

Christ in Isaiah

by H.J. Vine

The sermon explores the various aspects of Jesus Christ as revealed in the book of Isaiah, including His role as the Sign, the Stone, the Sanctuary, and the Light.

Scripture: Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 9:6

Topics: "The Nature of Christ", "Christ in Prophecy"

Description

H.J. Vine explores the profound significance of Christ as revealed in the book of Isaiah, emphasizing that Jesus is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies as 'the Woman's Seed,' 'Abraham's Seed,' and 'David's Seed.' He highlights the dual nature of Christ, who embodies both divine majesty and human humility, as seen in His titles such as 'Emmanuel' and 'Prince of Peace.' Vine encourages believers to recognize the depth of Christ's glory and the treasures found in the Scriptures, asserting that the Holy Spirit reveals these truths to those who seek Him. The sermon culminates in the assurance that Christ, the 'Tried Stone,' is the foundation of faith and the source of eternal hope for all who believe.

Transcript

Introduction

Who is this to whom the Old Testament from Genesis onwards so constantly points, raising in our hearts the very highest expectations, as it speaks of "the Woman's Seed," "Abraham's Seed," and "David's Seed?" Who is this through whom all the world is to be blessed? What is His name? Has He come? Is He living?

The first chapter of the New Testament answers these questions. There we are introduced to the only One who could be truly called "the Woman's Seed"--the promised Son of the Virgin (Isa. 2:1-3). The first verse of the New Testament shows Him to us--"JESUS CHRIST, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham." The glorious Fulfiller of the promises has come! The "Yea" and the "Amen" of them all! Yes, He lives! for though He was slain, He could not be holden of death, He rose from the dead and is alive for evermore!

"The Woman's Seed," but--meditate on the divine wonder here--He is also "Emmanuel"--"GOD with us." He is "Abraham's Seed," but, stupendous fact! He could also say "Before Abraham was I AM" (John 8:38). He is "David's Seed," but He is also "David's Lord" (Matt. 22:41-46). Yea, "Jesus Christ of the seed of David raised from among the dead" says, "I am the ROOT," before David, as well as "the Offspring," after David. He is THE FIRST, as well as THE LAST.

In looking at some of the glories of the Lord which are made known to us by the Holy Spirit of God in the Scriptures of truth, we must remind ourselves that the flesh cannot take in or understand these things, but having "no confidence in the flesh," it is the glad privilege of those who have the Holy Spirit to rejoice in Christ Jesus and His marvellous excellences. Such will have no ear for those who detract from His glory, but to all that exalts Him according to the Sacred Writings they will listen gladly. We must remember, however, that when the very best has been said concerning Him there are still eternal depths which are beyond our telling.

If it is the work of the Holy Spirit to glorify Him, this is also the right work for the Spirit-filled servant. The Spirit who fills him does not "speak from Himself" (John 16:13), nor does the servant (John 7:18), or he "seeks his own glory," instead of the Saviour's. Those who originate theories and ideals out of their own inner consciousness stand condemned before these verses.

Isaiah has been called the royal prophet by some, the evangelical prophet by others. Both are right, for he speaks of the King in His beauty and of good tidings for the poor. He is the royal evangelical prophet. His fields are vast and varied. May it be ours to dig some of the precious metal out of the abundance of his wealthy hills, and to gather some of the brilliant gems with their divinely beautiful colours, which are so plentiful in his rich valleys. For whether we look in "the depth" or gaze up at "the height," we shall find here the shining glories of Christ Jesus still undimmed by the dust of long centuries. In "the depth" of His humiliation as well as in "the height" of His majesty His perfections are full of lustre.

These treasures are of abiding and eternal value. "Riches and honour are with Me," says the Lord Jesus, the hidden wisdom of God; "yea, durable riches and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and MY revenue than choice silver . . . I was set up from everlasting" (Prov. 8:18-23).

When speaking of these spiritual possessions as "the fields of Isaiah," we may remind ourselves that they are really ours. They belong to the believers of this day, for we read of the prophets, that when "the Spirit of Christ which was in them testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" it was revealed to them, "that not unto themselves, but UNTO US they did minister the things" (1 Peter 1:11-12). We are therefore entering upon what is through grace our own God-given property.

The risen Son of God Himself has shown us the royal road to the treasure stores of the Old Testament, for "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:27).

The Sign

We will join Isaiah "at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field" (Isa. 7:3). Ahaz the king of Judah comes there also, and is told to ask "A SIGN" of the Lord, and what is most striking is that he is requested to ask it "either IN THE DEPTH, or IN THE HEIGHT above" (v. 11). The monarch, however, for some ulterior reason will not do so. Close dealings with God were not congenial to him. Consequently, a marvellous disclosure is made in verse 14. Ahaz, of "the house of David," would not ask for the sign "either in the depth, or in the height." God therefore says, as it were, I will give the sign Myself without your asking! I will give it both in the depth and in the height; and, as we see from other scriptures, in that very "house of David."

Mark, then, the wonderful words, "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name IMMANUEL."

What a vast store of divine wealth is laid open to us here. The virgin's Son becomes THE SIGN, given of God in "the depth" and in "the height" also. Who but the blessed God, who is infinite in wisdom, could have thought of or given such a sign? Behold in "the depth" of human weakness that wondrous Babe nursed on the virgin's lap; but even there His name tells us of "the height" of His glory--"IMMANUEL," "GOD with us." He is truly the Sign in "the depth" and "the height."

THIS SIGN in the depth and height is that which the Holy Spirit of God introduces at the very opening of the New Testament. Here in "the house of David" appears the promised Sign!

What a commotion immediately takes place! In the seen and the unseen; among the learned and the unlearned; among the great and the small; among the wicked and the pious. Why?

"Unto us a Child is born!"

The Sign in the depth behold

The break of the glorious morn

By the prophets long foretold.

See the virgin mother fair

In yon stable, lowly, meek;

And in the manger cradled there,

The Babe whom the shepherds seek.

THE SIGN IN THE DEPTH BEHOLD!

Creation moves at the sight!

Angels cry "Glory to God!"

The star in the heavens shines bright,

To guide wise men on their road;

The faithful behold and sing:

The pious worship the Lord

They talk of the newborn King,

Come forth to fulfil God's word,

THE SIGN OF ETERNAL LOVE.

Could the New Testament have an opening more striking and glorious? The wisdom which knows not God may see no glory here, but such wisdom is the folly which led "the princes of this world to crucify the Lord of Glory", the "hidden wisdom of God."

The angel of the Lord said, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be A SIGN unto you; Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (Luke 2:10-12).

Again, Simeon, a just and devout man, came by the Spirit into the temple and said to Mary, the virgin mother, "Behold, this Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for A SIGN which shall be spoken against . . . that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Luke 2:34-35). Surely this sign in "the depth" of sorrow and woe, and yet in "the height" of the glory of "THE CHRIST, THE LORD," is worthy of God who is "the ALL WISE." "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the glory of kings is to search out a thing. The heaven for height, and the earth for depth, and the heart of kings is unsearchable" (Prov. 25:2-3). Search the Scriptures. "These are they which testify of ME," said the Son of God! Finding Him, we shall fill our treasures with the finest gold and enrich our store with all manner of precious things.

The Stone

The truth concerning our Lord Jesus Christ can alone explain satisfactorily the signs and wonders which meet us in Isaiah 8. And we can only find the truly divine meaning as we are guided by the Holy Spirit, for there is a Stone here over which many have stumbled and fallen (Isa. 8:14).

When, however, we are low enough in our own esteem to notice the nature of this Stone, and to behold its virtues with the eye of faith, we shall see that it is full of beauty and splendour and wonderful significance. In "the depth" it is set at naught by the Jewish builders! (Acts 4:11); in "the height" it is "become the Head of the corner!" In "the depth" it is "a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel!" (v. 14); in "the height" of its glory they shall presently cry with shoutings, "Grace, grace unto it" (Zech. 4:7). Happy are those who value this rejected Stone now. Jacob sought rest by putting his weary head on a stone for a pillow, and set it up afterwards and anointed it as a pillar at Bethel but the real Stone, provided by God, is the One who gives true and lasting rest to the believer; and He is set up a "living Stone" in connection with whom other living stones are being built up as a spiritual Bethel, where worship abounds in truth (1 Peter 2:4-8).

Peter, when the Holy Spirit inspired him thus to write, had learned the lesson of Matthew 16:18. It is a pity Rome has not Jesus Christ is the Stone laid in Zion, not Peter! Jesus Christ is "the elect" and "precious" One! "He that believes on Him shall not be put to shame;" nay, even the infinite preciousness of this marvellous Stone is ours, as Peter says (1 Peter 2:7), "To you, therefore, which believe is the preciousness." This is indeed bountiful cheer for those who believe, and great encouragement for those who build only in connection with this "Living Stone." But, to those who refuse Him, there comes the warning to the disobedient, "the Stone which the builders cast away as worthless, this is become the head of the corner, and a Stone of stumbling and rock of offence; who stumble at the word, being disobedient, to which also they have been appointed."

Difficulties may arise when we take our stand with this rejected Stone, as in the eighth chapter of Isaiah. There are "confederacies," "counsels," and "associations," but these cannot prevail against the truth, for at the end of verse 10 we have IMMANUEL! God is with us!

This wonderful Stone has the power of breaking up religious confederacies and dissolving unscriptural organizations. When they are tested by the Lord, the Christ, they will not stand.

We are to sanctify the Lord Himself in our hearts at such times, and have no fear as they have. Peter shows this when, again referring to this chapter; he also tells us that "the Lord of hosts" (v. 13) is "the

Christ" (1 Peter 3:14-15, N.Tr.). This is indeed a great discovery, but we will not dwell on it at present.

The Sanctuary

In verse 14 of our chapter another marvellous truth is laid open before our wondering gaze, the Lord Jesus Christ is the believer's "SANCTUARY." "He shall be for a sanctuary."

In regard to the Stone, rejected and cast out in "the depth," received and glorified in "the height," we may well sing with the Psalmist, "The Stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Ps. 118:22-24); but what are we to say as to the "Sanctuary?"

The Epistle to the Hebrews will help us. There the Holy Spirit of God speaks of it, whilst showing the grace and the greatness of Jesus. He "suffered outside the gate" of the centre of earthly religion, that He might set us apart to Himself by His own blood; therefore, leaving behind us the earthly sanctuary and its system, we have come to Jesus (see Heb. 13:12-13); and He makes our hearts sing with gladness by making known to us the bountiful grace of our God, saying, "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren, in the midst of the assembly will I sing praise to Thee" (Heb. 2:12-13). Mark, He is not ashamed of us, but presents us in the presence of God along with Himself, saying, "Behold I and the children which God has given ME." It is these infinitely blessed words, just quoted from Hebrews 2, which are given to us by the Spirit to uncover for us the divine meaning of the Sign in Isaiah 8, where the very same words are used in verse 18.

From the context we see that here we are in thought upon the holy hill, and we learn from Hebrews "without holiness no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). Let not the world-borderer or the pleasure-lover think that his sight will be clear enough to behold the perfections of the Lord and the wondrous things that are here to be seen! Let not the man whose mind is clouded with wrong suspicions, and whose eye is evil, think that he can behold them; the vision must first be pure.

Isaiah ("the salvation of the Lord") is in the Sanctuary mount with his children, Shear-jashub ("the remnant shall return") and Maher-shalal-hash-baz ("swift for spoil, hasty for prey"). He stands, as it were, before God, holding each by the hand, and utters those words of such profound meaning, "Behold I and the children whom the Lord has given me!" Now notice carefully what he further says of himself and his own--they are for "signs and wonders!"

In Hebrews 2 we read of the salvation of the Lord--the "great salvation" which was first made known by the Lord Jesus and confirmed by His own, God also bearing witness with "signs and wonders!" It is the same blessed Lord Jesus Christ who, taking us by the hand, as it were, and linking us with Himself in this holy elevation and in this heavenly intimacy as His own, is saying in Hebrews 2:13, "Behold I and the children which God has given ME."

We find ourselves in the "sanctuary" truly here; but, thank God, not with fear and dread. Grace that takes us in, sets us at rest and peace in this holy place, with the sense that we are loved with an eternal love, knowing that His one offering has put away for ever that which could hinder our joy. And though we would fain fill our time with a ceaseless flow of worship in the Spirit, yet we may also with restful leisure adoringly admire the holy perfections of Him who said He HIMSELF would be "for a Sanctuary."

Ezekiel 11:15 will confirm us in this. "The inhabitants of Jerusalem," those who then boasted in the official leadership of God's people, had turned the real Israel away from the place of Jehovah's name and sanctuary. These hard leaders claimed the outward position, but "all the house of Israel wholly" were scattered! Where, then, should they find a sanctuary, seeing they were excluded from the sanctuary of God at Jerusalem by these place-loving leaders, who "devised mischief and gave wicked counsel" (v. 2)! Hark to the soul-cheering answer in verse 16; The Lord says, "I will be to them as a little Sanctuary."

It is Adonahy-Jehovah who says this. The Supreme Ruler, who is the same yesterday and today and for ever, is the blessed and unchanging retreat for our hearts, whatever changes may take place in the unsettled concerns of outward profession, or even among the nations of the world. He who is our true Sanctuary makes all things work together for our good. It was His voice that called us to, Himself, and He will never fail us. He will soon take us all to share the glory with our Lord Jesus Christ as His co-heirs, but meanwhile He is our "Sanctuary for a little while," as Ezekiel 11:16 might be read. It is not that He is "a little" Sanctuary, but rather that He is the Sanctuary of all His own "for a little" while, during the time of the scattering. "A little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. 10:37) but even now we sing our joyful song to Him:

"Jesus! before Thy face we fall,

Our Lord, our life, our hope, our all;

For we have nowhere else to flee,

No Sanctuary, Lord, but Thee.

In Thee we every glory view,

Of safety, strength, and beauty too

'Tis all our rest and peace to see

Our Sanctuary, Lord, in Thee."

The Light and the Fivefold Name

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from thenceforth for ever and ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." (Isa. 9:6-7)

Before reaching the great light of Isaiah 9 we have to pass through dark and dismal regions. What is it that has produced this distressful "trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish?" It is the direct outcome of turning away from the true God and sinking into spiritualism (Isa. 8:19), socialism and infidelity (v. 21). Denying right authority, they fret themselves and curse their king and their God. But a great light appears (Isa. 9:2). The darkness begins to pass away, but even as late as this day it has not entirely passed. It is passing, for the true light already shines! But who is this "great Light" whose brilliant beams shine with such beauty and brightness upon them "that dwell in the land of the shadow of death? (v. 2). In the fourth chapter of the New Testament, the Lord Jesus Christ, after defeating Satan, went forth to publicly preach,

"Repent: for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh." Then "the Light of the world" was seen in the shining of Jesus. "The people which sat in darkness saw great light" (Matt. 4:16).

Those who believe on Him have been delivered from darkness and from the authority of darkness, and now rejoice in the light. It shines in the world for all, but those who believe on Him are "in the light." By believing in the light we become sons of the light. The mere ecclesiastic says, "All the light is in the church." The Scriptures say the light is "in the world" and for the world, for those in darkness. Believers are in the light, and they shine publicly in that light now as the light of the world; but selfish error claims "a light" shut inside the assembly, which men must "come in to see," thus robbing it of its evangelical character and producing miserable self-occupation and strife.

The true, undimmed light of the full revelation of God in grace shines in Jesus, and there can be no such thing as "fresh light" or "new light." The Apostle John met presumptuous claims of this nature when he wrote, "The darkness is passing, and the true light already shines. He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in the darkness until now" (1 John 2:8-9). The true Light, our blessed and adorable Saviour, the Son of God, cannot be advanced upon. The assembly shines as she abides in Him. We are light only in the Lord.

Soon He will arise in majesty, as the last chapter of the Old Testament tells us, giving the righteous virtues and healing benefits of His blessed beams, as we read "the Sun of Righteousness" shall "raise with healing in His wings." The rising of the Sun will be glorious indeed, and it shall set no more. Then also "shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt. 13:43).

And now, as already in the light, we give thanks unto the Father who has put us there, free from the authority of darkness, and our hearts are at liberty to take in some measure of the rich unfoldings of the Spirit of Truth in verses 6 and 7. And as He enables us to apprehend these things let us gratefully thank our God for the gracious strengthening of His Spirit, by whom we have ability to understand the truth as it is seen in our Lord Jesus Christ.

In these verses the throne of David, the glory of the government, its peace, its judgment and righteousness, are brought into view, and over it all, in surpassing; and indescribable beauty and majesty, is the One who carries the government on His shoulder. Inscrutable and immutable as is the glory of His gracious and glorious person, yet we are encouraged to draw near, for though the Sign towers up to "the height" of impenetrableness, yet how tenderly is this introduced. He is the "Child born" and the "Son given." Wonderful Child! Wonderful Son! We would bow and worship before Thee as the wise men of old!

The "name" given is fivefold: it describes His glory in connection with His gracious government "upon the throne of David."

Let no one say this is only kingdom truth. It is truth concerning the glory of the One who is the assembly's heavenly Bridegroom. Truly it is the earthly part of the kingdom which is in view, but it is the immeasurable glory of the Person of the One who is high over all which is shown us here. And though our hopes are especially heavenly, yet the true bride is interested with deep affection in the glory of her Bridegroom. Speaking to her directly at the end of Revelation, He says, "I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright and morning Star" (v. 16). She answers along with the Spirit, "Come."

"WONDERFUL" is the first word in the spelling of this fivefold name of the God-given Sign. No word could be more suitable, for the more we know of Him the more full of wonder we see Him to be. The Pharisees, who watched His speech that they might confound Him, were utterly confounded themselves when they stood in the presence of "David's Son," the Messiah, the Christ, who was also "David's Lord" (Matt. 22:41-46). Truly He is called "Wonderful."

"COUNSELLOR." He will be the Source of all counsel for those who share the government and its benefits in that day. All counsel that is good has already proceeded from Him, for He it is who has said, "Counsel is Mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength. By Me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By Me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth" (Prov. 8:14-16). Divinely suitable it is, indeed, that He should be called "Counsellor."

But we are filled with holy reverence as we gaze at the central word of this unparalleled name--name of the Sign in "the depth" and in "the height," name of the "Child born," cradled in the manger, name of the "Son given."

"MIGHTY GOD!" He is the "mighty El." The title "El" here for God is singular. Its first occurrence is in Genesis 14--"most high El, possessor of heaven and earth." El signifies the strong One, the First. "God is One," and the attributes of God are generally connected with this singular name El. Blessed indeed it is that He is made known to our praising hearts in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father's love, for He is "image of the invisible God." He is the uncreated Son, "because by Him were created all things" (Col. 1:15-16). Rightly and most suitably therefore is He called "mighty God."

And now we are told something which outstrips all thought. And truly it must be so when the name of such an One is told to us.

"FATHER OF ETERNITY!" Who can think "eternity?" Who can grasp infinity? None but the eternal God! But though eternity is an infinite conception, it is not greater than Him of whom the inspired writer here speaks, the "Son given," for He is said to be the Father of eternity. It is beyond thought! We, however, believe it; and more, we believe that our Lord, our Saviour Jesus Christ, is He, as the Holy Spirit tells us; and we rejoice in His greatness and glory; yea, we rejoice that though we are enabled to apprehend much through divine grace, yet, I say, we rejoice that it still surpasses our comprehension. "He is before all things, and things subsist together by Him." This is said of the Son.

Favoured Israel may delight to call their King and their God the Father of the nation, in the time of the glory in the age to come, but they are to be reminded that He who reigns is "Father of the eternal age."

After such a description of His name, calling for the very greatest energy of thought, we enter, as it were, a quiet harbour of rest in the last word, "PRINCE OF PEACE!!" Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end. "No end" to the peace which others enjoy through His rule presently, but He Himself is the Prince of it, the Head, the Chief. He is "the Prince of the kings of the earth." There is none above or beyond Him. This is King David's greater Son! This is the true Solomon ("Peaceable") of Psalm 72. In the time of His government we read, "The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness . . . He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. In His days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endures . . . All nations shall call Him blessed . . . Blessed be His glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with His glory; Amen, and Amen."

What a title of beauty and blessing, finishing the divine spelling of the fivefold name! It is the crown, the sparkling diadem, which worthily ornaments this majestic monument of golden glory, "Prince of Peace!" What a desirable ending to such a list! Again we are reminded of Colossians 1. There we are told that He made peace by the blood of His cross, He made peace! He in whom the fullness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell. And by Him all things shall one day be reconciled in peaceful gladness to that fullness which dwells in Him. How blessed is the portion of those who are even "now" reconciled before that day of universal reconciliation!

Never could a sign be given equal to this, reaching from a Babe in the manger to the infinite height of the mighty God.

(iii.) MIGHTY EL:

(ii.) Counsellor: (iv.) Father of Eternity:

(i.) Wonderful: (v.) Prince of Peace:

(Isa. 9:6)

"A Child born: A Son given."

"Call His Name

JESUS."

(Matt. 1:21)

"The government shall be upon His shoulder." Happy day to come for the world! He will prosper where the politicians and rulers fail so sadly now. "On His shoulder" the government will be safe. But Luke 15 tells us that the sheep--the lost sinner that He seeks and finds--has both "shoulders" for his security. One shoulder will do for the government of the earth, but nothing less than both for the sheep He loves so well, and whose home-bringing gives His loving heart such joy, deep and divine. We may well thank God for such a Saviour, known and trusted before the kingdom of glory comes.

Having had the holy privilege of beholding the great sight of this part of Isaiah, the central "SIGN" which God has given, the whole vein of true wealth running through this part of the book lies open before us. We have seen Him in "the depth" as well as in "the height" of His personal glory; also in the splendour of His official kingdom glory, and this is the key which discloses to us what would otherwise be secret still.

Isaiah (I)

Section 1. Chapters 1-12

The King: the Root Shoot

The first part of Isaiah embraces chapters 1 to 39. The second, chapters 40 to 66. Christ as THE SIGN is the key that unlocks the treasure-store of the first part; Christ as THE SERVANT is the key that opens the second. Though the thought of the Sign in the depth and in the height runs all through Isaiah, indeed all through the Bible, the personal and official glory of our Lord Jesus Christ are prominent in the first part; in the second it is His moral glory which is most prominent, and this largely accounts for the difference

between the two parts, where there is, nevertheless, much similarity.

The first part of Isaiah divides into four distinct sections, as we shall the second into three.

In the first section (1-12) we find that the Lord begins by dealing with His people's sins. It is because of Him, the coming King, that His people's sins, though they be as scarlet and red like crimson, shall be as white as snow, and as wool (Isa. 1:18). He will straighten out that which they have perverted, when He rules. He will restore Zion's judges as at the first, and her counsellors as at the beginning: afterward she shall be called, "The city of righteousness, the faithful city (v. 26).

In Isaiah 2 it is declared that the nations shall be ruled in righteousness, and the effect will be peace; "Neither shall they learn war any more" (v. 4). The Prince of Peace shall then be over all. "The Lord alone shall be exalted in that day" (v. 17), for all the wicked shall be overthrown, when, in The glory of His majesty, "He arises to shake terribly the earth" (v. 21). Jerusalem shall then become the metropolis, "for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (v. 3).

We learn that in that day "the Branch of the Lord" (Isa. 4:2), or rather the SPROUT "out of the stock of Jesse," shall be beautiful and glorious. This is none other than Christ, and He shall bear the glory and make the fruit of the earth to be for excellency and comely ornament to His own in that day (Isa. 4:2).

Had we not known something of the personal glory of our Lord, we should not have been prepared for the great and fiery majesty which is revealed as His in Isaiah 6 in such holy splendour.

Isaiah, after describing what He had seen, says, "Mine eyes have seen THE KING" (v. 5); and it shall yet actually be that "the whole earth is full of His glory" (v. 3). And lest any doubt should remain as to whose glory is here spoken of, the Holy Spirit of God has told us in John 12:37-41 that Isaiah spake of Jesus, concluding, "These things said Esaias, when he saw HIS GLORY, and spake of HIM." Surely we may sing with joy as His greatness grows upon our souls:

"My Lord, my Life, my Rest, my Shield,

My Rock, my Food, My Light;

Each thought of Thee doth constant yield

Unchanging, fresh delight."

Power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing are rightly His.

Passing over the chapters we have dwelt upon in former papers, we now come to the close of this section. In the end of Isaiah 10, and at the commencement of Isaiah 11, we stand in a spot where once the mightiest trees flourished in governmental greatness. They are cut down now.

We see just a stock left in Isaiah 11:1--"the stock of Jesse." Sinful Israel, that once had mighty rulers, who were great in the earth as the cedar trees, has been brought down to this. It was necessary that it should be so too, that all the pride of man might be abased, and that the SIGN might appear first in "the depth." He is here seen "the Sprout" coming out of "the roots." He could scarcely be called a "Branch" here, for a branch does not come up from the roots. He came up from "the depth." He is the "Root Shoot," in Hebrew the **N■zer**. It is from this word, not from the town of Nazareth, that He was, in the first instance, called "a Nazarene" (see Matt. 2:23). This lowly "Shoot" grows out of Jesse's roots!

But what heights of glory rest upon this lowly One (vv. 2-8), eventually resulting in the earth being "full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (v. 9). To this Sign, or "Ensign," all "in that day" shall seek, and His rest shall be glory (v. 10). Would to God that more sought Him truly and sincerely now!

With what a suitable burst of praise this section closes, "THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH AND MY SONG" (Isa. 12:2). "SING UNTO THE LORD; FOR HE HATH DONE EXCELLENT THINGS: THIS IS KNOWN IN ALL THE EARTH" (Isa. 12:5).

Section 1. Chapters 13-27

The Throne

The predictions of the second section of the first part of Isaiah are both striking and stirring. In the first section of this part of the prophecy we have found the truth, which gives us an understanding of this that follows. It is the Virgin's Son, whose name is Emmanuel, who shall "sit upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice for ever." He is the divine explanation of the wonders here unfolded. The many and mighty overturnings of empires and kingdoms in these remarkable chapters are to make way for Him. As we remember Jesus Christ of the seed of David, raised from among the dead (2 Tim. 2:8), all will be clear and plain to us.

The glorious government of Christ, with its great, widespread, peaceful, and rich blessing, shall surely come. He shall sit in divine and judicial right upon the throne; but thanks be to God and our Father for the grace which has already made our glad hearts to rejoice in Him, before "that day" of His kingdom glory which has drawn us to Him during the time of His rejection, when Messiah is cut off and has nothing. It is an unspeakable privilege and honour to be allowed to "suffer with Him" now, before we "reign with Him" then, when in regal splendour and mighty majesty He shall worthily fill the throne. He came to His own, but Israel did not receive Him. He was in the world, but the world did not know Him. Some have received Him, and right is theirs--theirs only--to take the place of the children of God, for such are born of Him.

Isaiah 16:5 directs us to what is immediately before the mind of the Holy Spirit in this section. "In mercy shall the throne be established: and He shalt sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David."

But there are great obstacles in the way. There are proud and princely powers of profanity and wickedness which dispute the establishment of this throne, therefore "the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers" must be broken (Isa. 14:5). And for this purpose God will muster the armies of His wrath and prepare the weapons of His indignation (Isa. 13). The world powers must give way. The Lord Jesus must be enthroned in right and might. The oppressor, and Babylon the golden city, must cease. Babylon is the oppressor. It was Babylon politically which oppressed God's people Israel. It is in principle religious Babylon which oppresses today. In both ways, therefore, it must be overthrown, to make room for Christ and His own; for Christ and His earthly people Israel, and for Christ the Son of God and His heavenly assembly. Then shall multitudes mourn aloud, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen!" (See Isa. 21:9, and likewise Rev. 18:2.)

Others must also be brought low! Palistina must be dissolved! Proud Moab be stricken! (Isa. 14-16).

A mercantile power will seek to aid in the restoration of God's earthly people to their land (Isa. 18), but the effort will fail of final success.

Egypt and Ethiopia are shaken (Isa. 19-20), but it is deeply interesting to notice that when our Lord Jesus Christ rules with authority and power, Israel shall be "third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: whom the Lord of Hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be EGYPT MY PEOPLE, and ASSYRIA OF MY HANDS, and ISRAEL MINE INHERITANCE" (Isa. 19:24-25).

Before that day, however, as we have said, there must take place the great and important changes spoken of in this section. Mighty mountains must be overturned! High hills shall be cast down! Great governments and lesser shall crash to their fall! These prophecies of widespread destruction might well appal us did we not gaze upon them from a quiet and strong fortress, the Lord Himself being our "Refuge from the storm" (Isa. 25:4). He keeps "in perfect peace" those who trust alone in Him (Isa. 26:3).

In Isaiah 24 the Holy Spirit describes the final dissolution, in the midst of which the saved shall sing, as they see the majesty of the Lord appear, glowing with glory and splendour. "Behold, the Lord makes The earth empty, and makes it waste, and turns it upside down . . . Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth . . . The earth is clean dissolved . . . the earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard" (vv. 1, 17, 19, 20). "From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs. Glory to the RIGHTEOUS ONE!" (v. 16). Listen once again; how loudly swells the joyful song! "They shall left up their voice, they shall SING FOR THE MAJESTY OF THE LORD" (v. 14). The brightness of His majesty will be so glorious in its splendour that we learn from the last verse that "the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." Right worthily will our blessed and adorable Saviour fill the throne of this world's government in that day.

It is no wonder that Isaiah 25 follows with an outburst of "praise," and 26 with a "song," and that 27 ends with "worship."

If the glory of our Lord and Saviour is so great in connection with the earthly throne, human language must necessarily fail to describe that which the assembly shall share with Him above, when all things in the heavens, as well as upon the earth, shall be headed up in Him, who is the Christ (Eph. 1). Oh that we might be strengthened mightily of the Holy Spirit, according to the riches of the Father's glory, so that, as He who is the centre of all the glory dwells in our hearts, through faith, we might be able to take firm hold of the breadth and length and depth and height; and know, too, that which is even greater still and more precious than the wonderful glory, THE LOVE OF THE CHRIST--the love of the One who is the Head and the centre of all, the love of the Christ which surpasses knowledge.

The Golden Nail

There could be no entrance to, or understanding of, these scriptures apart from the truth concerning Him who is the Seed of David and who has the "key of David."

To those who keep His word and do not deny His Name, amid the ecclesiastical breakdown of this present day, as described in Revelation 2:3, the Holy and the True, who "has the key of David," promises, "because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee out of the hour of trial which is about to come upon the whole habitable world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

It is only in Revelation 3:7, and in our section (Isa. 22:22), that we read of this "key" being in the immediate possession of One "who opens and no one shall shut, and shuts and no one shall open."

And it is that which the Holy Spirit gives us in Revelation which enables us to appreciate the right and rich value of our discovery in Isaiah 22.

Eliakim carries the key of the house of David here. His name means "whom God will raise up," and he plainly points on to our Lord Jesus Christ, whom God has raised up, to secure all "the sure mercies of David," the promises connected with David's Seed. He is robed and strengthened, and the government committed into his hand, and he becomes a father to the people (v. 21).

Those who are addressed in Revelation 3 have "a little strength," but here we are told in verses 23 and 24 that we have One on whom we can rely in the fullest possible way, for He is fastened as a nail in "a sure place." The nail might be all that it should be, but it must also be fixed in a firm spot, if that which is entrusted to it for support is to be secure. This golden nail, which we behold here, is also "a glorious throne to His Father's house" (v. 23). He is also the One who has "the key," as we have seen, and is therefore none other than Jesus Christ raised from among the dead. He is indeed set in "a sure place," in the very glory of God, His Father's house. The children of God, do indeed find Him worthy of all their trust; but it is also declared that all the glory of His father's house" is likewise entrusted to Him; all securely hangs on this golden nail of divine providing. There can be no giving way or break-down here, though all else is shaken. Even the type gives way (v. 25), but the glorious Antitype, our risen and glorified Saviour, remains. To Him, the Son, it is said, "THY THRONE, O GOD, IS FOR EVER AND EVER." Soon our Lord Jesus Christ, the One who died for our sins, whom we trust now, shall be publicly manifested, in marvellous majesty, crowned with many crowns, decked with many diadems.

"Thou art coming, crownèd Saviour!

Not the second time for sin;--

Thou art coming, thronèd Saviour!

Bringing all the glory in.

All Thy Father's house, its glory

Hangs, by sure behest, on Thee!

O the sweetness of the story!

Saviour come! We wait for Thee!"

The Altar, the Pillar, and the Feast

We have already noticed that Egypt and Assyria are to be blessed along with Israel in the day of blessing from the Lord, but this blessing is inseparably connected with "the SIGN in the depth and the height." So we read, "It shall be for A SIGN and for a witness . . . in the land of Egypt. He shall send them a Saviour, a great One, and He shall deliver them" (Isa. 19:20). The "Sign" is called in verse 19 "AN ALTAR" and "A PILLAR." There is only one Person who answers to this striking twofold description of the "Sign." That person is Christ, who has stooped to the unsounded depth of sorrow and suffering at Calvary, where He offered Himself without spot to God as a sacrifice, and who has been raised again from among the dead and exalted to the height--to the throne, "JESUS CHRIST, the faithful Witness, the First-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him who loves us, and has washed us from our sins in

His own blood, and made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father: to Him be the glory and the might to the ages of ages. Amen" (Rev. 1:5-6). The secret of Egypt's future fullness is surely explained by this "Sign." For our Lord Jesus Christ alone in the greatness of His work and the excellence of His glory makes all these things clear to us. He is the Altar and the Pillar.

Isaiah 25-27 close the second section of Book I and introduce us to joyful festivities; the feast of fat things, of wines on the lees. It is enjoyed on the mount of royal grace (Isa. 25:6), not on the fiery mount of law-giving. The praise is full! The song is sweet! The worship is true!

The provision "in this mountain" is wonderfully abundant (Isa. 25:6). Fatness, fullness, and joy, well refined and pure, are here. "In this mountain" the veil that covers the face of all the troubled nations shall be taken away by the One who robbed death of its sting and the grave of its victory. He alone, the glorious Fulfiller of the promises and prophecy, shall reign in risen life and glory! For He is "Jesus Christ of the seed of David, raised from among the dead." True believers know this royal mount in its gracious meaning already. As "risen with Christ" they sit at the feast. "He will swallow up death in victory" (v. 8), confirms this, for the Holy Spirit takes up these words and uses them in 1 Corinthians 15:54. We can say even now in the words of verse 57, "thanks be to God who gives us the victory by our Lord Jesus Christ!" He is risen and the victory is ours!

Again, we read, "in this mountain shall the hand of the Lord rest" (v. 10). "We have waited for HIM," is said twice in verse 9. For whom? Our Lord Jesus Christ! This waiting will not be in vain! His victory over death and the grave will be known and enjoyed then in this mountain by the believing remnant of God's people on earth. Like Thomas, who said, "My Lord and my God," when he saw Him in resurrection, they also will say, "Lo, this is our God, this is our Lord!" (v. 9). "We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation!" Then the Lord's rest will be blessedly realized "in this mountain." It is no wonder the high praises of One so great ring out in triumph here! "O Lord, thou art my God, I will exalt thee, I will PRAISE THY NAME!" (v. 1).

How beautiful is the song that greets us in Isaiah 26 after all the turbulent scenes of the previous chapters, which were nevertheless necessary to clear the way for abiding peace! The singers have learned that "favour" will not teach the wicked righteousness (v. 10), nor bring them to "behold the majesty of the Lord." They have also learned that it is when God's "judgments are in the earth," breaking the staff of the wicked and casting down great governments, that "the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (v. 9). These are wholesome lessons.

This song, so supremely sweet, is sung in the joy of "salvation" (v. 1), and of the "perfect peace" which the Lord gives (v. 3), and of the "everlasting strength" which is in Him (v. 4).

The song is sung also in the sense of resurrection, as the feast of Isaiah 25 is enjoyed. This we see from the remarkable words of verse 19, where Israel is said to rise as from the dead by His power! They then call to others, "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead." They rejoice and sing in "the land of the living," before the Lord, the Righteous One! It will be like life from the dead! And away from the uttermost parts of the earth comes echoing back the loud and joyful chorus, "GLORY TO THE RIGHTEOUS ONE!" "They shall sing for the majesty of the Lord and cry aloud from the sea" (Isa. 24:14).

The terrible power of Satan in the tossing sea of the peoples and the nations is destroyed. Israel is preserved and watered and kept, day and night, as a beautiful garden, a vineyard of pure wine (Isa. 27:2).

One by one they had been gathered home, once "ready to perish" and "outcasts," but now with truth and love they "WORSHIP" the Lord, Jehovah, in the holy mount at Jerusalem (v. 13). It is always thus with "the true worshippers," whether in that day or this. In the hearts of the worshippers of this day, who worship in spirit and in truth, the sense of grace is deeply imbedded by the Holy Spirit of God. "Ready to perish," they were as the woman of John 4, but grace has filled and satisfied their souls. "Outcasts" also, as the man in John 9, they have learned the PERSONAL GLORY of their Saviour; He is none less than "THE SON OF GOD," and they worship in His presence. His precious blood has cleansed their guilt and cleared their consciences. They are purged worshippers, and in the beauty of holiness, boldly entering the very holiest of all, because of the infinite value of the work, and the priceless perfections of their glorious Saviour, the Son of God; their full hearts overflow before Him in worship and adoration. No ecclesiastical organization or gorgeous ritual can produce this, nothing can, in fact, but the knowledge of the SON OF GOD, the knowledge of Him who is shown by resurrection to be the Son of God truly, though David's seed according to the flesh.

Israel, Egypt, and Assyria under Christ

Referring back again very briefly to the close of Isaiah 19, it is most interesting to note that the two nations which were the cause of so much trouble to Israel shall be blessed of the Lord along with her in the day of Christ. What a glorious display it will be of the sovereign mercy as well as of the wisdom of our God

Verse 23 shows that peaceful relations and interchange will be maintained between Assyria on the north and Egypt on the south, and Israel in between the two, the national head and centre: no longer a hindrance as aforetime, but a help, given of God to sustain the system of nations which will then obtain in the world.

Verse 24 shows that these three nations together (restored under Christ Jesus) will be a means of blessing "in the midst of the earth." Under our Lord Jesus Christ, the KING OF KINGS AND THE LORD OF LORDS, they will form a threefold power for maintaining widespread blessing. Their territory forms the natural centre also.

Verse 25 shows that Israel will surely be the special earthly, national "inheritance" of the Lord, as the assembly, of which we form part through surpassing grace, will be His heavenly possession, His bride; but how precious to see He will call, Egypt "My people," and Assyria "the work of My hands." How it magnifies His mercy! How it teaches us of Himself, of His goodness!

To understand God's thoughts as to this future system of nations rightly, it should be remembered that such a system was before Him in Deuteronomy 32:8; and Ezekiel speaks of it as "Eden," "the garden of God." Israel, Egypt, Assyria, etc., which were stately trees in this "garden" planted by God, were cut down, and a new system of nations and government came into force, finding its head, not in Israel, but in Babylon. This latter system, of which Daniel treats and not Ezekiel, continues to this day. It is a marvellous system, symbolized in the great image (Dan. 2) of appalling developments. Christ suffered under it, and the assembly is being formed for glory during its prolongation. It will, however, be utterly ground to dust when the Stone smites it; when our Lord Jesus Christ comes; when He takes the power and the glory which rightly follows His sufferings and rejection. In that day the original system which God had before Him will be set up in Christ, the risen One from the dead. Then, indeed, under Him, Israel, Egypt, and Assyria will be "a blessing in the midst of the earth." All depends on Christ risen.

Section 1. Isaiah 28-35

We now pass to the closing scenes of the remaining sections of Isaiah (I). Isaiah 28-35 present "the King in His beauty," reigning in righteousness; while Isaiah 36-39 form a distinct historical section of striking significance.

Isaiah (I) has four separate sections. Isaiah (II) has three. This is full of meaning, proving to us that in the God-inspired Word every detail is taken into account--the numerical as well as the literal structure of it. Isaiah (I) in its four sections gives us the outward and public history; Isaiah (II) in its three sections the inward and moral history; and the 4+3 =7 showing the perfection (for which 7 stands in Scripture) of this book, in connection with which the religious rationalists of the day are displaying their folly, sawing it assunder, which, as it is commonly reported, the religionists of Isaiah's day did with the writer of it.

But our business is not with them and their dastardly work, but with the unfading and indestructible treasures which the Holy Spirit has placed here for us, for here we find "things concerning HIMSELF," and this is their wealth which we may possess.

In the last section mighty monarchies are overturned, as great mountains torn up by their roots, to make way for the rightful reign of the Son of David. Then the whole earth is clean dissolved and moved exceedingly! But in these chapters we see that woe comes upon the proud, the profane, and the rebellious people who are already possessing the land which is Jehovah's land, "the glory of all lands," for how could our Lord Jesus Christ establish His reign of righteousness amidst such surroundings?

The Sure Foundation

The foundations of His throne must be firm; and therefore we are again reminded here that the Sign must appear in "the depth" first. "The sufferings of Christ and the glory to follow," Christ must first "suffer and enter into His glory." And so we read again of the precious Stone of Isaiah 8 in 28:16, "I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a TRIED STONE, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: He that believes shall not make haste." He who becomes a sure foundation, the foundation upon which so great and majestic a superstructure is to rest in perfect stability, must indeed be proved by trials and testings which will leave no doubt as to His everlasting competency in the minds of the many myriads that are to have Him as their foundation. This precious Stone, this foundation Stone has been tested. He is indeed "A TRIED STONE," and proved to be "A SURE FOUNDATION." Others have been tried, only to prove themselves sure failures! Even the well-beloved and highly honoured Peter failed, and it is for our instruction that this is recorded. He failed in forbidding these very sufferings of Christ; he failed in denying Him at the time of His sorest trials; he failed in falling under metropolitan influence, so as to practically deny the truth of the gospel and of the church (Gal. 2). It is no wonder that he points away from himself to this "precious Stone" in his First Epistle! It is a wonder, though, that so many should still claim Peter as the rock foundation of the assembly. God's Word tells us that he was the apostle to the Jews, as Paul was the apostle sent to the Gentiles, and who therefore most naturally was inspired to write the Epistle to the Gentile Roman believers in his day. "Other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid, Jesus Christ."

"The church's one Foundation

Is Jesus Christ, our Lord."

Who else could have endured the bitter trials and testings which were His? The sore sufferings at the hands of man? The appalling power of the prince of darkness? The fiery indignation of an outraged God that He suffered as He endured the stroke of sin's just judgment? Who? None but the sinless, spotless

One! The precious Stone!

THE TRIED STONE! He not only endured the trials and testings, and came through them more than a triumphant conqueror, but in that fierce and fiery furnace His moral glories and excellences shone out in their own native brilliance. He spake rightly! His silences were eloquent! His actions, like His words, told His intrinsic worth! Silver and gold and precious stones in their divine and spiritual meaning expressed their never-to-be-forgotten perfectness in Him, when in "the depth" of sorrow and solitary suffering He was "the Tried Stone."

Truly His worthiness, and His trustworthiness also, has been thus proven. It can be said, "He that believes on Him shall not be confounded." We can rest with implicit confidence here! The foundation has been tried. It is firm, immovable, "A SURE FOUNDATION!"

Rear the superstructure of splendour and glory higher than the earth, yea, higher than the heavens themselves, our Lord and Saviour, the Christ, is divinely capable of sustaining it all. Yea, He alone, the perfect One, the proven One, and none other! Only He who is the Sign in "the depth" and "the height."

Let the "crown of pride," then, be trodden under the foot (Isa. 28:3). Let the scornful religious leaders, with their refuge of lies and their agreement with Antichrist, be swept away (v. 15), so that the Lord Himself may be "for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the believing remnant" (v. 5).

Woe to the "crown of pride!" Woe to the city where David dwelt, now so "degraded" (v. 29)! "Woe to the rebellious" children (v. 30)! "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help" (v. 31)! But the necessary lesson shall be well learned by the believing remnant, and the "King shall reign" (v. 32); then, woe to those who took treacherous advantage of His suffering people (33)! "It is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion" (Isa. 34:8). That being settled by the righteous Lord, then there shall be a full restoration, as we see in the final beautiful words of our section, "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. 35:10).

After this swift survey of our eight chapters, we shall be now at leisure to gaze adoringly at "the height" of glory which is herein shown to us, as connected with our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. Pride, scorn, and rebellion are righteously removed, and we see, rising radiantly before our eyes like the sun in its splendour, the glorious majesty of the Messiah, the Christ, the King, brightening and blessing all with His beams, and especially where, in the days of His deep sorrow, the darkest shadows enshrouded Him: even where they murdered Him on the cursed tree! There is seen the brightest of His earthly shining. What a triumph of good over evil! It is just like our blessed God to act thus.

Thrice happy are they who have already accepted God's holy judgment of sin in its root and its fruit, at the cross. They are indeed at liberty, in the life of Christ risen, to be led by the Holy Spirit to behold the glory of Christ, and to see unfolding the things concerning Himself which are enfolded in all the Scriptures of truth. These things which are hidden from the natural eye are all clear and beautiful to the spiritual eye. But let never so much favour be shown to the fallen, unregenerate man, he will not behold the beauty of the Lord; nay, "they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

The righteous judgment of God, at the cross, against sin, must be accepted. There only can the way be found to the restful fields of spiritual wealth contained in the Word. Then made free in Christ Jesus, who is raised from the dead, having finished the work which He came to do, we may know the things of the Spirit,

and "the mind of the Spirit, which is life and peace." It is true as to His work on the cross, and also consequently as to His work of government on the throne--"the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places" (Isa. 32:17-18). It is as thus blessed even now, through the cross, that our hearts rise to rejoice in Christ Jesus and in His manifold perfections.

The King in His Beauty

"The King in His beauty" delights to have us near to Him. He died that we might be with Him for ever, to share His heavenly glory. And what must that be, when it is said of His earthly glory, "The Lord is exalted; for He dwells on high: He has filled Zion with judgment and righteousness. And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the Lord is his treasure?" (Isa. 33:5-6). Rulers without count have come to grief because of failure in some or all of these necessary attributes of a throne! Kingdom after kingdom has decayed or been destroyed for the selfsame reason! But His throne takes character from Himself who is just and righteous altogether, whose wisdom and knowledge and understanding cannot be numbered; yea, who is Himself "the wisdom of God," and likewise "the salvation of God." Stable, indeed, then must the throne be on which He sits. But though these things must necessarily be connected with the stability of a throne which is to bring blessing to men, yet power and might is also there. "Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done; and, ye that are near, acknowledge My might" (Isa. 33:13). It is there to be put into operation if necessary, and so we read, "The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness has surprised the hypocrites" (v. 14). But the throne is for the blessing of men, so the believing remnant who have waited for Him rejoice in "their glorious Lord." They say, He is "unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our law-giver, the Lord is our King; He will save us" (vv. 21-22).

Another "king" will oppress and persecute them, but he (Antichrist) will be cast into the place of his doom, "for the king it is prepared," where the fire is kindled by the "breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone" (Isa. 30:33).

The Lord will save them by overthrowing the oppressor. Antichrist, who is the oppressor, will climb to "the height," and from thence will be his fall, for, "before a fall comes pride, but before honour humility." Antichrist will pretend great humility, for he will come "like a lamb," but he is at heart "a dragon" (Rev. 13:11). This is the eagerly-looked-for superman, energized by Satanic cunning and power.

The true Christ, Israel's deliverer and our Saviour and Lord, has been highly exalted because He first humbled Himself; for His humility He is honoured in "the height" of the throne.

Kings will be astonished when they see the despised One glorified, and the proud Assyrian oppressor "and his princes shall be afraid of THE ENSIGN" when He shall be seen in Zion (Isa. 31:9). "The Ensign" is the sprout of Jesse, of the line of David, our Lord Jesus Christ (see Isa. 11:10). "Behold, a King shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment" (Isa. 32:1). Many a rightful heir has come to a throne only to abuse the power that is conferred, but Jesus Christ of the seed of David, raised from the dead, will reign in righteousness. Under Him shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, for He is Abraham's seed, as well as David's. This groaning earth will rejoice when He who is meek and lowly in heart administers the glorious abundance of His royal blessing. Happy, too, the princes who are associated with Him in the ruling of that day. "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them;

and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom

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