhabited forever, means that the end-time Babylon is a *symbolic* power rather than a restored power from that part of the Middle East.

A symbolic woman represents God’s professed people in the Scriptures, as a check of Isaiah 54:5-6; Jeremiah 3:20; 6:2; Ezekiel 23:2-4; II Corinthians 11:2; and Ephesians 5:25-32 reveals. As a city, Babylon also represents a political power. Therefore, end-time Babylon is the symbol of a false Christian Church, who like Satan, seeks for self-glorification and represents itself as officially speaking with God’s authority on earth. It is the Antichrist in the sense that it claims the authority to speak for God, or as Daniel 7:25’s prophecy of the little horn says, the authority to even change God’s “times and law.” There is only one Christian Church that is also a political power and claims the prerogatives of God’s authority to change His “times and law,” and that is the Roman Catholic Church. The system, not the individual members in it, is what God condemns and warns against. God has His people presently even in symbolic Babylon according to Revelation 18:4.

Although the Papal Church has existed throughout the large majority of the Christian Era, at the end-time it will lead a coalition of political nations represented by the 10 horns on the beast that Babylon rides. That coalition will enforce the decrees of Babylon until the nations realize too late that they have been deceived. Then at the last moment they turn against Babylon to destroy her (Revelation 17:16-17). At that time God will send the Seven Last Plagues (Revelation 15:5-16:21), ultimately aimed at Babylon (18:1-24), and she will be destroyed during the seventh plague (16:17-21). And thus symbolic Babylon will come to its end just as surely as literal Babylon came to its end in 539 B.C.

God’s Covenant with Judah

Isaiah chapter 59 summarizes the situation that both God and the nation of Judah found themselves in during the prophet Isaiah’s day in the early seventh century B.C. Remember that earlier we noted the covenant lawsuit context of Isaiah’s prophetic book. God was suing Judah for violating

the terms of their covenant with Him. The result is that God won his suit, and several nations were permitted by God to harass Judah because of their sins. Chief among them were the Assyrians and the Babylonians. Assyria threatened Judah during Isaiah's lifetime, while Babylon took the Jews captive in what history calls the Babylonian Captivity beginning in 605 B.C.²⁶, several decades after Isaiah's death. Despite God allowing these and other nations to harass Judah, God will eventually defeat those enemies of His people and restore a "remnant" to Jerusalem and Judah (Isaiah 1:9). The concept of the remnant is that they are God's professed people who survived His judgments for their sins and with whom God started over to rebuild His people. Note that God will also have a "remnant" Christian people according to Revelation 12:17. [Note: Modern English translations usually translate the Greek word for "remnant" as "rest" in Revelation 12:17.²⁷]

It is noteworthy that God sued Judah for violating the terms of their covenant with Him, but He did not sue them for a spiritual divorce. The Lord reminds Judah of this by means of His rhetorical question in Isaiah 50:1: "Where is the certificate of your mother's divorce...?" In the context of this statement, the "mother is Judah, the children are the Jews, and the father is God."²⁸ On the other hand, He did indeed divorce the northern kingdom of Israel for spiritual adultery according to Jeremiah 3:8. This serves as a warning that God will not tolerate spiritual adultery—covenant-breaking—forever.

On the basis of Isaiah 59:21, futurist scholars conclude that God's covenant with Judah was different and that Judah would always remember to keep their covenant with Him:

'As for Me,' says the Lord, 'this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants' descendants,' says the Lord, 'from this time and forevermore.'

But note two important details about this verse. First, the pronoun "them" refers back to "those who turn from transgression in Jacob" (v. 20), not to everyone in Judah. Second, after referring to "them" (plural), the Lord then uses the singular number of the words for "you" and "your" in the remainder of the verse. In the context, the singular use of "you" and "your" would refer back to "Zion" in verse 20. Therefore, the point is that the singular *Zion* represents the plural *those who turn from transgression*. The point is this: Those who turn from transgression in Zion will always belong to the covenant with God and thus receive the blessings of the covenant. Of course, the New Testament interprets Zion as the heavenly Jerusalem, a metaphor for the Church (Hebrews 13:22-23). Isaiah 59:21, therefore, does *not* predict that literal Judah will always remain faithful to her covenant with God. In any case, think about it: If God did not guarantee the northern kingdom of Israel's faithfulness to the covenant, why would He then guarantee Judah's faithfulness to the same covenant? Indeed, subsequent history reveals the sad fact that Judah did

not remain faithful to the covenant but even actively rejected the Messiah when He came. Nevertheless God's promises will indeed be fulfilled through Jesus the Messiah for those who belong to New Israel (spiritual Israel).

This covenant lawsuit context of the book of Isaiah implicitly means that God's covenant with His people is a two-way covenant. That means the blessings promised as a result of the covenant are conditional on the people's relationship with God. No one earns His blessings, of course. But no one will be forever blessed when they persist in violating the terms of their covenant relationship with God. Therefore, the covenant lawsuit in Isaiah demonstrates two important theological truths. First, our obedience to God is a vital component of our relationship to Him even though that obedience does not itself *merit* us salvation. Second, there can be no such thing with God as "once saved, always saved." If Christians understood these simple concepts derived from the Old Testament, there would be (1) no legalists among Christians and (2) no doctrine of "once saved, always saved." How beautiful is God's Word!

The conditional nature of the covenant with God is also taught directly by the Old Testament. In Moses' farewell address to the Hebrew nation, he made it very clear to them that their covenant relationship with God was a two-way covenant. This means that all the promises made to literal Israel were conditional upon their positive response to God. Deuteronomy 28 contains the blessings of the covenant for obedience to God and the curses of the covenant for disobedience to God. Perhaps the Lord was trying to tell His people something when He inspired Moses to spend only 14 verses (28:1-14) on the blessings of the covenant and 54 verses (28:15-68) on the curses of the covenant.

This conditional aspect of God's covenant with Israel is extended to all nations in Jeremiah 18:1-11, so that He would not deliver His promises of glory to any nation that turned against Him and He would not deliver His judgments of doom to any nation that turned toward Him.

There were hints of the Jewish nation's rejection of Jesus as the Messiah in Isaiah 53 and Zechariah 11-13. And of course, the 70 Weeks Prophecy of Daniel 9 predicts that the Jewish nation would reject the Messiah: (1) verse 26's literal Hebrew of "none to (or for) Him"²⁹ and (2) the mention of Jerusalem's destruction in verse 26 immediately following reference to the death of the Messiah. In other words, the Messiah's death will not be accompanied by having anyone for Him. Then as a result of His execution, Jerusalem would eventually be destroyed, which happened at the hands of the Romans in A.D. 70.

Here is the point: If the Jewish nation as a whole had accepted Jesus as their promised Messiah, He could have established His literal kingdom in Jerusalem and fulfilled the promises of glory to literal Israel. But when they rejected His *spiritual* kingdom and mission, He must allow them to suffer the curses of the covenant and could not therefore restore Israel to its literal, political glory.

It is just that simple. Just think about this for a moment. If the Jewish people as a whole had accepted Jesus as their Messiah, the entire eschatology (end-time events scenario) of the New Testament would have been entirely different. The book of Revelation, for example, could not have been written as it was.

Sometimes Christians object by citing Romans 11:1-2, where the apostle Paul declares that “God has not cast away His people” (v. 2), but that spiritual “blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved” (vv. 25-26). In Romans 11 the apostle Paul uses the metaphor of an olive tree to represent God’s followers of Jesus. Although he says that the Jews are the natural branches of that olive tree, they must be grafted in just like the Gentiles (vv. 21-24) if they believe in Jesus. In verses 25-26, he declares that “blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved.” However, note two significant points. First, it was common in Jewish literature to speak of “all Israel” being saved but then listing all of the exceptions to that.³⁰ In other words, Paul does not here mean that every single Jew will be saved at the last hour of human history, although apparently he does mean that the large majority of Jews will accept Jesus at the last hour of history. Second, he says nothing about this constituting a final dispensation of the Jews, with the Church having been raptured just prior to this. Both Jews and Gentiles are grafted onto the *same* olive tree. Do not miss that point! Jewish and Gentile believers in Jesus belong to the same organized people of God—the same olive tree—not to separate organizations, to say nothing of living in separate dispensations.

The Christian Church Making the Same Mistake Today

The most popular end-time perspective among Christians today, especially among most Protestants, is reflecting the same mistake that the Jews made in the first century A.D. In focusing so much on the promises of Israel’s restoration in the Old Testament, these dispensational futurists ignore the conditional aspect of the covenant between God and ancient Israel. The result is to insist on “seeing” the secret Rapture of the Church in Scripture when it is not there. Our own perspective explained above about the conditional aspects of the covenant with Israel was the predominant view for the vast majority of the Christian Era and for Protestant Christianity’s first 300 years. Not until John Nelson Darby, leader of the Brethren movement in Britain, began preaching dispensational futurism in the 1830s, was the traditional Christian perspective eventually challenged successfully among so many Christians.³¹ It gradually was adopted among more conservative Protestants in the early twentieth century. After World War II, when the modern nation of Israel was created in 1948, this trend of accepting dispensational futurism intensified. Finally, after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, after which Israel has occupied all of the city of Jerusalem (having taken over East Jerusalem in that war), this false teaching exploded until today it is the dominant view among Protestants altogether.

This popular view also insists that while the Church Age has interrupted Israel's Davidic kingdom, it will resume after the Rapture for a short period of time before the visible, audible, glorious Second Coming of Jesus. In so doing, they ignore the fact that all the promises in the Old Testament made to literal Israel are fulfilled in Jesus (II Corinthians 1:20) and that all who belong to Jesus are the Jews that count with God, according to Romans 2:28-29; 9:6-8; and Galatians 3:29. And there is nothing in the language of those passages that makes that Christian status temporary.

As a result of these errors, the advocates of the popular view focus on *old* Jerusalem rather than the New Jerusalem, on a supposed rebuilt *Jerusalem* Temple rather than on the Heavenly Sanctuary, and on *politics* in the Middle East rather than on the spiritual issues that actually make up the Battle of Armageddon.

The Destruction of the Wicked

In Isaiah 11:1-4 a Rod or Branch from the stock of Jesse will come and “shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked” (v. 4). Jesse is a reference to King David's father (I Samuel 16:1, 10-13). Yet this male (“He”) descendant of Jesse will obviously exist in the end-time and slay the wicked. Obviously, from what we have already learned, this is then a reference to the Messiah. Note that the description of how the Messiah will slay the wicked is drawn from Psalm 2:8-9. It is also reflected in Revelation 19:15, where it is Jesus (vv. 13, 16) who is described in the same way in His battle against the wicked at His Second Coming. Therefore, the wicked will be destroyed at the Second Coming of Jesus the Messiah.

In addition to Babylon's destruction in 539 B.C. constituting a symbol of the final destruction of the wicked, Isaiah 34 also depicts the final end of all wicked forces on this earth. Although Isaiah 34:5-6 mentions Edom as that nation that will be destroyed, clearly Edom is also a type of *all* the wicked, for verse 1 refers to “nations,” the “earth,” and the “world.” Verse 2 adds that the destruction here is aimed at “all nations.”

The description of this global event matches some of the specifications provided in the book of Revelation concerning the end-time. For example, “the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll” and “their host shall fall down As the leaf falls from the vine, And as fruit falling from a fig tree” (v. 4). This language is echoed in Revelation 6:13-14, which speaks of the “great day of His [God's] wrath” (v. 17). In turn, all this was echoed by Jesus Himself in His message to the apostles about His Second Coming in Matthew 24:29-31 (cf. v. 3). Also, Isaiah 34:9-10 speaks of fire and brimstone that “shall not be quenched night or day; Its smoke shall ascend forever.” This is echoed in Revelation 14:9-11, where it is stated that those who receive the mark of the beast at the end-time crisis will receive “the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone...And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever.” It is obvious that the apostle John, who wrote the book of Revelation,

was borrowing the language from Isaiah 34 in his description of the fate that would befall those who receive the mark of the beast.

Does this mean that the wicked will be tormented ceaselessly throughout eternity in the flames of hell? No. Please note that this language borrowed from Isaiah 34 is in the form of poetry. This can be seen in most modern English translations of the Bible, for Hebrew poetry in most translations is written in the poetic format. One of the characteristics of poetry, whether Hebrew or even English, is that poetry concerns itself with painting a word picture. Not every detail or precise wording is to be understood literally, but it is present in order to paint the word picture. We know that Isaiah 34 should not be understood as teaching that the fire and brimstone and smoke will burn and ascend endlessly because of the description of the land that follows those verses (vv. 9-10). In verses 11-17, all manner of wild animals and plant life will live in the land that was just described as burning with pitch and its smoke ascending forever. It is obvious to anyone that no animals or plant life could live in a region while fire and smoke are ongoing. Therefore, the poetry of Isaiah 34 means that the description of brimstone burning and smoke ascending forever is poetic language depicting complete destruction, *not* a fire and smoke that exists endlessly. When the fire has destroyed the wicked, it will then go out.

When will the wicked be destroyed by the wrath of God? According to II Peter 3:10-13, this time is called “the day of the Lord” (v. 10). It will burn up “both the earth and the works that are in it” (v. 10) in preparation for the “new heavens and a new earth” (v. 13). In His parable of the Wheat and the Tares (Matthew 13:24-43), Jesus explained that the tares, representing the wicked, will be “gathered and burned in the fire...at the end of the age” (v. 40). This, of course, begins at the Second Coming of Jesus, as we noted above. However, the *final* destruction of the wicked will be just after the end of the millennium and the Great White Throne Judgment recorded in Revelation 20:7-15. Revelation 20:5 implies that the resurrection of the wicked—which would include all the lost throughout history, including those killed at the Second Coming—will occur at the end of the millennium. Then they face the Great White Throne Judgment, apparently in order to show them that God is just in His judgments. It must be at that point that even the wicked will “bow to Me [the Lord], And every tongue shall confess to God” (Romans 14:11; cf. Philippians 2:10-11), not in repentance but simply in acknowledgment that God has been fair in His judgment. Then the wicked are destroyed by fire (Revelation 20:9, 15), from which there will never be another resurrection—because even Death itself is figuratively destroyed as well (Revelation 20:14). And just like II Peter 3, this final destruction will be a preparation for the creation of a “new heaven and a new earth” (Revelation 21:1).

The New Earth

At the Second Coming of Jesus the saved who had died before then will be resurrected and, along with the living saved, will be taken to heaven to be with Him. This is the plain teaching of I

Thessalonians 4:16-17 and John 14:1-3. At the same time the living wicked will be destroyed by Jesus' coming, making the world desolate of people (Revelation 19:21). Only Satan and his evil angels will be alive on the earth for the next 1,000 years. This is known as the millennium (Revelation 20:1-3, 5). Then at the end of the millennium, the entire capital of the universe moves from heaven to earth, the wicked dead are resurrected, the Great White Throne Judgment takes place, and sin and sinners are destroyed forever (20:11-15). At that point, the Lord will create a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21:1).

The New Jerusalem

Perhaps the most amazing thing about the New Earth is that it will become the new capital of the universe. We know this because Revelation 21:3 and 22 tell us that God the Father and Jesus the Lamb will live with human beings, and 22:1 says that God's throne will be there. What an awesome thought that the only world to have ever sinned will actually become the place that God moves his capital from heaven and establishes His capital!

That capital city is the New Jerusalem, which comes down from heaven (Revelation 21:2). This city is a cube, meaning that its length, width, and height are of equal size (21:16). The only other thing in the Scriptures that is said to be a cube is the Most Holy Place in the Jerusalem Temple (I Kings 6:20). That means that the entire city is one gigantic most holy place, pun intended. That size is enormous, being 12,000 furlongs (21:16). It is not clear whether that length describes the entire circumference of the city or the length of each side. Also, it is not clear whether the Greek furlong or the Roman furlong was intended. The Greek furlong was 606.5 feet, making the size 1,378.4 miles. The Roman furlong was 660 feet, making the city 1,500 miles.³² Therefore, we cannot know for certain exactly how large the New Jerusalem is. But it could be as "small" as 119,000 square miles or as large as 140,625 square miles. If each side is 12,000 furlongs, then the city would either be 1.9 million square miles or 2.25 million square miles. In either case, the New Jerusalem is larger than the state of Colorado. And if each side is 12,000 furlongs, then it would make the city either 65.5 percent or 77.6 percent of the continental United States. The point is that the city is large enough for all the saved.

The wall is 144 cubits (21:17), although we do not know whether that refers to its height or its width. If it is the height, then the city is a cube in that its buildings are as tall as each side. According to Revelation 21:18, the wall is made of jasper.

The city has 12 gates, with each gate being one gigantic pearl (21:12-13, 21). There are 12 foundations, each one adorned with precious stones (21:14, 19-20). And the city's street is made of "pure gold, like transparent glass" (21:21). The purest form of solid gold is gold or yellowish in color. However, the purest form of gold is its powder form. When powder gold is heated, cooled, and then heated again, its structure becomes like very clear glass.³³

There is no need for the sun or the moon to provide light for the city because God (the Father) and Jesus (the Lamb) are the light (21:23; 22:4). That does not mean there is no sun or moon but only that they are not needed to light up the city. Of course, they will provide light for the New Earth outside of the capital city. The gates are never locked because there will be perfect security since sin will no longer exist (21:25).

Revelation 21:22 says there is no temple in the New Jerusalem because “the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.” Yet the book of Revelation contains several references to the temple in heaven (8:2-5; 11:19; 15:5-8). But there is no contradiction because when the temple is functioning in heaven, the Lord is still dealing with the sin problem. After the millennium sin and sinners are completely eradicated, so there is no need for a literal temple anymore. Whether it will still exist but only as a memorial or museum, or whether it will be torn down, we are not told. The important point is that there will be no functioning temple in the New Jerusalem.

There is a pure river of life that flows in the New Jerusalem and the Tree of Life on either side of the river (22:1-2). What a huge tree that must be in order to have roots on both sides of a river! Note that the Tree of Life was originally located in the Garden of Eden as Adam’s and Eve’s first home (Genesis 2:10; 3:24). That particular tree remained in Eden because cherubim were placed by God to prevent humans from gaining access to it. Apparently, God supernaturally took the Tree of Life to heaven at some point before the global Flood. Revelation 22:2 says that this tree “bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month.” This wording suggests that each month a different type of fruit is produced by the Tree of Life. Remember that the Tree of Life was necessary in the Garden of Eden to enable Adam and Eve to maintain their immortality. Apparently the Tree of Life will be a continual reminder even to the eternally saved that their immortality is dependent upon God the Life-Giver.

The same passage says that the leaves are for “the healing of the nations.” Since there will be no sickness in heaven or the New Earth, the secret of the leaves is not in their nutrition but in the shade they provide. In Zechariah 3:10, when God removes the iniquity of His people (v. 9), “Everyone will invite his neighbor Under his vine and under his fig tree.” This may refer to the different ethnic and racial groups sitting under the Tree of Life (under its leaves), perhaps while eating its fruit, where their interaction with each other will enhance understanding and appreciation for the different cultures represented in heaven and the New Earth. In this way, the Tree of Life becomes a positive symbol that is the reverse of the Tower of Babel. At the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11:1-9, the people were congregating together in violation of God’s command to fill the entire earth (Genesis 9:1; 11:4). So God confused their languages, which stopped work on the Tower and resulted in the people scattering throughout the earth (11:8-9). But with no sin, the congregating of people in a united project will not prove spiritually dangerous. Therefore, we can also expect that God will undo the diversity of languages and give everyone the ability to speak the same language.

Conditions on the Earth

Isaiah 65:17; 66:22; and Revelation 21:1 all tell us that God will create a “new heaven and a new earth.” The Greek word for *new* in Revelation 21:1 refers to something that is new in “quality” or “kind” rather than new in time.³⁴ This tells us that the Lord will not completely obliterate the earth and replace it with a brand new planet. Rather, He will destroy the effects of sin and restore or recreate the earth into a different kind or quality of earth.

This New Earth will have “no more sea” (Revelation 21:1). Even though seas sometimes are symbolic of political and/or military trouble between nations (Isaiah 57:20), the context in Revelation 21 suggests that it should be understood as a literal sea. Currently, the earth’s surface is covered with about 70 percent water. Apparently that will not be the case in the New Earth. From a Biblical perspective the high mountains were created by the massive upheaval of the earth during the global Flood. If the effects of sin are to be reversed, perhaps there will not be the very tall mountains that now exist, although the Lord may create new mountains for aesthetic purposes.

The upheaval of the earth caused by the global Flood almost certainly was the major cause of the earth being tilted about 23.5 degrees from its axis. This tilt of the axis is responsible for the seasons being extreme away from the equatorial regions. The fact that the Tree of Life will produce fruit all year long means that the climate will be moderate year-round, which in turn means the Lord will put the earth straight on its axis. There will be no conditions that now create extreme weather.

Isaiah 35 speaks about the future glorious days of His people. According to verse 1, “the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose,” which means there really will be no more deserts and other desolate places where plant growth is either nonexistent or very rare. The planet will be agriculturally fertile and productive, probably like it was before the Flood. As for animal life, there will be no danger from what used to be wild animals. They will not eat each other or hurt people in any way (Isaiah 11:6-9; 65:25).

Condition of People

According to I Corinthians 13:10-12, the apostle Paul declared that when perfection comes “I shall know just as I also am known” (v. 12). This means that once we get to heaven those who knew each other on the earth will know us there also. According to Philippians 3:20-21 at the Second Coming of Jesus the saved will all receive glorified bodies like Jesus has. This is what theologians call glorification, and according to I Corinthians 15:51-54, this includes immortality. Remember that after His resurrection, Jesus ate food (Luke 24:41-43). He also passed through a closed door (John 20:19). This suggests that our glorified bodies, although will still need food, will be able to temporarily pass through solid objects. It is of some interest that modern physicists tell us that

matter is mostly open space. Since we will go to heaven at the Second Coming through the *air* (I Thessalonians 4:17), apparently we will be able to fly like a bird. What another awesome thought!

Our glorified bodies will therefore not be subject to corruption (I Corinthians 15:42). This means no one will get sick and there will be no deformities, pain, sorrow, crying, or death (Isaiah 35:5-6; 65:19-20; Revelation 21:4). Revelation 21:4 is a most reassuring text on this issue: “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” So why does Isaiah 65:20 say that “the child shall die one hundred years old”? Note that this was initially promised to the literal nation of Judah (vv. 18-19), but Judah left her covenant with God at the end of the 70 Weeks prophecy in A.D. 34. If the Jewish nation had accepted Jesus as their Messiah, it is evident that God would have more gradually blessed Judah in part by extending the lifespan of her citizens until the day that He would later raise the dead and give the saved immortal bodies.

With perfect bodies, our brains will also function perfectly as God originally intended. Our memories will therefore be perfect and our intellectual capacity for learning will be enormous in contrast to our present capacity. Furthermore, since it is actually our brain that senses things, perhaps we will be able to have microscopic and telescopic vision, for example. The truth is that the Bible does not tell us about every condition and ability in heaven and the New Earth. In fact, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him” (I Corinthians 2:9). We will simply have to cling to God so we can be there and discover what He has in store for us. The New Earth will be a kind of restored Garden of Eden, with the Tree of Life from Eden there in the New Jerusalem. Since the Hebrew word for “Eden” means “pleasure”³⁵ we can be certain that it will be a place of great pleasure indeed!

Activities in the New Earth

According to Isaiah 65:21-22, God’s people will build houses and live in them, which means each of us will not only have a home that Jesus has prepared for us in the New Jerusalem (John 14:2-3), but we will have a home somewhere else on earth outside the city as well. The same passage in Isaiah says we will plant vineyards and eat of its fruit. So there will be agricultural activity.

Since we apparently will be able to fly, the wonders of the entire universe will be open to God’s people. Assuming that God has created other intelligent beings on some other worlds, in addition to humans and angels, without sin we should be able to visit these beings and learn about their cultures and share our experiences of how the Lord redeemed us from sin. In this way we may be ambassadors for Jesus.

Finally, we will worship the Lord on each Sabbath and on each new moon, according to Isaiah 66:23. As we have seen before, the weekly seventh-day Sabbath was designed for mankind and never intended exclusively for Israelites or Jews. But what is meant by worship on each new moon? The new moon, of course, is the beginning of a new month. According to the Hebrew Scriptures, each new moon (1) was a day for special sacrifices under the Old Testament sacrificial system (Numbers 28:11-15); (2) was a feast day for eating a feast (I Samuel 20:5, 24); (3) was a day that trumpets were blown to call people to the tabernacle for public worship (Numbers 10:10; Ezekiel 46:1-3); and (4) was a day when commerce was prohibited (Amos 8:5). It was not a Sabbath per se because apparently other secular activities were not prohibited. Of course, in heaven and the New Earth there will be no more animal sacrifices, and there will be no money because money exists only because resources are limited. However, in heaven and the New Earth apparently each new moon will be a day for public worship and for eating a feast together—a joyous occasion.

Conclusion

Speaking about the time when the New Earth has been created, our favorite Christian author outside the Bible writers wrote this in the last paragraph of the book *The Great Controversy*:

The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.³⁶

ENDNOTES

¹ *Andrews Study Bible*. New King James' Version. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2010, p. 857.

² Ibid.

³ Strong, James. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. "Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary of the Old Testament," #3470. Iowa Falls, IA: World Bible Publishers, 1986 ed., p. 70.

⁴ All of the dates for the kings of Judah here are approximate. They will vary by two or three years among different Bible scholars.

⁵ Unger, Merrill. *Unger's Bible Dictionary*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1980 printing, p. 534.

⁶ MacArthur, John. *The MacArthur Study Bible*. New King James' Version. Nashville, TN: Word Bibles, 1997, p. 953.

⁷ Hillers, Delbert R. *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea*. Chapter Six: "Therefore I Will Punish You." Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969, pp. 120-142.

⁸ This outline was adapted from two different outlines of Isaiah, one in the *Andrews Study Bible*, New King James' Version, Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2010, p. 859, and Ryrie, Charles C. *The Ryrie Study Bible*. New American Standard Bible. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1978, p. 1013.

⁹ White, Ellen. *Selected Messages*, Book I. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1958, p. 344.

¹⁰ *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Vol. I., ed. by R. Laird Harris. #197. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1980, p. 198.

¹¹ Ibid, Vol. II. #2165, p. 848.

¹² Strong, James. "Greek Dictionary of the New Testament," #4566-4567, p. 86 and "Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary of the Old Testament," #7854, p. 152.

¹³ Ibid, "Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary of the Old Testament," #4899, p. 97.

¹⁴ Jacobson, Samuel Srolovic. *The Quest of a Jew*. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1973, p. 15.

¹⁵ *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Vol. II, #2376, p. 919.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Jacobson, Samuel Srolovic, p. 20.

¹⁸ *Problems in Bible Translation*. Committee on Problems in Bible Translation. Washington, D.C.: The Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1954, pp. 152-157.

¹⁹ Strong, James. "Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary of the Old Testament," #6005, p. 118, and #4122, p. 82.

²⁰ <http://targum.info/targumic-texts>, "Targumic Texts," "Targum Isaiah."

²¹ *Services for the Day of Atonement*, trans. by S. G., New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1928, p. 288 as quoted in Jacobson, p. 25.

²² Strong, James. "Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary of the Old Testament," #6664, p. 130. See also Deuteronomy 25:1.

²³ Wallbank, T. Walter, Alastair M. Taylor, and Nels M. Bailkey. *Civilization: Past and Present*, Vol. 1. Chicago, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1965, pp. 58-59.

²⁴ Herodotus. *Histories*. Fifth century B.C., 1.189-1.191, as translated at <https://www.livius.org/sources/content/herodotus/cyrus-takes-babylon>.

²⁵ Vine, W. E. *The Expanded Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, ed. by John R. Kohlenberger III. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1984, p. 769.

²⁶ Daniel 1:1.

²⁷ See the New King James' Version, the New American Standard Bible, the New International Version, the Revised Standard Version, the New Revised Standard Version, and the English Standard Version as examples.

²⁸ Nichol, Francis D. ed. *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 4. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Company, 1976 revised ed., p. 281.

²⁹ Green, Jay P., Sr., General Ed. and Translator. *The Interlinear Bible*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1985, Daniel 9:27, p. 691.

³⁰ Bruce, F. F. *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980 reprint, p. 222.

³¹ Elwell, Walter A., ed. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984, "Darby, John Nelson," pp. 292-293.

³² Unger, Merrill, pp. 720-721.

³³ <https://www.quora.com/Is-completely-pure-gold-transparent>.

³⁴ Vine, W. E. Ed. by John R. Kohlenberger III, p. 781.

³⁵ Strong, James. "Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary of the Old Testament," #5730-5731, p. 113.

³⁶ White, Ellen. *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1950 ed., p. 678.