

NEW KING JAMES VERSION™

THE
MAXWELL
LEADERSHIP
BIBLE



LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP FROM
THE WORD OF GOD BY

JOHN C. MAXWELL

— THIRD EDITION —

THE
MAXWELL
LEADERSHIP
BIBLE

THIRD EDITION

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Introduction to ISAIAH

We remember Isaiah as one of the greatest prophets in Jewish history and as one of the most powerful models in the Bible. The book that bears his name describes his consistent lifestyle, his uncompromising convictions, and his clear vision that drove him to continue speaking out despite the unfaithfulness of his people.

Isaiah's lifestyle reminds us that we cannot separate a leader's words and walk. A leader must first be an example to the people. People do what people see. Isaiah led with integrity. Integrity means "oneness," the quality of purity and consistency. When we speak of the integrity of Scripture, we mean that it proclaims one consistent message. This word describes Isaiah, a man of God full of consistency.

Isaiah's convictions teach us about avoiding ungodly compromise. He and his contemporary, the prophet Micah, both raised the bar for the people by holding to God's standards with unswerving determination. While leaders must remain flexible with their methods, they cannot compromise their convictions.

Finally, Isaiah furnishes a beautiful case study of a leader who led from vision. He describes a God-given vision that drives him to fulfill his calling as a leader. He clings to it despite rejection (6:9). Throughout the book he communicates his vision to the people and warns them to repent. Before he finishes, he has influenced King Hezekiah to bring about national reforms. Through his tenacious intercession with God, Sennacherib's entire army is destroyed (2 Kin. 19:36, 37; 2 Chr. 32:20–23; Is. 37:36–38).

Consistent Lifestyle . . . Uncompromising Convictions . . . Clear Vision

God's Role in Isaiah

As the One who inspired both Isaiah's ministry and his writings, God again reveals Himself as the Leader of leaders. We see the Lord telling Isaiah what to say to the people and warning them of the impending judgment if they fail to repent. God also gives Isaiah visions about the future. While the first 39 chapters lay out some bleak moments, the remaining 27 provide strong hope. Isaiah predicts the coming Messiah as the Ultimate Leader for the people of Israel. The Messiah embodies all the positive qualities of an effective leader.

Leaders in Isaiah

Isaiah, King Hezekiah, the Messiah

Other People of Influence in Isaiah

Kings of Judah and Israel, leaders of Assyria, Babylon, Edom, Egypt, Tyre, Cush, Philistia, Moab, Damascus (Syria), Dedan, and Kedar

Lessons in Leadership

- Vision is born out of values and ethics—they must align.
- The measure of a person is what he or she does with power.
- Leaders create atmospheres and environments for growth and success.
- Ability, opportunity, and desire make up the components of a call to lead.

- God reduces prideful leaders but resources humble leaders.
- Strategic planning that ignores God and the changing culture is doomed to fail.
- Insecure leaders inevitably destroy people; secure leaders develop people.
- The higher leaders climb, the fewer there are who can hold them accountable.
- God Himself provides the ultimate model of servant leadership.

LEADERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS IN ISAIAH

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I The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

The Wickedness of Judah

² 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;

³ The ox knows its owner

And the donkey its master’s crib;

But Israel does not know,
My people do not consider.”

⁴ Alas, sinful nation,

A people laden with iniquity,

A brood of evildoers,

Children who are corrupters!

They have forsaken the LORD,

They have provoked to anger

The Holy One of Israel,

They have turned away backward.

⁵ Why should you be stricken again?

You will revolt more and more.

The whole head is sick,

And the whole heart faints.

⁶ From the sole of the foot even to the head,
There is no soundness in it,
But wounds and bruises and
putrefying sores;
They have not been closed or bound up,
Or soothed with ointment.

⁷ Your country *is* desolate,
Your cities *are* burned with fire;
Strangers devour your land
in your presence;
And *it is* desolate, as overthrown
by strangers.

⁸ So the daughter of Zion is left
as a booth in a vineyard,
As a hut in a garden of cucumbers,
As a besieged city.

⁹ Unless the LORD of hosts
Had left to us a very small remnant,
We would have become like Sodom,
We would have been made like Gomorrah.

¹⁰ Hear the word of the LORD,
You rulers of Sodom;
Give ear to the law of our God,
You people of Gomorrah:

¹¹ “To what purpose *is* the multitude
of your sacrifices to Me?”
Says the LORD.

- "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams
And the fat of fed cattle.
I do not delight in the blood of bulls,
Or of lambs or goats.
- 12 "When you come to appear before Me,
Who has required this from your hand,
To trample My courts?
- 13 Bring no more futile sacrifices;
Incense is an abomination to Me.
The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and
the calling of assemblies—
I cannot endure iniquity and
the sacred meeting.
- 14 Your New Moons and your
appointed feasts
My soul hates;
They are a trouble to Me,
I am weary of bearing *them*.
- 15 When you spread out your hands,
I will hide My eyes from you;
Even though you make many prayers,
I will not hear.
Your hands are full of blood.

Growth Occurs When Vision and Values Match

Isaiah 1:10–17

God scolds the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem—even calling them rulers of Sodom and people of Gomorrah, the wicked cities He wiped out in Genesis 19—because they continued to perform religious rituals long after their hearts had grown cold and distant toward God. In other words, they continued to pursue a godly vision far from the values that birthed it. They had become empty, hollow leaders.

God resents perfunctory behavior. He doesn't want leaders who merely go through the motions. Leaders can look good while pursuing a worthwhile vision that they no longer consider valuable. Leaders find power only when . . .

1. Their vision and values match.
2. Their lifestyle and lip service match.
3. Their conduct and character match.
4. Their image and integrity match.
5. Their promises and production match.
6. Their strategy and support match.

- 16 "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean;
Put away the evil of your doings
from before My eyes.
Cease to do evil,
Learn to do good;
Seek justice,
Rebuke the oppressor;^a
Defend the fatherless,
Plead for the widow.
- 17 "Come now, and let us reason together,"
Says the LORD,
"Though your sins are like scarlet,
They shall be as white as snow;
Though they are red like crimson,
They shall be as wool.
- 19 If you are willing and obedient,
You shall eat the good of the land;
20 But if you refuse and rebel,
You shall be devoured by the sword";
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

The Degenerate City

- 21 How the faithful city has become a harlot!
It was full of justice;
Righteousness lodged in it,
But now murderers.
- 22 Your silver has become dross,
Your wine mixed with water.
- 23 Your princes *are* rebellious,
And companions of thieves;
Everyone loves bribes,
And follows after rewards.
They do not defend the fatherless,
Nor does the cause of the widow
come before them.
- 24 Therefore the Lord says,
The LORD of hosts, the Mighty
One of Israel,
"Ah, I will rid Myself of My adversaries,
And take vengeance on My enemies.
- 25 I will turn My hand against you,
And thoroughly purge away your dross,
And take away all your alloy.
- 26 I will restore your judges as at the first,
And your counselors as at the beginning.
Afterward you shall be called the city
of righteousness, the faithful city."
- 27 Zion shall be redeemed with justice,
And her penitents with righteousness.

1:17^a Some ancient versions read *the oppressed*.

28 The destruction of transgressors and
of sinners *shall be* together,
And those who forsake the LORD
shall be consumed.

29 For they^a shall be ashamed
of the terebinth trees
Which you have desired;
And you shall be embarrassed
because of the gardens
Which you have chosen.

30 For you shall be as a terebinth
whose leaf fades,
And as a garden that has no water.

31 The strong shall be as tinder,
And the work of it as a spark;
Both will burn together,
And no one shall quench *them*.

The Future House of God

2 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw
concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

2 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days
That the mountain of the LORD's house
Shall be established on the
top of the mountains,
And shall be exalted above the hills;
And all nations shall flow to it.

3 Many people shall come and say,
"Come, and let us go up to the
mountain of the LORD,
To the house of the God of Jacob;
He will teach us His ways,
And we shall walk in His paths."
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

4 He shall judge between the nations,
And rebuke many people;
They shall beat their swords into plowshares,
And their spears into pruning hooks;
Nation shall not lift up sword
against nation,
Neither shall they learn war anymore.

The Day of the LORD

5 O house of Jacob, come and let us walk
In the light of the LORD.

6 For You have forsaken Your
people, the house of Jacob,
Because they are filled with eastern ways;
They *are* soothsayers like the Philistines,
And they are pleased with the
children of foreigners.

7 Their land is also full of silver and gold,
And there is no end to their treasures;
Their land is also full of horses,
And there is no end to their chariots.

8 Their land is also full of idols;
They worship the work of their own hands,
That which their own fingers have made.

9 People bow down,
And each man humbles himself;
Therefore do not forgive them.

10 Enter into the rock, and hide in the dust,
From the terror of the LORD
And the glory of His majesty.

11 The lofty looks of man shall be humbled,
The haughtiness of men shall
be bowed down,
And the LORD alone shall be
exalted in that day.

12 For the day of the LORD of hosts
Shall come upon everything proud and lofty,
Upon everything lifted up—
And it shall be brought low—

13 Upon all the cedars of Lebanon
that are high and lifted up,
And upon all the oaks of Bashan;

14 Upon all the high mountains,
And upon all the hills *that are* lifted up;

15 Upon every high tower,
And upon every fortified wall;

16 Upon all the ships of Tarshish,
And upon all the beautiful sloops.

17 The loftiness of man shall be bowed down,
And the haughtiness of men
shall be brought low;

The LORD alone will be exalted in that day,
18 But the idols He shall utterly abolish.

19 They shall go into the holes of the rocks,
And into the caves of the earth,
From the terror of the LORD
And the glory of His majesty,
When He arises to shake the earth mightily.

20 In that day a man will cast
away his idols of silver
And his idols of gold,
Which they made, *each* for
himself to worship,
To the moles and bats,

1:29^a Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Vulgate;
some Hebrew manuscripts and Targum read *you*.

- 21 To go into the clefts of the rocks,
And into the crags of the rugged rocks,
From the terror of the LORD
And the glory of His majesty,
When He arises to shake the earth mightily.
- 22 Sever yourselves from such a man,
Whose breath *is* in his nostrils;
For of what account is he?

Judgment on Judah and Jerusalem

- 3** For behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts,
Takes away from Jerusalem
and from Judah
The stock and the store,
The whole supply of bread and
the whole supply of water;
2 The mighty man and the man of war,
The judge and the prophet,
And the diviner and the elder;
3 The captain of fifty and the honorable man,
The counselor and the skillful artisan,
And the expert enchanter.

Judah's Lousy Leaders: Everything Rises and Falls on Leadership

Isaiah 3:1-4

God had a strategy for judging Judah, and part of His judgment involved removing good leaders from the nation. No organization or nation can prosper without good leadership. People suffer with poor leaders at the helm. God knew the way to impact the nation was to change its leadership.

- 4 "I will give children *to be* their princes,
And babes shall rule over them.
5 The people will be oppressed,
Every one by another and every
one by his neighbor;
The child will be insolent toward
the elder,
And the base toward the honorable."
- 6 When a man takes hold of his brother
In the house of his father, *saying*,
"You have clothing;
You be our ruler,
And *let* these ruins *be* under your power,"^a

- 7 In that day he will protest, saying,
"I cannot cure *your* ills,
For in my house *is* neither
food nor clothing;
Do not make me a ruler of the people."
- 8 For Jerusalem stumbled,
And Judah is fallen,
Because their tongue and their doings
Are against the LORD,
To provoke the eyes of His glory.
9 The look on their countenance
witnesses against them,
And they declare their sin as Sodom;
They do not hide *it*.
Woe to their soul!
For they have brought evil
upon themselves.
- 10 "Say to the righteous that *it*
shall be well with them,
For they shall eat the fruit of their doings.
11 Woe to the wicked! *It shall be ill with him*,
For the reward of his hands
shall be given him.
12 *As for My people, children*
are their oppressors,
And women rule over them.
O My people! Those who lead
you cause *you* to err,
And destroy the way of your paths."

Oppression and Luxury Condemned

- 13 The LORD stands up to plead,
And stands to judge the people.
14 The LORD will enter into judgment
With the elders of His people
And His princes:
"For you have eaten up the vineyard;
The plunder of the poor *is* in your houses.
15 What do you mean by crushing My people
And grinding the faces of the poor?"
Says the Lord GOD of hosts.
- 16 Moreover the LORD says:
"Because the daughters of Zion
are haughty,
And walk with outstretched necks
And wanton eyes,
Walking and mincing *as* they go,
Making a jingling with their feet,

3:6^aLiterally *hand*

17 Therefore the Lord will strike
with a scab
The crown of the head of the
daughters of Zion,
And the LORD will uncover
their secret parts.”

18 In that day the Lord will take
away the finery:
The jingling anklets, the scarves,
and the crescents;
19 The pendants, the bracelets, and the veils;
20 The headdresses, the leg ornaments,
and the headbands;
The perfume boxes, the charms,
21 and the rings;
The nose jewels,
22 the festal apparel, and the mantles;
The outer garments, the purses,
23 and the mirrors;
The fine linen, the turbans, and the robes.

24 And so it shall be:

Instead of a sweet smell there
will be a stench;
Instead of a sash, a rope;
Instead of well-set hair, baldness;
Instead of a rich robe, a
girding of sackcloth;
And branding instead of beauty.
25 Your men shall fall by the sword,
And your mighty in the war.

26 Her gates shall lament and mourn,
And she *being* desolate shall
sit on the ground.

4 And in that day seven women shall
take hold of one man, saying,
“We will eat our own food and
wear our own apparel;
Only let us be called by your name,
To take away our reproach.”

The Renewal of Zion

2 In that day the Branch of the LORD
shall be beautiful and glorious;
And the fruit of the earth *shall be*
excellent and appealing
For those of Israel who have escaped.

3 And it shall come to pass that *he who is left* in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy—everyone who is recorded among the living in Jerusalem. 4 When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and purged the blood of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning, 5 then the LORD will create above every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and above her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night. For over all the glory there *will be* a covering. 6 And there will be a tabernacle for shade in the daytime from the heat, for a place of refuge, and for a shelter from storm and rain.

The Law of Navigation: How Leaders Lead

Isaiah 3:14, 15

The more power leaders gain, the more they reveal of themselves. Power causes the heart to disclose its contents.

The leaders described in Isaiah 3 displayed their corrupt hearts the moment they won a position of authority. Good or bad, leaders determine where and when the organization goes; this is the ripple effect of the Law of Navigation. The Lord responded to these corrupt leaders by sounding judgment against them.

Leaders must consider the impact of their every move. Leaders always lead. There are no time-outs! There never comes a time when it doesn't matter what you do. Think of your leadership like a diet. Suppose you eat right in the restaurant with friends, but then go home and consume a whole strawberry cheesecake. You won't lose weight that way! What you eat eventually shows. In the same way, those you lead eventually reflect your leadership. Your navigation as a leader depends on the following:

1. When you know where you are going, you gain *conviction*.
2. When you have been there before, you gain *credibility*.
3. When you can take someone with you, you gain *connection*.

God's Disappointing Vineyard

5 Now let me sing to my Well-beloved
A song of my Beloved regarding
His vineyard:

My Well-beloved has a vineyard
On a very fruitful hill.

2 He dug it up and cleared out its stones,
And planted it with the choicest vine.
He built a tower in its midst,
And also made a winepress in it;
So He expected *it* to bring forth *good* grapes,
But it brought forth wild grapes.

3 “And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem
and men of Judah,
Judge, please, between Me
and My vineyard.

4 What more could have been
done to My vineyard
That I have not done in it?
Why then, when I expected *it* to
bring forth *good* grapes,
Did it bring forth wild grapes?

5 And now, please let Me tell you
what I will do to My vineyard:
I will take away its hedge, and
it shall be burned;
And break down its wall, and it
shall be trampled down.

6 I will lay it waste;
It shall not be pruned or dug,
But there shall come up briars and thorns.
I will also command the clouds
That they rain no rain on it.”

7 For the vineyard of the LORD of
hosts *is* the house of Israel,
And the men of Judah are
His pleasant plant.
He looked for justice, but
behold, oppression;
For righteousness, but behold, a cry *for help*.

Impending Judgment on Excesses

8 Woe to those who join house to house;
They add field to field,
Till *there is* no place
Where they may dwell alone in
the midst of the land!
9 In my hearing the LORD of hosts *said*,
“Truly, many houses shall be desolate,
Great and beautiful ones, without inhabitant.
10 For ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath,
And a homer of seed shall yield one ephah.”

11 Woe to those who rise early in the morning,
That they may follow intoxicating drink;
Who continue until night, *till*
wine inflames them!

The Value of Vision

Isaiah 4:2–6

Isaiah 4 illustrates how good leaders create a climate for growth based on a picture of a preferred future. A strong God-given vision drove all the worthwhile accomplishments recorded in the Bible. Consider the following examples:

Leader

1. Abraham (Gen. 12)
2. Moses (Ex. 3; 4)
3. Joshua (Num. 27)
4. David (1 Chr. 22)
5. Solomon (2 Chr. 28)
6. Nehemiah (Neh. 2)
7. Esther (Esth. 4)
8. Zerubbabel (Hag. 1)
9. Jesus (Matt. 28; Luke 15)
10. Paul (Acts 9)

Vision

1. To create a great nation of people of faith
2. To lead the people of Israel out of Egypt
3. To lead the people of Israel into the Promised Land
4. To build the temple in Jerusalem
5. To complete the building of the temple
6. To rebuild the Jerusalem wall
7. To save the Jewish people from Haman
8. To rebuild the temple
9. To seek and save the lost, and to disciple men to do the same
10. To take the gospel to the Jews and Gentiles

12 The harp and the strings,
The tambourine and flute,
And wine are in their feasts;
But they do not regard the work of the LORD,
Nor consider the operation of His hands.

13 Therefore my people have
gone into captivity,
Because *they have* no knowledge;
Their honorable men *are* famished,
And their multitude dried up with thirst.

14 Therefore Sheol has enlarged itself
And opened its mouth beyond measure;
Their glory and their multitude
and their pomp,
And he who is jubilant, shall descend into it.

15 People shall be brought down,
Each man shall be humbled,
And the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled.

16 But the LORD of hosts shall be
exalted in judgment,
And God who is holy shall be
hallowed in righteousness.

17 Then the lambs shall feed in their pasture,
And in the waste places of the fat
ones strangers shall eat.

18 Woe to those who draw iniquity
with cords of vanity,
And sin as if with a cart rope;
19 That say, "Let Him make speed
and hasten His work,
That we may see *it*;
And let the counsel of the Holy One
of Israel draw near and come,
That we may know *it*."

20 Woe to those who call evil
good, and good evil;
Who put darkness for light,
and light for darkness;
Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

21 Woe to *those who are* wise in their own eyes,
And prudent in their own sight!

22 Woe to men mighty at drinking wine,
Woe to men valiant for mixing
intoxicating drink,

23 Who justify the wicked for a bribe,
And take away justice from
the righteous man!

24 Therefore, as the fire devours the stubble,
And the flame consumes the chaff,

So their root will be as rottenness,
And their blossom will ascend like dust;
Because they have rejected the
law of the LORD of hosts,
And despised the word of the
Holy One of Israel.

25 Therefore the anger of the LORD is
aroused against His people;
He has stretched out His hand against them
And stricken them,
And the hills trembled.
Their carcasses *were* as refuse in
the midst of the streets.

For all this His anger is not turned away,
But His hand *is* stretched out still.

26 He will lift up a banner to the
nations from afar,
And will whistle to them from
the end of the earth;
Surely they shall come with speed, swiftly.

27 No one will be weary or
stumble among them,
No one will slumber or sleep;
Nor will the belt on their loins be loosed,
Nor the strap of their sandals be broken;

28 Whose arrows *are* sharp,
And all their bows bent;
Their horses' hooves will seem like flint,
And their wheels like a whirlwind.

29 Their roaring *will be* like a lion,
They will roar like young lions;
Yes, they will roar
And lay hold of the prey;
They will carry *it* away safely,
And no one will deliver.

30 In that day they will roar against them
Like the roaring of the sea.
And if *one* looks to the land,
Behold, darkness *and* sorrow;
And the light is darkened by the clouds.

Isaiah Called to Be a Prophet

6 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His *robe* filled the temple. ²Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³And one cried to another and said:

"Holy, holy, holy *is* the LORD of hosts;
The whole earth *is* full of His glory!"

⁴And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.

⁵So I said:

“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;
For my eyes have seen the King,
The LORD of hosts.”

⁶Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal *which* he had taken with the tongs from the altar. ⁷And he touched my mouth *with it*, and said:

“Behold, this has touched your lips;
Your iniquity is taken away,
And your sin purged.”

⁸Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying:

“Whom shall I send,
And who will go for Us?”

Then I said, “Here *am* I! Send me.”

⁹And He said, “Go, and tell this people:

‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand;
Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’

The Call of a Leader

Isaiah 6:1–8

The first eight verses of Isaiah 6 illustrate how God calls many leaders. After Isaiah captures a vision for God, the Lord lays out a need for someone to speak for Him. God has a message and is looking for a messenger. God issued a general call, for anyone, and Isaiah took it personally. He did so because of three factors that make up a divine call to lead:

1. **Opportunity:** We see a specific place where we can make a difference. This has to do with timing (v. 1).
2. **Ability:** We recognize that we have the God-given gifts to do something about the need. This has to do with competence (vv. 6, 7).
3. **Desire:** We want to step out and address the need; our hunger pushes us. This has to do with our passion (v. 8).

Responding to a Divine Call

Isaiah 6:1–8

Have you ever noticed that the experience of Isaiah parallels our own process of responding to a divine call to lead?

Isaiah gets a vision of God (Is. 6:1–4), a vision of himself (6:5–7) and a vision of ministry (6:8). At least five stages in this process apply to us:

Stage One: The Revelation of God (vv. 1, 2)

Isaiah saw the Lord in a face-to-face encounter that changed him forever.

Stage Two: The Realization of God’s Holiness (vv. 3, 4)

Isaiah experiences God as holy. Through this encounter, the Lord becomes more than an abstract idea. Isaiah learns of God’s awesome personality.

Stage Three: The Recognition of His Own Sinfulness (v. 5)

Isaiah sees the vast distance between God and himself. He sees the infinite contrast and is broken of self.

Stage Four: The Renewal of His Perspective (vv. 6, 7)

An angel touches the prophet, cleansing him and giving him a new outlook. He is ready to serve.

Stage Five: The Response of His Lifestyle (v. 8)

When God calls, Isaiah eagerly steps forward. A call is marked by a fruitful life.

¹⁰ “Make the heart of this people dull,
And their ears heavy,
And shut their eyes;
Lest they see with their eyes,
And hear with their ears,
And understand with their heart,
And return and be healed.”

¹¹ Then I said, “Lord, how long?”
And He answered:

“Until the cities are laid waste
and without inhabitant,
The houses are without a man,
The land is utterly desolate,

¹² The LORD has removed men far away,
And the forsaken places *are* many
in the midst of the land.

¹³ But yet a tenth *will be* in it,
And will return and be for consuming,
As a terebinth tree or as an oak,
Whose stump *remains* when
it is cut down.
So the holy seed *shall be* its stump.”

Isaiah Sent to King Ahaz

7 Now it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to *make* war against it, but could not prevail against it. ²And it was told to the house

of David, saying, “Syria’s forces are deployed in Ephraim.” So his heart and the heart of his people were moved as the trees of the woods are moved with the wind.

³Then the LORD said to Isaiah, “Go out now to meet Ahaz, you and Shear-Jashub^a your son, at the end of the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller’s Field, ⁴and say to him: “Take heed, and be quiet; do not fear or be fainthearted for these two stubs of smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria, and the son of Remaliah. ⁵Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah have plotted evil against you, saying, ⁶“Let us go up against Judah and trouble it, and let us make a gap in its wall for ourselves, and set a king over them, the son of Tabel”— ⁷thus says the Lord GOD:

“It shall not stand,
Nor shall it come to pass.

⁸ For the head of Syria *is* Damascus,
And the head of Damascus *is* Rezin.
Within sixty-five years Ephraim
will be broken,
So that it will not be a people.

⁹ The head of Ephraim *is* Samaria,
And the head of Samaria *is*
Remaliah’s son.
If you will not believe,
Surely you shall not be established.””

^{7:3^a} Literally A Remnant Shall Return

The Law of Connection: The Call Pushes Leaders to Communicate

Isaiah 7:1–17

Isaiah wants to communicate a message that begins to burn inside of him (as it did with Jeremiah). The divine message gives him an urgency to connect with others and spread God’s word. God’s call gives him a divine compulsion to speak and act.

A leader’s sense of call provides divine energy. Ponder a few other examples of this phenomenon:

1. Abraham was called by God through a divine visitation (Gen. 12).
2. Joseph was called by God through a dream (Gen. 37).
3. Moses was called by God through a voice in a burning bush (Ex. 3; 4).
4. Aaron was called by God through his brother Moses (Ex. 4).
5. Joshua was called by God through Moses (Ex. 17).
6. Gideon was called by God through an angel (Judg. 6).
7. Samuel was called by God through God’s audible voice (1 Sam. 3).
8. David was called by God through the prophet Samuel (1 Sam. 16).
9. Paul was called by God through a vision while he traveled (Acts 9).
10. Timothy was called by God by Paul’s preaching and through his upbringing (1 Tim. 1; 2 Tim. 1; 2).

The Immanuel Prophecy

¹⁰Moreover the LORD spoke again to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹“Ask a sign for yourself from the LORD your God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above.”

¹²But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, nor will I test the LORD!”

¹³Then he said, “Hear now, O house of David! Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.^a ¹⁵Curds and honey He shall eat, that He may know to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶For before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you dread will be forsaken by both her kings. ¹⁷The LORD will bring the king of Assyria upon you and your people and your father’s house—days that have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah.”

- ¹⁸ And it shall come to pass in that day
That the LORD will whistle for the fly
That is in the farthest part of
the rivers of Egypt,
And for the bee that is in
the land of Assyria.
- ¹⁹ They will come, and all of them will rest
In the desolate valleys and in
the clefts of the rocks,
And on all thorns and in all pastures.
- ²⁰ In the same day the Lord will
shave with a hired razor,
With those from beyond the River,^a
with the king of Assyria,
The head and the hair of the legs,
And will also remove the beard.
- ²¹ It shall be in that day
That a man will keep alive a
young cow and two sheep;
- ²² So it shall be, from the abundance
of milk they give,
That he will eat curds;
For curds and honey everyone will
eat who is left in the land.
- ²³ It shall happen in that day,
That wherever there could
be a thousand vines
Worth a thousand shekels of silver,
It will be for briers and thorns.

²⁴ With arrows and bows men will come there,
Because all the land will become
briers and thorns.

²⁵ And to any hill which could
be dug with the hoe,
You will not go there for fear
of briers and thorns;
But it will become a range for oxen
And a place for sheep to roam.

Assyria Will Invade the Land

8 Moreover the LORD said to me, “Take a large scroll, and write on it with a man’s pen concerning Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz.^a ²And I will take for Myself faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah.”

³Then I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. Then the LORD said to me, “Call his name Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz; ‘for before the child shall have knowledge to cry ‘My father’ and ‘My mother,’ the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be taken away before the king of Assyria.”

⁵The LORD also spoke to me again, saying:

- ⁶ “Inasmuch as these people refused
The waters of Shiloah that flow softly,
And rejoice in Rezin and in
Remaliah’s son;
- ⁷ Now therefore, behold, the Lord
brings up over them
The waters of the River,^a
strong and mighty—
The king of Assyria and all his glory;
He will go up over all his channels
And go over all his banks.
- ⁸ He will pass through Judah,
He will overflow and pass over,
He will reach up to the neck;
And the stretching out of his wings
Will fill the breadth of Your
land, O Immanuel.^a
- ⁹ “Be shattered, O you peoples,
and be broken in pieces!
Give ear, all you from far countries.
Gird yourselves, but be broken in pieces;
Gird yourselves, but be broken in pieces.

7:14^a Literally *God-With-Us* 7:20^a That is, the Euphrates 8:1^a Literally *Speed the Spoil, Hasten the Booty* 8:7^a That is, the Euphrates 8:8^a Literally *God-With-Us*

- 10 Take counsel together, but it
will come to nothing;
Speak the word, but it will not stand,
For God is with us.”^a

Fear God, Heed His Word

¹¹For the LORD spoke thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying:

- 12 “Do not say, ‘A conspiracy,’
Concerning all that this people
call a conspiracy,
Nor be afraid of their threats,
nor be troubled.
- 13 The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow;
Let Him be your fear,
And *let Him be your dread.*
- 14 He will be as a sanctuary,
But a stone of stumbling and
a rock of offense
To both the houses of Israel,
As a trap and a snare to the
inhabitants of Jerusalem.
- 15 And many among them shall stumble;
They shall fall and be broken,
Be snared and taken.”
- 16 Bind up the testimony,
Seal the law among my disciples.
- 17 And I will wait on the LORD,
Who hides His face from
the house of Jacob;
And I will hope in Him.
- 18 Here am I and the children whom
the LORD has given me!
We are for signs and wonders in Israel
From the LORD of hosts,
Who dwells in Mount Zion.

¹⁹And when they say to you, “Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter,” should not a people seek their God? *Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living?* ²⁰To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, *it is because there is no light in them.*

²¹They will pass through it hard-pressed and hungry; and it shall happen, when they are hungry, that they will be enraged and curse their king and their God, and look upward. ²²Then they will look to the earth, and see trouble and darkness, gloom of anguish; and *they will be driven into darkness.*

The Government of the Promised Son

- 9 Nevertheless the gloom *will not be*
upon her who *is* distressed,
As when at first He lightly esteemed
The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,
And afterward more heavily oppressed *her,*
By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan,
In Galilee of the Gentiles.
- 2 The people who walked in darkness
Have seen a great light;
Those who dwelt in the land of
the shadow of death,
Upon them a light has shined.
- 3 You have multiplied the nation
And increased its joy;^a
They rejoice before You
According to the joy of harvest,
As *men* rejoice when they divide the spoil.
- 4 For You have broken the yoke of his burden
And the staff of his shoulder,
The rod of his oppressor,
As in the day of Midian.
- 5 For every warrior’s sandal
from the noisy battle,
And garments rolled in blood,
Will be used for burning *and* fuel of fire.
- 6 For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be
upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
- 7 Of the increase of *His*
government and peace
There will be no end,
Upon the throne of David and
over His kingdom,
To order it and establish it with
judgment and justice
From that time forward, even forever.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts
will perform this.

The Punishment of Samaria

- 8 The Lord sent a word against Jacob,
And it has fallen on Israel.

8:10 ^aHebrew *Immanuel* 9:3 ^aFollowing Qere and Targum; Kethib and Vulgate read *not increased joy*; Septuagint reads *Most of the people You brought down in Your joy.*

- 9 All the people will know—
Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria—
Who say in pride and arrogance of heart:
- 10 “The bricks have fallen down,
But we will rebuild with hewn stones;
The sycamores are cut down,
But we will replace *them* with cedars.”
- 11 Therefore the LORD shall set up
The adversaries of Rezin against him,
And spur his enemies on,
12 The Syrians before and the
Philistines behind;
And they shall devour Israel
with an open mouth.

For all this His anger is not turned away,
But His hand *is* stretched out still.

- 13 For the people do not turn to
Him who strikes them,
Nor do they seek the LORD of hosts.
- 14 Therefore the LORD will cut off
head and tail from Israel,
Palm branch and bulrush in one day.
- 15 The elder and honorable, he *is* the head;
The prophet who teaches lies, he *is* the tail.
- 16 For the leaders of this people
cause *them* to err,
And *those who are* led by them are destroyed.
- 17 Therefore the LORD will have no
joy in their young men,
Nor have mercy on their
fatherless and widows;
For everyone *is* a hypocrite and an evildoer,
And every mouth speaks folly.

For all this His anger is not turned away,
But His hand *is* stretched out still.

- 18 For wickedness burns as the fire;
It shall devour the briars and thorns,
And kindle in the thickets of the forest;
They shall mount up *like* rising smoke.
- 19 Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts
The land is burned up,
And the people shall be as fuel for the fire;
No man shall spare his brother.
- 20 And he shall snatch on the right hand
And be hungry;
He shall devour on the left hand
And not be satisfied;
Every man shall eat the flesh of his own arm.
- 21 Manasseh *shall devour* Ephraim,
and Ephraim Manasseh;
Together they *shall be* against Judah.

For all this His anger is not
turned away,
But His hand *is* stretched out still.

- 10 “Woe to those who decree
unrighteous decrees,
Who write misfortune,
Which they have prescribed
- 2 To rob the needy of justice,
And to take what is right from
the poor of My people,
That widows may be their prey,
And *that* they may rob the fatherless.
- 3 What will you do in the day
of punishment,
And in the desolation *which*
will come from afar?
To whom will you flee for help?
And where will you leave your glory?
- 4 Without Me they shall bow down
among the prisoners,
And they shall fall among the slain.”

For all this His anger is not turned away,
But His hand *is* stretched out still.

The Benefits of Humility, the Liabilities of Pride

Isaiah 10:1–6

Beware of treating followers unjustly! God reserves a stern condemnation for oppressive leaders.

In Isaiah 10, God speaks to both Assyria and Israel to declare the benefits of humility and the liabilities of pride. Later, God even models the leadership style He wants every leader to embrace by sending the Suffering Servant. The Messiah will come to serve, not to be served (Is. 52; 53; Mark 10:45). God perfectly illustrates servant leadership. Followers come when leaders serve. Look how often God calls His leaders “servants”:

1. **Abraham:** called God’s servant (Gen. 26:24)
2. **Moses:** called God’s servant (Ex. 14:31)
3. **Joshua:** called Moses’ servant (Ex. 33:11)
4. **Caleb:** called God’s servant (Num. 14:24)
5. **Samuel:** called God’s servant (1 Sam. 3:9)
6. **David:** called Saul’s servant (1 Sam. 29:3)
7. **Elijah:** called God’s servant (2 Kin. 9:36)
8. **Isaiah:** called God’s servant (Is. 20:3)

Arrogant Assyria Also Judged

- 5 “Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger
And the staff in whose hand
is My indignation.
- 6 I will send him against an ungodly nation,
And against the people of My wrath
I will give him charge,
To seize the spoil, to take the prey,
And to tread them down like
the mire of the streets.
- 7 Yet he does not mean so,
Nor does his heart think so;
But *it is* in his heart to destroy,
And cut off not a few nations.
- 8 For he says,
‘Are not my princes altogether kings?
9 Is not Calno like Carchemish?
Is not Hamath like Arpad?
Is not Samaria like Damascus?
10 As my hand has found the
kingdoms of the idols,
Whose carved images excelled those
of Jerusalem and Samaria,
11 As I have done to Samaria and her idols,
Shall I not do also to Jerusalem
and her idols?’”
- 12Therefore it shall come to pass, when the
Lord has performed all His work on Mount Zion
and on Jerusalem, *that He will say*, “I will punish
the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king
of Assyria, and the glory of his haughty looks.”
13For he says:
- “By the strength of my hand I have done *it*,
And by my wisdom, for I am prudent;
Also I have removed the
boundaries of the people,
And have robbed their treasuries;
So I have put down the inhabitants
like a valiant *man*.
- 14 My hand has found like a nest
the riches of the people,
And as one gathers eggs *that are left*,
I have gathered all the earth;
And there was no one who moved *his wing*,
Nor opened *his mouth* with even a peep.”
- 15 Shall the ax boast itself against
him who chops with it?
Or shall the saw exalt itself against
him who saws with it?
As if a rod could wield *itself*
against those who lift it up,

Or as if a staff could lift up, *as
if it were* not wood!

- 16 Therefore the Lord, the Lord^a of hosts,
Will send leanness among his fat ones;
And under his glory
He will kindle a burning
Like the burning of a fire.
- 17 So the Light of Israel will be for a fire,
And his Holy One for a flame;
It will burn and devour
His thorns and his briars in one day.
- 18 And it will consume the glory of his
forest and of his fruitful field,
Both soul and body;
And they will be as when a
sick man wastes away.
- 19 Then the rest of the trees of his forest
Will be so few in number
That a child may write them.

The Returning Remnant of Israel

- 20 And it shall come to pass in that day
That the remnant of Israel,
And such as have escaped of
the house of Jacob,
Will never again depend on him
who defeated them,
But will depend on the LORD, the
Holy One of Israel, in truth.
- 21 The remnant will return, the
remnant of Jacob,
To the Mighty God.
- 22 For though your people, O Israel,
be as the sand of the sea,
A remnant of them will return;
The destruction decreed shall
overflow with righteousness.
- 23 For the Lord GOD of hosts
Will make a determined end
In the midst of all the land.
- 24Therefore thus says the Lord GOD of hosts:
“O My people, who dwell in Zion, do not be afraid
of the Assyrian. He shall strike you with a rod
and lift up his staff against you, in the manner
of Egypt. 25For yet a very little while and the in-
dignation will cease, as will My anger in their de-
struction.” 26And the LORD of hosts will stir up a
scourge for him like the slaughter of Midian
at the rock of Oreb; *as* His rod was on the sea, so
will He lift it up in the manner of Egypt.

10:16 ^aFollowing Bomberg; Masoretic Text and Dead
Sea Scrolls read *YHWH (the LORD)*.

- 27 It shall come to pass in that day
That his burden will be taken
 away from your shoulder,
 And his yoke from your neck,
 And the yoke will be destroyed
 because of the anointing oil.
- 28 He has come to Aiath,
 He has passed Migron;
 At Michmash he has attended
 to his equipment.
- 29 They have gone along the ridge,
 They have taken up lodging at Geba.
 Ramah is afraid,
 Gibeah of Saul has fled.
- 30 Lift up your voice,
 O daughter of Gallim!
 Cause it to be heard as far as Laish—
 O poor Anathoth!^a
- 31 Madmenah has fled,
 The inhabitants of Gebim seek refuge.
- 32 As yet he will remain at Nob that day;
 He will shake his fist at the mount
 of the daughter of Zion,
 The hill of Jerusalem.
- 33 Behold, the Lord,
 The LORD of hosts,
 Will lop off the bough with terror;
 Those of high stature *will be* hewn down,
 And the haughty will be humbled.
- 34 He will cut down the thickets
 of the forest with iron,
 And Lebanon will fall by the Mighty One.
- He shall strike the earth with
 the rod of His mouth,
 And with the breath of His lips
 He shall slay the wicked.
- 5 Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins,
 And faithfulness the belt of His waist.
- 6 “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,
 The leopard shall lie down
 with the young goat,
 The calf and the young lion and
 the fatling together;
 And a little child shall lead them.
- 7 The cow and the bear shall graze;
 Their young ones shall lie down together;
 And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
- 8 The nursing child shall play
 by the cobra’s hole,
 And the weaned child shall put
 his hand in the viper’s den.
- 9 They shall not hurt nor destroy
 in all My holy mountain,
 For the earth shall be full of the
 knowledge of the LORD
 As the waters cover the sea.
- 10 “And in that day there shall
 be a Root of Jesse,
 Who shall stand as a banner to the people;
 For the Gentiles shall seek Him,
 And His resting place shall be glorious.”
- 11 It shall come to pass in that day
That the Lord shall set His hand
 again the second time
 To recover the remnant of His
 people who are left,
 From Assyria and Egypt,
 From Pathros and Cush,
 From Elam and Shinar,
 From Hamath and the islands of the sea.
- 12 He will set up a banner for the nations,
 And will assemble the outcasts of Israel,
 And gather together the dispersed of Judah
 From the four corners of the earth.
- 13 Also the envy of Ephraim shall depart,
 And the adversaries of Judah
 shall be cut off;
 Ephraim shall not envy Judah,
 And Judah shall not harass Ephraim.

The Reign of Jesse's Offspring

- 11** There shall come forth a Rod
 from the stem of Jesse,
 And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.
- 2 The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him,
 The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
 The Spirit of counsel and might,
 The Spirit of knowledge and of
 the fear of the LORD.
- 3 His delight *is* in the fear of the LORD,
 And He shall not judge by
 the sight of His eyes,
 Nor decide by the hearing of His ears;
- 4 But with righteousness He
 shall judge the poor,
 And decide with equity for the
 meek of the earth;
- 10:30^a Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate;
 Septuagint and Syriac read *Listen to her, O Anathoth.*

- 14 But they shall fly down upon the shoulder
of the Philistines toward the west;
Together they shall plunder
the people of the East;
They shall lay their hand on Edom and Moab;
And the people of Ammon shall obey them.
- 15 The LORD will utterly destroy^a the
tongue of the Sea of Egypt;
With His mighty wind He will shake
His fist over the River,^b
And strike it in the seven streams,
And make *men* cross over dry-shod.
- 16 There will be a highway for the
remnant of His people
Who will be left from Assyria,
As it was for Israel
In the day that he came up
from the land of Egypt.
- 3 I have commanded My sanctified ones;
I have also called My mighty
ones for My anger—
Those who rejoice in My exaltation.”
- 4 The noise of a multitude in the mountains,
Like that of many people!
A tumultuous noise of the kingdoms
of nations gathered together!
The LORD of hosts musters
The army for battle.
- 5 They come from a far country,
From the end of heaven—
The LORD and His weapons of indignation,
To destroy the whole land.
- 6 Wail, for the day of the LORD *is* at hand!
It will come as destruction
from the Almighty.
- 7 Therefore all hands will be limp,
Every man’s heart will melt,
- 8 And they will be afraid.
Pangs and sorrows will take hold of *them*;
They will be in pain as a
woman in childbirth;
They will be amazed at one another;
Their faces *will be like flames*.
- 9 Behold, the day of the LORD comes,
Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger,
To lay the land desolate;
And He will destroy its sinners from it.
- 10 For the stars of heaven and
their constellations
Will not give their light;
The sun will be darkened in its going forth,
And the moon will not cause
its light to shine.

A Hymn of Praise

12 And in that day you will say:

- “O LORD, I will praise You;
Though You were angry with me,
Your anger is turned away,
and You comfort me.
- 2 Behold, God *is* my salvation,
I will trust and not be afraid;
For YAH, the LORD, *is* my strength and song;
He also has become my salvation.”^a
- 3 Therefore with joy you will draw water
From the wells of salvation.
- 4 And in that day you will say:
- “Praise the LORD, call upon His name;
Declare His deeds among the peoples,
Make mention that His name is exalted.
- 5 Sing to the LORD,
For He has done excellent things;
This *is* known in all the earth.
- 6 Cry out and shout, O inhabitant of Zion,
For great *is* the Holy One of
Israel in your midst!”
- 11 “I will punish the world for *its* evil,
And the wicked for their iniquity;
I will halt the arrogance of the proud,
And will lay low the haughtiness
of the terrible.
- 12 I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold,
A man more than the golden wedge of Ophir.
- 13 Therefore I will shake the heavens,
And the earth will move out of her place,
In the wrath of the LORD of hosts
And in the day of His fierce anger.

Proclamation Against Babylon

13 The burden against Babylon which Isaiah
the son of Amoz saw.

- 2 “Lift up a banner on the high mountain,
Raise your voice to them;
Wave your hand, that they may
enter the gates of the nobles.

11:15^a Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint, Syriac, and Targum read *dry up*. ^b That is, the Euphrates 12:2^a Exodus 15:2

14 It shall be as the hunted gazelle,
And as a sheep that no man takes up;
Every man will turn to his own people,
And everyone will flee to his own land.

15 Everyone who is found will
be thrust through,
And everyone who is captured
will fall by the sword.

16 Their children also will be dashed
to pieces before their eyes;
Their houses will be plundered
And their wives ravished.

17 "Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them,
Who will not regard silver;
And *as for* gold, they will not delight in it.

18 Also *their* bows will dash the
young men to pieces,
And they will have no pity on
the fruit of the womb;

Their eye will not spare children.
19 And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms,
The beauty of the Chaldeans' pride,
Will be as when God overthrew

Sodom and Gomorrah.
20 It will never be inhabited,
Nor will it be settled from
generation to generation;
Nor will the Arabian pitch tents there,
Nor will the shepherds make
their sheepfolds there.

21 But wild beasts of the desert will lie there,
And their houses will be full of owls;
Ostriches will dwell there,
And wild goats will caper there.

22 The hyenas will howl in their citadels,
And jackals in their pleasant palaces.
Her time *is* near to come,
And her days will not be prolonged."

Mercy on Jacob

14 For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will still choose Israel, and settle them in their own land. The strangers will be joined with them, and they will cling to the house of Jacob. ²Then people will take them and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel will possess them for servants and maids in the land of the LORD; they will take them captive whose captives they were, and rule over their oppressors.

Fall of the King of Babylon

³It shall come to pass in the day the LORD gives you rest from your sorrow, and from your fear and the hard bondage in which you were made to serve, ⁴that you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say:

"How the oppressor has ceased,
The golden^a city ceased!

14:4^a Or *insolent*

A Riches to Rags Story

Isaiah 14:3–23

Proverbs 16:18 reminds us that pride comes before a fall and that a haughty spirit causes one to stumble. We see that truth in action in Isaiah 14.

While we see the immediate fulfillment of this passage in the king of Babylon, many scholars believe the text also speaks of Satan. Note the arrogant words in verses 12–17. What a sobering picture of a leader who goes astray! Both the oppressive king and Satan had one common characteristic: a lust for pride and power. Consider the devil's fall from his original place in heaven, as described in Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28, and Revelation 12; 20:

1. The one cast down (to the bottomless pit) (Is. 14:15; Rev. 12:10; 20:3)
2. Full of wisdom (Ezek. 28:12)
3. Perfect in beauty (Ezek. 28:12)
4. Song leader and musician of heaven (Ezek. 28:13)
5. The anointed cherub (Ezek. 28:14)
6. One who covered the throne (Ezek. 28:14, 16)
7. Great dragon (Rev. 12:9)
8. The serpent (Rev. 12:9; 20:2)
9. The devil; the spirit of deception (Rev. 12:9; 20:10)
10. Accuser of the brethren (Rev. 20:10)

- 5 The LORD has broken the staff of the wicked,
The scepter of the rulers;
- 6 He who struck the people in wrath
with a continual stroke,
He who ruled the nations in anger,
Is persecuted *and* no one hinders.
- 7 The whole earth is at rest *and* quiet;
They break forth into singing.
- 8 Indeed the cypress trees rejoice over you,
And the cedars of Lebanon,
Saying, 'Since you were cut down,
No woodsman has come up against us.'
- 9 "Hell from beneath is excited about you,
To meet *you* at your coming;
It stirs up the dead for you,
All the chief ones of the earth;
It has raised up from their thrones
All the kings of the nations.
- 10 They all shall speak and say to you:
'Have you also become as weak as we?
Have you become like us?'
- 11 Your pomp is brought down to Sheol,
And the sound of your stringed instruments;
The maggot is spread under you,
And worms cover you.'
- 12 "How you are fallen from heaven,
O Lucifer,^a son of the morning!
How you are cut down to the ground,
You who weakened the nations!
- 13 For you have said in your heart:
'I will ascend into heaven,
I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;
I will also sit on the mount
of the congregation
On the farthest sides of the north;
- 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,
I will be like the Most High.'
- 15 Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol,
To the lowest depths of the Pit.
- 16 "Those who see you will gaze at you,
And consider you, *saying*:
'Is this the man who made
the earth tremble,
Who shook kingdoms,
17 Who made the world as a wilderness
And destroyed its cities,
Who did not open the house
of his prisoners?'
- 18 "All the kings of the nations,
All of them, sleep in glory,
Everyone in his own house;
- 19 But you are cast out of your grave
Like an abominable branch,
Like the garment of those who are slain,
Thrust through with a sword,
Who go down to the stones of the pit,
Like a corpse trodden underfoot.

14:12^a Literally *Day Star*

The Fall of Lucifer

PROFILE in Leadership

Isaiah:

A Leader's Heart of Love for the Unlovely

Isaiah 15:5; 16:9, 11

Someone must have forgotten to tell the prophet Isaiah that he lived in Old Testament times.

You know the picture most have of ancient Hebrew leaders: eye-for-an-eye types, angry, hair akimbo, and eager for God's righteous judgment to fall upon the pagans and the wicked. And yet, here stands Isaiah, crying out for heathen Moab and weeping for wayward Heshbon.

Isaiah demonstrates for us the attitude of a godly leader who sees approaching judgment on

unbelievers. He actually *grieves* over what is coming on lost souls. While he acknowledges and even celebrates God's righteousness and sovereignty in judging those who reject Him, he also proclaims that the calamity about to descend is nothing other than a terrible tragedy.

Isaiah's lament over the fate of these ancient nations reveals the attitude of a truly godly leader. While he knew those erring nations surely deserved God's judgment, he also knew that without God's grace and mercy, none of us could expect anything else.

We ought to stand in awed silence when we see the judgment of God falling on those who have forsaken His way. But we should never see His judgment as an occasion to celebrate our own righteousness. Rather, we ought to grieve for the lost and reflect deeply on the grace and mercy God has extended to us.

- 20 You will not be joined with them in burial,
Because you have destroyed your land
And slain your people.
The brood of evildoers shall never be named.
- 21 Prepare slaughter for his children
Because of the iniquity of their fathers,
Lest they rise up and possess the land,
And fill the face of the world with cities.”

Babylon Destroyed

- 22 “For I will rise up against them,”
says the LORD of hosts,
“And cut off from Babylon the
name and remnant,
And offspring and posterity,” says the LORD.
- 23 “I will also make it a possession
for the porcupine,
And marshes of muddy water;
I will sweep it with the broom of
destruction,” says the LORD of hosts.

Assyria Destroyed

- 24 The LORD of hosts has sworn, saying,
“Surely, as I have thought, so
it shall come to pass,
And as I have purposed, so it shall stand:
- 25 That I will break the Assyrian in My land,
And on My mountains tread him underfoot.
Then his yoke shall be removed from them,
And his burden removed
from their shoulders.
- 26 This is the purpose that is purposed
against the whole earth,
And this is the hand that is stretched
out over all the nations.
- 27 For the LORD of hosts has purposed,
And who will annul it?
His hand is stretched out,
And who will turn it back?”

Philistia Destroyed

28 This is the burden which came in the year
that King Ahaz died.

- 29 “Do not rejoice, all you of Philistia,
Because the rod that struck you is broken;
For out of the serpent’s roots
will come forth a viper,
And its offspring will be a
fiery flying serpent.
- 30 The firstborn of the poor will feed,
And the needy will lie down in safety;
I will kill your roots with famine,
And it will slay your remnant.

- 31 Wail, O gate! Cry, O city!
All you of Philistia are dissolved;
For smoke will come from the north,
And no one will be alone in
his appointed times.”

- 32 What will they answer the
messengers of the nation?
That the LORD has founded Zion,
And the poor of His people
shall take refuge in it.

Proclamation Against Moab

15 The burden against Moab.

- Because in the night Ar of Moab is laid waste
And destroyed,
Because in the night Kir of Moab is laid waste
And destroyed,
- 2 He has gone up to the temple^a and Dibon,
To the high places to weep.
Moab will wail over Nebo and over Medeba;
On all their heads will be baldness,
And every beard cut off.
- 3 In their streets they will clothe
themselves with sackcloth;
On the tops of their houses
And in their streets
Everyone will wail, weeping bitterly.
- 4 Heshbon and Elealeh will cry out,
Their voice shall be heard as far as Jahaz;
Therefore the armed soldiers^a
of Moab will cry out;
His life will be burdensome to him.
- 5 “My heart will cry out for Moab;
His fugitives shall flee to Zoar,
Like a three-year-old heifer.^a
For by the Ascent of Luhith
They will go up with weeping;
For in the way of Horonaim
They will raise up a cry of destruction,
- 6 For the waters of Nimrim will be desolate,
For the green grass has withered away;
The grass fails, there is nothing green.
- 7 Therefore the abundance they have gained,
And what they have laid up,
They will carry away to the
Brook of the Willows.

15:2^a Hebrew *bayith*, literally *house* 15:4^a Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint and Syriac read *loins*. 15:5^a Or *The Third Eglath*, an unknown city (compare Jeremiah 48:34)

- 8 For the cry has gone all around
the borders of Moab,
Its wailing to Eglaim
And its wailing to Beer Elim.
- 9 For the waters of Dimon^a will be full of blood;
Because I will bring more upon Dimon,^b
Lions upon him who escapes from Moab,
And on the remnant of the land.”

Moab Destroyed

- 16** Send the lamb to the ruler of the land,
From Sela to the wilderness,
To the mount of the daughter of Zion.
- 2 For it shall be as a wandering bird
thrown out of the nest;
So shall be the daughters of Moab
at the fords of the Arnon.
- 3 “Take counsel, execute judgment;
Make your shadow like the night
in the middle of the day;
Hide the outcasts,
Do not betray him who escapes.
- 4 Let My outcasts dwell with you, O Moab;
Be a shelter to them from the
face of the spoiler.
For the extortioner is at an end,
Devastation ceases,
The oppressors are consumed
out of the land.
- 5 In mercy the throne will be established;
And One will sit on it in truth, in
the tabernacle of David,
Judging and seeking justice and
hastening righteousness.”

- 6 We have heard of the pride of Moab—
He is very proud—
Of his haughtiness and his
pride and his wrath;
But his lies shall not be so.
- 7 Therefore Moab shall wail for Moab;
Everyone shall wail.
For the foundations of Kir
Hareseth you shall mourn;
Surely *they are* stricken.
- 8 For the fields of Heshbon languish,
And the vine of Sibmah;
The lords of the nations have broken
down its choice plants,
Which have reached to Jazer
And wandered through the wilderness.
Her branches are stretched out,
They are gone over the sea.

- 9 Therefore I will bewail the vine of Sibmah,
With the weeping of Jazer;
I will drench you with my tears,
O Heshbon and Elealeh;
For battle cries have fallen
Over your summer fruits and your harvest.
- 10 Gladness is taken away,
And joy from the plentiful field;
In the vineyards there will be no singing,
Nor will there be shouting;
No treaders will tread out
wine in the presses;
I have made their shouting cease.
- 11 Therefore my heart shall resound
like a harp for Moab,
And my inner being for Kir Heres.
- 12 And it shall come to pass,
When it is seen that Moab is
weary on the high place,
That he will come to his sanctuary to pray;
But he will not prevail.

¹³This *is* the word which the LORD has spoken concerning Moab since that time. ¹⁴But now the LORD has spoken, saying, “Within three years, as the years of a hired man, the glory of Moab will be despised with all that great multitude, and the remnant *will be* very small *and* feeble.”

Proclamation Against Syria and Israel

- 17** The burden against Damascus.
“Behold, Damascus will cease
from *being* a city,
And it will be a ruinous heap.
- 2 The cities of Aroer *are* forsaken;^a
They will be for flocks
Which lie down, and no one
will make *them* afraid.
- 3 The fortress also will cease from Ephraim,
The kingdom from Damascus,
And the remnant of Syria;
They will be as the glory of the
children of Israel,”
Says the LORD of hosts.

15:9^a Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Dead Sea Scrolls and Vulgate read *Dibon*; Septuagint reads *Rimon*. ^b Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Dead Sea Scrolls and Vulgate read *Dibon*; Septuagint reads *Rimon*. 17:2^a Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *It shall be forsaken forever*; Targum reads *Its cities shall be forsaken and desolate*.

- 4 "In that day it shall come to pass
That the glory of Jacob will wane,
And the fatness of his flesh grow lean.
- 5 It shall be as when the harvester
gathers the grain,
And reaps the heads with his arm;
It shall be as he who gathers heads of grain
In the Valley of Rephaim.
- 6 Yet gleaning grapes will be left in it,
Like the shaking of an olive tree,
Two *or* three olives at the top of
the uppermost bough,
Four *or* five in its most fruitful branches,"
Says the LORD God of Israel.
- 7 In that day a man will look to his Maker,
And his eyes will have respect
for the Holy One of Israel.
- 8 He will not look to the altars,
The work of his hands;
He will not respect what his
fingers have made,
Nor the wooden images^a nor
the incense altars.
- 9 In that day his strong cities will
be as a forsaken bough^a
And an uppermost branch,^b
Which they left because of the
children of Israel;
And there will be desolation.
- 10 Because you have forgotten the
God of your salvation,
And have not been mindful of the
Rock of your stronghold,
Therefore you will plant pleasant plants
And set out foreign seedlings;
- 11 In the day you will make your
plant to grow,
And in the morning you will make
your seed to flourish;
But the harvest *will be* a heap of ruins
In the day of grief and desperate sorrow.
- 12 Woe to the multitude of many people
Who make a noise like the roar of the seas,
And to the rushing of nations
That make a rushing like the
rushing of mighty waters!
- 13 The nations will rush like the
rushing of many waters;
But *God* will rebuke them and
they will flee far away,

And be chased like the chaff of the
mountains before the wind,
Like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.

- 14 Then behold, at eventide, trouble!
And before the morning, he *is* no more.
This *is* the portion of those who plunder us,
And the lot of those who rob us.

Proclamation Against Ethiopia

- 18 Woe to the land shadowed with
buzzing wings,
Which *is* beyond the rivers of Ethiopia,
2 Which sends ambassadors by sea,
Even in vessels of reed on
the waters, *saying*,
"Go, swift messengers, to a nation
tall and smooth *of skin*,
To a people terrible from their
beginning onward,
A nation powerful and treading down,
Whose land the rivers divide."
- 3 All inhabitants of the world and
dwellers on the earth:
When he lifts up a banner on the
mountains, you see *it*;
And when he blows a trumpet, you hear *it*.
- 4 For so the LORD said to me,
"I will take My rest,
And I will look from My dwelling place
Like clear heat in sunshine,
Like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest."
- 5 For before the harvest, when
the bud is perfect
And the sour grape is ripening in the flower,
He will both cut off the sprigs
with pruning hooks
And take away *and* cut down the branches.
- 6 They will be left together for the
mountain birds of prey
And for the beasts of the earth;
The birds of prey will summer on them,
And all the beasts of the earth
will winter on them.
- 7 In that time a present will be
brought to the LORD of hosts
From^a a people tall and smooth *of skin*,

17:8^a Hebrew *Asherim*, Canaanite deities
17:9^a Septuagint reads *Hivites*; Targum reads *laid waste*; Vulgate reads *as the plows*. ^bSeptuagint reads *Amorites*; Targum reads *in ruins*; Vulgate reads *corn*.
18:7^a Following Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text omits *From*; Targum reads *To*.

And from a people terrible from
 their beginning onward,
 A nation powerful and treading down,
 Whose land the rivers divide—
 To the place of the name of
 the LORD of hosts,
 To Mount Zion.

Proclamation Against Egypt

19 The burden against Egypt.

Behold, the LORD rides on a swift cloud,
 And will come into Egypt;
 The idols of Egypt will totter at His presence,
 And the heart of Egypt will
 melt in its midst.

2 “I will set Egyptians against Egyptians;
 Everyone will fight against his brother,
 And everyone against his neighbor,
 City against city, kingdom against kingdom.

3 The spirit of Egypt will fail in its midst;
 I will destroy their counsel,
 And they will consult the idols
 and the charmers,
 The mediums and the sorcerers.

4 And the Egyptians I will give
 Into the hand of a cruel master,
 And a fierce king will rule over them,”
 Says the Lord, the LORD of hosts.

5 The waters will fail from the sea,
 And the river will be wasted and dried up.

6 The rivers will turn foul;
 The brooks of defense will be
 emptied and dried up;
 The reeds and rushes will wither.

7 The papyrus reeds by the River,^a
 by the mouth of the River,
 And everything sown by the River,
 Will wither, be driven away, and be no more.

8 The fishermen also will mourn;
 All those will lament who cast
 hooks into the River,
 And they will languish who
 spread nets on the waters.

9 Moreover those who work in fine flax
 And those who weave fine
 fabric will be ashamed;
10 And its foundations will be broken.
 All who make wages *will be*
 troubled of soul.

11 Surely the princes of Zoan *are* fools;
 Pharaoh’s wise counselors
 give foolish counsel.

How do you say to Pharaoh, “I
am the son of the wise,
 The son of ancient kings?”

12 Where *are* they?
 Where are your wise men?
 Let them tell you now,
 And let them know what the LORD of
 hosts has purposed against Egypt.

19:7^a That is, the Nile

Personal Qualifications of Leadership

Isaiah 19:11–15

What qualifies a person to be a leader? Most natural leaders don’t aspire to be great leaders; they aspire to be great *persons*. Personal qualifications lead to leadership qualifications. When leaders lead their own lives well, others naturally want to follow.

Consider Mother Teresa of Calcutta, India. It’s doubtful she ever said, “I am going to set out to be a great leader!” Yet that is what she became by determining to be the person God created her to be. She developed personal qualities that became leadership qualities.

Isaiah illustrates this from a negative viewpoint. The senseless, naïve leaders of Zoan and Noph lacked the foresight to lead others. Their incompetence prompted God to compare them with a drunken man who can’t even walk straight. If we want our leadership to last, we must pay attention to four crucial elements:

- 1. Character**—enables us to do what is right even when it seems difficult.
- 2. Perspective**—enables us to understand what must happen to reach a goal.
- 3. Courage**—enables us to initiate and take the risks to step out toward a worthy goal.
- 4. Favor**—enables us to attract and empower others to join us in the cause.

- ¹³ The princes of Zoan have become fools;
The princes of Noph^a are deceived;
They have also deluded Egypt,
Those who are the mainstay of its tribes.
- ¹⁴ The LORD has mingled a perverse
spirit in her midst;
And they have caused Egypt
to err in all her work,
As a drunken man staggers in his vomit.
- ¹⁵ Neither will there be *any* work for Egypt,
Which the head or tail,
Palm branch or bulrush, may do.^a

¹⁶In that day Egypt will be like women, and will be afraid and fear because of the waving of the hand of the LORD of hosts, which He waves over it. ¹⁷And the land of Judah will be a terror to Egypt; everyone who makes mention of it will be afraid in himself, because of the counsel of the LORD of hosts which He has determined against it.

Egypt, Assyria, and Israel Blessed

¹⁸In that day five cities in the land of Egypt will speak the language of Canaan and swear by the LORD of hosts; one will be called the City of Destruction.^a

¹⁹In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the LORD at its border. ²⁰And it will be for a sign and for a witness to the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they will cry to the LORD because of the oppressors, and He will send them a Savior and a Mighty One, and He will deliver them. ²¹Then the LORD will be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the LORD in that day, and will make sacrifice and offering; yes, they will make a vow to the LORD and perform it. ²²And the LORD will strike Egypt, He will strike and heal it; they will return to the LORD, and He will be entreated by them and heal them.

²³In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians.

²⁴In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria—a blessing in the midst of the land, ²⁵whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, “Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.”

The Sign Against Egypt and Ethiopia

20 In the year that Tartan^a came to Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against Ashdod and took it,

²at the same time the LORD spoke by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, “Go, and remove the sackcloth from your body, and take your sandals off your feet.” And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.

³Then the LORD said, “Just as My servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and a wonder against Egypt and Ethiopia, ⁴so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians as prisoners and the Ethiopians as captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt. ⁵Then they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation and Egypt their glory. ⁶And the inhabitant of this territory will say in that day, ‘Surely such is our expectation, wherever we flee for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria; and how shall we escape?’”

The Fall of Babylon Proclaimed

21 The burden against the Wilderness of the Sea.

- As whirlwinds in the South pass through,
So it comes from the desert,
from a terrible land.
- ² A distressing vision is declared to me;
The treacherous dealer deals
treacherously,
And the plunderer plunders.
Go up, O Elam!
Besiege, O Media!
All its sighing I have made to cease.
- ³ Therefore my loins are filled with pain;
Pangs have taken hold of me, like
the pangs of a woman in labor.
I was distressed when *I* heard it;
I was dismayed when *I* saw it.
- ⁴ My heart wavered, fearfulness
frightened me;
The night for which I longed He
turned into fear for me.
- ⁵ Prepare the table,
Set a watchman in the tower,
Eat and drink.
Arise, you princes,
Anoint the shield!

19:13^aThat is, ancient Memphis 19:15^aCompare Isaiah 9:14–16 19:18^aSome Hebrew manuscripts, Arabic, Dead Sea Scrolls, Targum, and Vulgate read *Sun*; Septuagint reads *Asedek* (literally *Righteousness*). 20:1^aOr *the Commander in Chief*

- 6 For thus has the Lord said to me:
 “Go, set a watchman,
 Let him declare what he sees.”
- 7 And he saw a chariot *with* a
 pair of horsemen,
 A chariot of donkeys, *and* a chariot of camels,
 And he listened earnestly with great care.
- 8 Then he cried, “A lion,^a my Lord!
 I stand continually on the
 watchtower in the daytime;
 I have sat at my post every night.
- 9 And look, here comes a chariot of
 men *with* a pair of horsemen!”
 Then he answered and said,
 “Babylon is fallen, is fallen!
 And all the carved images of her gods
 He has broken to the ground.”
- 10 Oh, my threshing and the grain of my floor!
 That which I have heard from
 the LORD of hosts,
 The God of Israel,
 I have declared to you.

Proclamation Against Edom

- ¹¹The burden against Dumah.
 He calls to me out of Seir,
 “Watchman, what of the night?
 Watchman, what of the night?”
- 12 The watchman said,
 “The morning comes, and also the night.
 If you will inquire, inquire;
 Return! Come back!”

Proclamation Against Arabia

- ¹³The burden against Arabia.
 In the forest in Arabia you will lodge,
 O you traveling companies of Dedanites.
- 14 O inhabitants of the land of Tema,
 Bring water to him who is thirsty;
 With their bread they met him who fled.
- 15 For they fled from the swords,
 from the drawn sword,
 From the bent bow, and from
 the distress of war.
- ¹⁶For thus the LORD has said to me: “Within
 a year, according to the year of a hired man, all
 the glory of Kedar will fail; ¹⁷and the remainder
 of the number of archers, the mighty men of
 the people of Kedar, will be diminished; for the
 LORD God of Israel has spoken it.”

Proclamation Against Jerusalem

- 22** The burden against the Valley of Vision.
 What ails you now, that you have
 all gone up to the housetops,
 2 You who are full of noise,
 A tumultuous city, a joyous city?
 Your slain *men are* not slain with the sword,
 Nor dead in battle.
- 3 All your rulers have fled together;
 They are captured by the archers.
 All who are found in you are
 bound together;
 They have fled from afar.
- 4 Therefore I said, “Look away from me,
 I will weep bitterly;
 Do not labor to comfort me
 Because of the plundering of the
 daughter of my people.”
- 5 For *it is* a day of trouble and
 treading down and perplexity
 By the Lord GOD of hosts
 In the Valley of Vision—
 Breaking down the walls
 And of crying to the mountain.
- 6 Elam bore the quiver
 With chariots of men *and* horsemen,
 And Kir uncovered the shield.
- 7 It shall come to pass *that*
 your choicest valleys
 Shall be full of chariots,
 And the horsemen shall set
 themselves in array at the gate.
- 8 He removed the protection of Judah.
 You looked in that day to the armor
 of the House of the Forest;
- 9 You also saw the damage to
 the city of David,
 That it was great;
 And you gathered together the
 waters of the lower pool.
- 10 You numbered the houses of Jerusalem,
 And the houses you broke down
 To fortify the wall.
- 11 You also made a reservoir
 between the two walls
 For the water of the old pool.
 But you did not look to its Maker,
 Nor did you have respect for Him
 who fashioned it long ago.

21:8^a Dead Sea Scrolls read *Then the observer cried.*

- 12 And in that day the Lord GOD of hosts
Called for weeping and for mourning,
For baldness and for girding with sackcloth.
- 13 But instead, joy and gladness,
Slaying oxen and killing sheep,
Eating meat and drinking wine:
“Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!”
- 14 Then it was revealed in my hearing
by the LORD of hosts,
“Surely for this iniquity there will
be no atonement for you,
Even to your death,” says the
Lord GOD of hosts.

The Judgment on Shebna

- 15 Thus says the Lord GOD of hosts:
“Go, proceed to this steward,
To Shebna, who is over the house, and say:
16 “What have you here, and
whom have you here,
That you have hewn a sepulcher here,
As he who hews himself a
sepulcher on high,
Who carves a tomb for himself in a rock?
17 Indeed, the LORD will throw
you away violently,
O mighty man,
And will surely seize you.
18 He will surely turn violently
and toss you like a ball
into a large country;
There you shall die, and there
your glorious chariots
Shall be the shame of your master’s house.
19 So I will drive you out of your office,
And from your position he
will pull you down.^a
20 “Then it shall be in that day,
That I will call My servant Eliakim
the son of Hilkiah;
21 I will clothe him with your robe
And strengthen him with your belt;
I will commit your responsibility
into his hand.
He shall be a father to the
inhabitants of Jerusalem
And to the house of Judah.
22 The key of the house of David
I will lay on his shoulder;
So he shall open, and no one shall shut;
And he shall shut, and no one shall open.

- 23 I will fasten him as a peg in a secure place,
And he will become a glorious
throne to his father’s house.

24 “They will hang on him all the glory of his father’s house, the offspring and the posterity, all vessels of small quantity, from the cups to all the pitchers. 25 In that day,” says the LORD of hosts, “the peg that is fastened in the secure place will be removed and be cut down and fall, and the burden that was on it will be cut off; for the LORD has spoken.”

Proclamation Against Tyre

23 The burden against Tyre.

Wail, you ships of Tarshish!
For it is laid waste,
So that there is no house, no harbor;
From the land of Cyprus^a it
is revealed to them.

- 2 Be still, you inhabitants of the coastland,
You merchants of Sidon,
Whom those who cross the sea have filled.^a
3 And on great waters the grain of Shihor,
The harvest of the River,^a is her revenue;
And she is a marketplace for the nations.
4 Be ashamed, O Sidon;
For the sea has spoken,
The strength of the sea, saying,
“I do not labor, nor bring forth children;

22:19^a Septuagint omits *he will pull you down*; Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *I will pull you down*.

23:1^a Hebrew *Kittim*, western lands, especially Cyprus

23:2^a Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint and Targum read *Passing over the water*; Dead Sea Scrolls read *Your messengers passing over the sea*.

23:3^a That is, the Nile

God's Providence: He Raises Up Leaders and Brings Them Down

Isaiah 23:1–18

The city of Tyre wielded great international influence during Isaiah’s day. Its wealthy merchants created a high standard of living. But when God chose to bring them down, no one could stop Him. We can position people, but only God exalts them. We can develop others, but only God raises them up.

- Neither do I rear young men,
Nor bring up virgins.”
- 5 When the report *reaches* Egypt,
They also will be in agony at
the report of Tyre.
- 6 Cross over to Tarshish;
Wail, you inhabitants of the coastland!
- 7 Is this your joyous *city*,
Whose antiquity *is* from ancient days,
Whose feet carried her far off to dwell?
- 8 Who has taken this counsel against
Tyre, the crowning *city*,
Whose merchants *are* princes,
Whose traders *are* the
honorable of the earth?
- 9 The LORD of hosts has purposed it,
To bring to dishonor the pride of all glory,
To bring into contempt all the
honorable of the earth.
- 10 Overflow through your land like the River,^a
O daughter of Tarshish;
There is no more strength.
- 11 He stretched out His hand over the sea,
He shook the kingdoms;
The LORD has given a commandment
against Canaan
To destroy its strongholds.
- 12 And He said, “You will rejoice no more,
O you oppressed virgin daughter of Sidon.
Arise, cross over to Cyprus;
There also you will have no rest.”
- 13 Behold, the land of the Chaldeans,
This people *which* was not;
Assyria founded it for wild
beasts of the desert.
They set up its towers,
They raised up its palaces,
And brought it to ruin.
- 14 Wail, you ships of Tarshish!
For your strength is laid waste.
- 15 Now it shall come to pass in that day that
Tyre will be forgotten seventy years, according to
the days of one king. At the end of seventy years
it will happen to Tyre as *in* the song of the harlot:
- 16 “Take a harp, go about the city,
You forgotten harlot;
Make sweet melody, sing many songs,
That you may be remembered.”

¹⁷And it shall be, at the end of seventy years,
that the LORD will deal with Tyre. She will return
to her hire, and commit fornication with all the
kingdoms of the world on the face of the earth.
¹⁸Her gain and her pay will be set apart for the
LORD; it will not be treasured nor laid up, for her
gain will be for those who dwell before the LORD,
to eat sufficiently, and for fine clothing.

Impending Judgment on the Earth

- 24** Behold, the LORD makes the earth
empty and makes it waste,
Distorts its surface
And scatters abroad its inhabitants.
- 2 And it shall be:
As with the people, so with the priest;
As with the servant, so with his master;
As with the maid, so with her mistress;
As with the buyer, so with the seller;
As with the lender, so with the borrower;
As with the creditor, so with the debtor.
- 3 The land shall be entirely emptied
and utterly plundered,
For the LORD has spoken this word.
- 4 The earth mourns *and* fades away,
The world languishes *and* fades away;
The haughty people of the earth languish.
- 5 The earth is also defiled under
its inhabitants,
Because they have transgressed the laws,
Changed the ordinance,
Broken the everlasting covenant.
- 6 Therefore the curse has devoured the earth,
And those who dwell in it are desolate.
Therefore the inhabitants of
the earth are burned,
And few men *are* left.
- 7 The new wine fails, the vine languishes,
All the merry-hearted sigh.
- 8 The mirth of the tambourine ceases,
The noise of the jubilant ends,
The joy of the harp ceases.
- 9 They shall not drink wine with a song;
Strong drink is bitter to those who drink it.
- 10 The city of confusion is broken down;
Every house is shut up, so
that none may go in.
- 11 *There is* a cry for wine in the streets,
All joy is darkened,
The mirth of the land is gone.

^{23:10}^aThat is, the Nile

12 In the city desolation is left,
And the gate is stricken with destruction.

13 When it shall be thus in the midst
of the land among the people,
It shall be like the shaking of an olive tree,
Like the gleaning of grapes when
the vintage is done.

14 They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing;
For the majesty of the LORD
They shall cry aloud from the sea.

15 Therefore glorify the LORD
in the dawning light,
The name of the LORD God of Israel
in the coastlands of the sea.

16 From the ends of the earth
we have heard songs:
"Glory to the righteous!"
But I said, "I am ruined, ruined!
Woe to me!
The treacherous dealers have
dealt treacherously,
Indeed, the treacherous dealers
have dealt very treacherously."

17 Fear and the pit and the snare
Are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth.

18 And it shall be
That he who flees from the noise of the fear
Shall fall into the pit,
And he who comes up from
the midst of the pit
Shall be caught in the snare;
For the windows from on high are open,
And the foundations of the
earth are shaken.

19 The earth is violently broken,
The earth is split open,
The earth is shaken exceedingly.

20 The earth shall reel to and
fro like a drunkard,
And shall totter like a hut;
Its transgression shall be heavy upon it,
And it will fall, and not rise again.

21 It shall come to pass in that day
That the LORD will punish on high
the host of exalted ones,
And on the earth the kings of the earth.

22 They will be gathered together,
As prisoners are gathered in the pit,
And will be shut up in the prison;
After many days they will be punished.

23 Then the moon will be disgraced
And the sun ashamed;
For the LORD of hosts will reign
On Mount Zion and in Jerusalem
And before His elders, gloriously.

Praise to God

25 O LORD, You *are* my God.

I will exalt You,
I will praise Your name,
For You have done wonderful *things*;
Your counsels of old *are*
faithfulness *and* truth.

2 For You have made a city a ruin,
A fortified city a ruin,
A palace of foreigners to be a city no more;
It will never be rebuilt.

3 Therefore the strong people will glorify You;
The city of the terrible nations will fear You.

4 For You have been a strength to the poor,
A strength to the needy in his distress,
A refuge from the storm,
A shade from the heat;
For the blast of the terrible ones *is*
as a storm *against* the wall.

5 You will reduce the noise of aliens,
As heat in a dry place;
As heat in the shadow of a cloud,
The song of the terrible ones
will be diminished.

6 And in this mountain
The LORD of hosts will make for all people
A feast of choice pieces,
A feast of wines on the lees,
Of fat things full of marrow,
Of well-refined wines on the lees.

7 And He will destroy on this mountain
The surface of the covering
cast over all people,
And the veil that is spread over all nations.

8 He will swallow up death forever,
And the Lord GOD will wipe away
tears from all faces;
The rebuke of His people
He will take away from all the earth;
For the LORD has spoken.

9 And it will be said in that day:
"Behold, this *is* our God;
We have waited for Him, and He will save us.
This *is* the LORD;
We have waited for Him;
We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."

- 10 For on this mountain the hand
of the LORD will rest,
And Moab shall be trampled
down under Him,
As straw is trampled down
for the refuse heap.
- 11 And He will spread out His
hands in their midst
As a swimmer reaches out to swim,
And He will bring down their pride
Together with the trickery of their hands.
- 12 The fortress of the high fort of your walls
He will bring down, lay low,
And bring to the ground, down to the dust.

A Song of Salvation

26 In that day this song will be sung in the
land of Judah:

- “We have a strong city;
God will appoint salvation for
walls and bulwarks.
- 2 Open the gates,
That the righteous nation which
keeps the truth may enter in.
- 3 You will keep *him* in perfect peace,
Whose mind is stayed on You,
Because he trusts in You.
- 4 Trust in the LORD forever,
For in YAH, the LORD, *is* everlasting strength.^a
- 5 For He brings down those who dwell on high,
The lofty city;
He lays it low,
He lays it low to the ground,

- He brings it down to the dust.
- 6 The foot shall tread it down—
The feet of the poor
And the steps of the needy.”
- 7 The way of the just *is* uprightness;
O Most Upright,
You weigh the path of the just.
- 8 Yes, in the way of Your judgments,
O LORD, we have waited for You;
The desire of *our* soul *is* for Your name
And for the remembrance of You.
- 9 With my soul I have desired
You in the night,
Yes, by my spirit within me I
will seek You early;
For when Your judgments *are* in the earth,
The inhabitants of the world
will learn righteousness.

26:4^a Or *Rock of Ages*

Leaders Manage Stress by Managing Perspective

Isaiah 26:3, 4

Those who fix their eyes on the past risk a severe collision with the future. Those who see only the future hit much too hard the speed bumps of today. Only those who fix their eyes on God can effectively negotiate the right pace of life.

Vision: Great Leaders Never Lose Sight of the Big Picture

Isaiah 25:1–12

Good leaders never shrink from dealing with the realities of the here and now, no matter how depressing they might be. Yet they never lose sight of the big picture and what the ultimate future looks like.

While Isaiah 25 boasts a wonderful vision for the future, it comes on the heels of chapter 24, which predicts doom and gloom for the immediate future. One chapter deals with a temporary situation; the next pictures the ultimate situation. Leadership must stay in touch with both. Vision separates leaders from followers:

Followers

1. See the here and now
2. Driven by the atmosphere of today
3. Limited perspective on their abilities
4. Can be diverted by today's losses
5. Key word: immediate

Leaders

1. See the ultimate goals and potential
2. Driven by their vision for tomorrow
3. Larger perspective on everyone's abilities
4. Stays on track by focusing on the goal
5. Key word: ultimate

- 10 Let grace be shown to the wicked,
Yet he will not learn righteousness;
In the land of uprightness he
will deal unjustly,
And will not behold the majesty of the LORD.
- 11 LORD, *when* Your hand is lifted
up, they will not see.
But they will see and be ashamed
For *their* envy of people;
Yes, the fire of Your enemies
shall devour them.
- 12 LORD, You will establish peace for us,
For You have also done all our works in us.
- 13 O LORD our God, masters besides You
Have had dominion over us;
But by You only we make
mention of Your name.
- 14 *They are* dead, they will not live;
They are deceased, they will not rise.
Therefore You have punished
and destroyed them,
And made all their memory to perish.
- 15 You have increased the nation, O LORD,
You have increased the nation;
You are glorified;
You have expanded all the
borders of the land.
- 16 LORD, in trouble they have visited You,
They poured out a prayer *when* Your
chastening *was* upon them.
- 17 As a woman with child
Is in pain and cries out in her pangs,
When she draws near the time of her delivery,
So have we been in Your sight, O LORD.
- 18 We have been with child, we
have been in pain;
We have, as it were, brought forth wind;
We have not accomplished any
deliverance in the earth,
Nor have the inhabitants of the world fallen.
- 19 Your dead shall live;
Together with my dead body^a they shall arise.
Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust;
For your dew *is like* the dew of herbs,
And the earth shall cast out the dead.
- 21 For behold, the LORD comes out of His place
To punish the inhabitants of the
earth for their iniquity;
The earth will also disclose her blood,
And will no more cover her slain.
- 27** In that day the LORD with His severe
sword, great and strong,
Will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent,
Leviathan that twisted serpent;
And He will slay the reptile
that *is* in the sea.

The Restoration of Israel

- 2 In that day sing to her,
"A vineyard of red wine!"^a
- 3 I, the LORD, keep it,
I water it every moment;
Lest any hurt it,
I keep it night and day.
- 4 Fury *is* not in Me.
Who would set briars and thorns
Against Me in battle?
I would go through them,
I would burn them together.
- 5 Or let him take hold of My strength,
That he may make peace with Me;
And he shall make peace with Me."
- 6 Those who come He shall cause
to take root in Jacob;
Israel shall blossom and bud,
And fill the face of the world with fruit.
- 7 Has He struck Israel as He struck
those who struck him?
Or has He been slain according
to the slaughter of those who
were slain by Him?
- 8 In measure, by sending it away,
You contended with it.
He removes *it* by His rough wind
In the day of the east wind.
- 9 Therefore by this the iniquity of
Jacob will be covered;
And this *is* all the fruit of taking away his sin:
When he makes all the stones of the altar

Take Refuge from the Coming Judgment

- 20 Come, my people, enter your chambers,
And shut your doors behind you;
Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment,
Until the indignation is past.

26:19^a Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Syriac and Targum read *their dead bodies*; Septuagint reads *those in the tombs*. 27:2^a Following Masoretic Text (Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*), Bomberg, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text (*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*), some Hebrew manuscripts, and Septuagint read *delight*; Targum reads *choice vineyard*.

- Like chalkstones that are beaten to dust,
Wooden images^a and incense
altars shall not stand.
- 10 Yet the fortified city *will be* desolate,
The habitation forsaken and
left like a wilderness;
There the calf will feed, and
there it will lie down
And consume its branches.
- 11 When its boughs are withered,
they will be broken off;
The women come *and* set them on fire.
For it *is* a people of no understanding;
Therefore He who made them will
not have mercy on them,
And He who formed them will
show them no favor.
- 12 And it shall come to pass in that day
That the LORD will thresh,
From the channel of the River^a
to the Brook of Egypt;
And you will be gathered one by one,
O you children of Israel.
- 13 So it shall be in that day:
The great trumpet will be blown;
They will come, who are about to
perish in the land of Assyria,
And they who are outcasts in
the land of Egypt,
And shall worship the LORD in the
holy mount at Jerusalem.
- Which an observer sees;
He eats it up while it is still in his hand.
- 5 In that day the LORD of hosts will be
For a crown of glory and a
diadem of beauty
To the remnant of His people,
- 6 For a spirit of justice to him
who sits in judgment,
And for strength to those who turn
back the battle at the gate.
- 7 But they also have erred through wine,
And through intoxicating drink
are out of the way;
The priest and the prophet have erred
through intoxicating drink,
They are swallowed up by wine,
They are out of the way through
intoxicating drink;
They err in vision, they
stumble *in* judgment.
- 8 For all tables are full of vomit *and* filth;
No place *is* clean.
- 9 “Whom will he teach knowledge?
And whom will he make to
understand the message?
Those *just* weaned from milk?
Those *just* drawn from the breasts?”
- 10 For precept *must be* upon precept,
precept upon precept,
Line upon line, line upon line,
Here a little, there a little.”

Woe to Ephraim and Jerusalem

- 28** Woe to the crown of pride, to
the drunkards of Ephraim,
Whose glorious beauty *is* a fading flower
Which *is* at the head of the verdant valleys,
To those who are overcome with wine!
- 2 Behold, the Lord has a mighty
and strong one,
Like a tempest of hail and a
destroying storm,
Like a flood of mighty waters overflowing,
Who will bring *them* down to
the earth with *His* hand.
- 3 The crown of pride, the
drunkards of Ephraim,
Will be trampled underfoot;
- 4 And the glorious beauty *is* a fading flower
Which *is* at the head of the verdant valley,
Like the first fruit before the summer,

- 11 For with stammering lips
and another tongue
He will speak to this people,
- 12 To whom He said, “This *is*
the rest *with which*
You may cause the weary to rest,”
And, “This *is* the refreshing”;
Yet they would not hear.
- 13 But the word of the LORD was to them,
“Precept upon precept, precept
upon precept,
Line upon line, line upon line,
Here a little, there a little,”
That they might go and fall
backward, and be broken
And snared and caught.

27:9^a Hebrew *Asherim*, Canaanite deities 27:12^a That
is, the Euphrates

- 14 Therefore hear the word of the
LORD, you scornful men,
Who rule this people who *are* in Jerusalem,
15 Because you have said, “We have
made a covenant with death,
And with Sheol we are in agreement.
When the overflowing scourge
passes through,
It will not come to us,
For we have made lies our refuge,
And under falsehood we have
hidden ourselves.”

A Cornerstone in Zion

16 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

- “Behold, I lay in Zion a stone
for a foundation,
A tried stone, a precious cornerstone,
a sure foundation;
Whoever believes will not act hastily.
17 Also I will make justice the measuring line,
And righteousness the plummet;
The hail will sweep away the refuge of lies,
And the waters will overflow
the hiding place.
18 Your covenant with death will be annulled,
And your agreement with
Sheol will not stand;
When the overflowing scourge
passes through,
Then you will be trampled down by it.
19 As often as it goes out it will take you;
For morning by morning it will pass over,
And by day and by night;
It will be a terror just to
understand the report.”
20 For the bed is too short to stretch out *on*,
And the covering so narrow that
one cannot wrap himself *in it*.
21 For the LORD will rise up as
at Mount Perazim,
He will be angry as in the
Valley of Gibeon—
That He may do His work,
His awesome work,
And bring to pass His act, His unusual act.
22 Now therefore, do not be mockers,
Lest your bonds be made strong;
For I have heard from the
Lord GOD of hosts,
A destruction determined even
upon the whole earth.

Listen to the Teaching of God

- 23 Give ear and hear my voice,
Listen and hear my speech.
24 Does the plowman keep
plowing all day to sow?
Does he keep turning his soil
and breaking the clods?
25 When he has leveled its surface,
Does he not sow the black cummin
And scatter the cummin,
Plant the wheat in rows,
The barley in the appointed place,
And the spelt in its place?
26 For He instructs him in right judgment,
His God teaches him.
27 For the black cummin is not threshed
with a threshing sledge,
Nor is a cartwheel rolled
over the cummin;
But the black cummin is
beaten out with a stick,
And the cummin with a rod.
28 Bread *flour* must be ground;
Therefore he does not thresh it forever,
Break *it with* his cartwheel,
Or crush it *with* his horsemen.
29 This also comes from the LORD of hosts,
Who is wonderful in counsel *and*
excellent in guidance.

Woe to Jerusalem

- 29** “Woe to Ariel,^a to Ariel, the
city *where* David dwelt!
Add year to year;
Let feasts come around.
2 Yet I will distress Ariel;
There shall be heaviness and sorrow,
And it shall be to Me as Ariel.
3 I will encamp against you all around,
I will lay siege against you
with a mound,
And I will raise siegeworks
against you.
4 You shall be brought down,
You shall speak out of the ground;
Your speech shall be low,
out of the dust;
Your voice shall be like a medium’s,
out of the ground;
And your speech shall whisper
out of the dust.

29:1^a That is, Jerusalem

- 5 “Moreover the multitude of your foes
Shall be like fine dust,
And the multitude of the terrible ones
Like chaff that passes away;
Yes, it shall be in an instant, suddenly.
- 6 You will be punished by the LORD of hosts
With thunder and earthquake
and great noise,
With storm and tempest
And the flame of devouring fire.
- 7 The multitude of all the nations
who fight against Ariel,
Even all who fight against
her and her fortress,
And distress her,
Shall be as a dream of a night vision.
- 8 It shall even be as when a
hungry man dreams,
And look—he eats;
But he awakes, and his soul is still empty;
Or as when a thirsty man dreams,
And look—he drinks;
But he awakes, and indeed *he is faint*,
And his soul still craves:
So the multitude of all the nations shall be,
Who fight against Mount Zion.”

The Blindness of Disobedience

- 9 Pause and wonder!
Blind yourselves and be blind!
They are drunk, but not with wine;
They stagger, but not with intoxicating drink.
- 10 For the LORD has poured out on you
The spirit of deep sleep,
And has closed your eyes,
namely, the prophets;
And He has covered your heads,
namely, the seers.

¹¹The whole vision has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed, which *men* deliver to one who is literate, saying, “Read this, please.”
And he says, “I cannot, for it *is* sealed.”

¹²Then the book is delivered to one who is illiterate, saying, “Read this, please.”
And he says, “I am not literate.”

¹³Therefore the Lord said:

“Inasmuch as these people draw
near with their mouths
And honor Me with their lips,
But have removed their hearts far from Me,
And their fear toward Me is taught
by the commandment of men,

- 14 Therefore, behold, I will again
do a marvelous work
Among this people,
A marvelous work and a wonder;
For the wisdom of their wise
men shall perish,
And the understanding of their
prudent *men* shall be hidden.”
- 15 Woe to those who seek deep to hide
their counsel far from the LORD,
And their works are in the dark;
They say, “Who sees us?” and,
“Who knows us?”
- 16 Surely you have things turned around!
Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay;
For shall the thing made say
of him who made it,
“He did not make me”?
Or shall the thing formed say
of him who formed it,
“He has no understanding”?

Future Recovery of Wisdom

- 17 Is it not yet a very little while
Till Lebanon shall be turned
into a fruitful field,
And the fruitful field be esteemed as a forest?
- 18 In that day the deaf shall hear
the words of the book,
And the eyes of the blind shall see out
of obscurity and out of darkness.
- 19 The humble also shall increase
their joy in the LORD,
And the poor among men shall rejoice
In the Holy One of Israel.
- 20 For the terrible one is brought to nothing,
The scornful one is consumed,
And all who watch for iniquity are cut off—
21 Who make a man an offender by a word,
And lay a snare for him who
reproves in the gate,
And turn aside the just by empty words.

²²Therefore thus says the LORD, who redeemed
Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob:

“Jacob shall not now be ashamed,
Nor shall his face now grow pale;
23 But when he sees his children,
The work of My hands, in his midst,
They will hallow My name,
And hallow the Holy One of Jacob,
And fear the God of Israel.

- ²⁴ These also who erred in spirit will come to understanding, And those who complained will learn doctrine.”

Futile Confidence in Egypt

- 30** “Woe to the rebellious children,” says the LORD,
 “Who take counsel, but not of Me,
 And who devise plans, but not of My Spirit,
 That they may add sin to sin;
² Who walk to go down to Egypt,
 And have not asked My advice,
 To strengthen themselves in
 the strength of Pharaoh,
 And to trust in the shadow of Egypt!
³ Therefore the strength of Pharaoh
 Shall be your shame,
 And trust in the shadow of Egypt
 Shall be *your* humiliation.
⁴ For his princes were at Zoan,
 And his ambassadors came to Hanes.
⁵ They were all ashamed of a people
who could not benefit them,
 Or be help or benefit,
 But a shame and also a reproach.”

⁶The burden against the beasts of the South.

- Through a land of trouble and anguish,
 From which *came* the lioness and lion,
 The viper and fiery flying serpent,
 They will carry their riches on the
 backs of young donkeys,
 And their treasures on the humps of camels,
 To a people *who* shall not profit;
⁷ For the Egyptians shall help in
 vain and to no purpose.
 Therefore I have called her
 Rahab-Hem-Shebeth.^a

A Rebellious People

- ⁸ Now go, write it before them on a tablet,
 And note it on a scroll,
 That it may be for time to come,
 Forever and ever:
⁹ That this *is* a rebellious people,
 Lying children,
 Children *who* will not hear
 the law of the LORD;
¹⁰ Who say to the seers, “Do not see,”
 And to the prophets, “Do not
 prophesy to us right things;
 Speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits.

Strategic Planning: Where God Fits In

Isaiah 30:1–5

Leaders and organizations constantly make plans. This is one reason why leaders are in demand; they plan for and negotiate the future. Yet Isaiah issues a warning to every leader who develops plans without asking if they fit the mind of God.

Leaders must remember just how tentative strategic plans need to be. No one knows the future except God. Keep in mind the following equation as you plan:

Our Preparation + God's Providence = Success

Leaders must constantly ask if their plans fit God's revealed will for them and their organization. Then they must ask if their plans remain relevant to the needs of their mission, their values, their vision, and their long-range objectives. Finally, they need to ask if their plans fit the needs of their culture and time. This makes for wise leadership and strategic planning.

- ¹¹ Get out of the way,
 Turn aside from the path,
 Cause the Holy One of Israel
 To cease from before us.”

¹²Therefore thus says the Holy One of Israel:

- “Because you despise this word,
 And trust in oppression and
 perversity,
 And rely on them,
¹³ Therefore this iniquity shall be to you
 Like a breach ready to fall,
 A bulge in a high wall,
 Whose breaking comes
 suddenly, in an instant.
¹⁴ And He shall break it like the
 breaking of the potter's vessel,
 Which is broken in pieces;
 He shall not spare.
 So there shall not be found
 among its fragments
 A shard to take fire from the hearth,
 Or to take water from the cistern.”

^{30:7}^aLiterally *Rahab Sits Idle*

¹⁵For thus says the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel:

“In returning and rest you shall be saved;
In quietness and confidence
shall be your strength.”

But you would not,
¹⁶And you said, “No, for we will
flee on horses”—
Therefore you shall flee!
And, “We will ride on swift *horses*”—
Therefore those who pursue
you shall be swift!

¹⁷One thousand *shall flee* at the
threat of one,
At the threat of five you shall flee,
Till you are left as a pole on
top of a mountain
And as a banner on a hill.

God Will Be Gracious

¹⁸Therefore the LORD will wait, that
He may be gracious to you;
And therefore He will be exalted, that
He may have mercy on you.
For the LORD *is* a God of justice;
Blessed *are* all those who wait for Him.

¹⁹For the people shall dwell in
Zion at Jerusalem;
You shall weep no more.
He will be very gracious to you
at the sound of your cry;
When He hears it, He will answer you.

²⁰And *though* the Lord gives you
The bread of adversity and the
water of affliction,
Yet your teachers will not be moved
into a corner anymore,
But your eyes shall see
your teachers.

²¹Your ears shall hear a word
behind you, saying,
“This *is* the way, walk in it,”
Whenever you turn to the right hand
Or whenever you turn to the left.

²²You will also defile the covering
of your images of silver,
And the ornament of your
molded images of gold.
You will throw them away as
an unclean thing;
You will say to them, “Get away!”

²³Then He will give the rain for your seed
With which you sow the ground,
And bread of the increase of the earth;
It will be fat and plentiful.
In that day your cattle will feed
In large pastures.

²⁴Likewise the oxen and the young
donkeys that work the ground
Will eat cured fodder,
Which has been winnowed with
the shovel and fan.

²⁵There will be on every high mountain
And on every high hill
Rivers *and* streams of waters,
In the day of the great slaughter,
When the towers fall.

²⁶Moreover the light of the moon
will be as the light of the sun,
And the light of the sun will be sevenfold,
As the light of seven days,
In the day that the LORD binds up
the bruise of His people
And heals the stroke of their wound.

Judgment on Assyria

²⁷Behold, the name of the LORD
comes from afar,
Burning *with* His anger,
And *His* burden *is* heavy;
His lips are full of indignation,
And His tongue like a devouring fire.

²⁸His breath is like an overflowing stream,
Which reaches up to the neck,
To sift the nations with the
sieve of futility;
And *there shall be* a bridle in
the jaws of the people,
Causing *them* to err.

²⁹You shall have a song
As in the night *when* a holy festival is kept,
And gladness of heart as when
one goes with a flute,
To come into the mountain of the LORD,
To the Mighty One of Israel.

³⁰The LORD will cause His glorious
voice to be heard,
And show the descent of His arm,
With the indignation of *His* anger
And the flame of a devouring fire,
With scattering, tempest, and hailstones.

³¹For through the voice of the LORD
Assyria will be beaten down,
As He strikes with the rod.

- 32 And *in* every place where the staff
of punishment passes,
Which the LORD lays on him,
It will be with tambourines and harps;
And in battles of brandishing
He will fight with it.
- 33 For Tophet *was* established of old,
Yes, for the king it is prepared.
He has made *it* deep and large;
Its pyre *is* fire with much wood;
The breath of the LORD, like a
stream of brimstone,
Kindles it.

The Folly of Not Trusting God

- 31** Woe to those who go down
to Egypt for help,
And rely on horses,
Who trust in chariots because
they are many,
And in horsemen because
they are very strong,
But who do not look to the
Holy One of Israel,
Nor seek the LORD!
- 2 Yet He also *is* wise and will bring disaster,
And will not call back His words,
But will arise against the house
of evildoers,
And against the help of those
who work iniquity.
- 3 Now the Egyptians *are* men, and not God;
And their horses are flesh, and not spirit.
When the LORD stretches out His hand,
Both he who helps will fall,
And he who is helped will fall down;
They all will perish together.

God Will Deliver Jerusalem

- ⁴For thus the LORD has spoken to me:
“As a lion roars,
And a young lion over his prey
(When a multitude of shepherds
is summoned against him,
He will not be afraid of their voice
Nor be disturbed by their noise),
So the LORD of hosts will come down
To fight for Mount Zion and for its hill.
- 5 Like birds flying about,
So will the LORD of hosts
defend Jerusalem.
Defending, He will also deliver *it*;
Passing over, He will preserve *it*.”

⁶Return to *Him* against whom the children of
Israel have deeply revolted. ⁷For in that day every
man shall throw away his idols of silver and his
idols of gold—sin, which your own hands have
made for yourselves.

- 8 “Then Assyria shall fall by a
sword not of man,
And a sword not of mankind
shall devour him.
But he shall flee from the sword,
And his young men shall
become forced labor.
- 9 He shall cross over to his stronghold for fear,
And his princes shall be
afraid of the banner,”
Says the LORD,
Whose fire *is* in Zion
And whose furnace *is* in Jerusalem.

A Reign of Righteousness

- 32** Behold, a king will reign
in righteousness,
And princes will rule with justice.
- 2 A man will be as a hiding
place from the wind,
And a cover from the tempest,
As rivers of water in a dry place,
As the shadow of a great rock
in a weary land.
- 3 The eyes of those who see will not be dim,
And the ears of those who hear will listen.
- 4 Also the heart of the rash will
understand knowledge,
And the tongue of the stammerers
will be ready to speak plainly.
- 5 The foolish person will no longer
be called generous,
Nor the miser said *to be* bountiful;
- 6 For the foolish person will
speak foolishness,
And his heart will work iniquity:
To practice ungodliness,
To utter error against the LORD,
To keep the hungry unsatisfied,
And he will cause the drink
of the thirsty to fail.
- 7 Also the schemes of the schemer *are* evil;
He devises wicked plans
To destroy the poor with lying words,
Even when the needy speaks justice.
- 8 But a generous man devises generous things,
And by generosity he shall stand.

Consequences of Complacency

- 9 Rise up, you women who are at ease,
Hear my voice;
You complacent daughters,
Give ear to my speech.
- 10 In a year and *some* days
You will be troubled, you
complacent women;
For the vintage will fail,
The gathering will not come.
- 11 Tremble, you *women* who are at ease;
Be troubled, you complacent ones;
Strip yourselves, make yourselves bare,
And gird *sackcloth* on *your* waists.
- 12 People shall mourn upon their breasts
For the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine.
- 13 On the land of my people will
come up thorns *and* briers,
Yes, on all the happy homes
in the joyous city;
- 14 Because the palaces will be forsaken,
The bustling city will be deserted.
The forts and towers will
become lairs forever,
A joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of flocks—
- 15 Until the Spirit is poured upon
us from on high,
And the wilderness becomes a fruitful field,
And the fruitful field is counted as a forest.

The Peace of God's Reign

- 16 Then justice will dwell in the wilderness,
And righteousness remain
in the fruitful field.

- 17 The work of righteousness will be peace,
And the effect of righteousness,
quietness and assurance forever.
- 18 My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation,
In secure dwellings, and in
quiet resting places,
- 19 Though hail comes down on the forest,
And the city is brought low in humiliation.
- 20 Blessed *are* you who sow beside all waters,
Who send out freely the feet of
the ox and the donkey.

A Prayer in Deep Distress

33 Woe to you who plunder, though
you *have not been* plundered;
And you who deal treacherously, though they
have not dealt treacherously with you!
When you cease plundering,
You will be plundered;
When you make an end of
dealing treacherously,
They will deal treacherously with you.

- 2 O LORD, be gracious to us;
We have waited for You.
Be their^a arm every morning,
Our salvation also in the time of trouble.
- 3 At the noise of the tumult
the people shall flee;
When You lift Yourself up, the
nations shall be scattered;

33:2^aSeptuagint omits *their*; Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *our*.

The Law of Solid Ground: Leaders Must Earn Trust

Isaiah 33:14–16

Who can stand up under the purification process of God? Who can remain unchanged through the fire of God? That's the question Isaiah asks and then answers. He lays out a list of traits for the kind of people who can stand in a crisis. Ponder his description:

1. **Integrity:** The leader's life and words match (v. 15).
2. **Justice:** The leader rejects dishonest gain (v. 15).
3. **Convictions:** The leader's values won't allow him to accept bribes (v. 15).
4. **Positive focus:** The leader refuses to dwell on destructive issues (v. 15).
5. **Pure:** The leader disciplines his or her mind to remain clean and pure (v. 15).
6. **Secure:** The leader is firm, stable in his identity and source of strength (v. 16).

Characteristics like these earn the trust of others. When leaders possess them, they feel secure enough to develop others, rather than destroy them. Remember, only secure leaders empower others.

- 4 And Your plunder shall be gathered
Like the gathering of the caterpillar;
 As the running to and fro of locusts,
 He shall run upon them.
- 5 The LORD is exalted, for He dwells on high;
 He has filled Zion with justice
 and righteousness.
- 6 Wisdom and knowledge will be
 the stability of your times,
 And the strength of salvation;
 The fear of the LORD *is* His treasure.
- 7 Surely their valiant ones shall cry outside,
 The ambassadors of peace
 shall weep bitterly.
- 8 The highways lie waste,
 The traveling man ceases.
 He has broken the covenant,
 He has despised the cities,^a
 He regards no man.
- 9 The earth mourns *and* languishes,
 Lebanon is shamed *and* shriveled;
 Sharon is like a wilderness,
 And Bashan and Carmel
 shake off *their* fruits.

Impending Judgment on Zion

- 10 "Now I will rise," says the LORD;
 "Now I will be exalted,
 Now I will lift Myself up.
- 11 You shall conceive chaff,
 You shall bring forth stubble;
 Your breath, *as* fire, shall devour you.
- 12 And the people shall be *like*
 the burnings of lime;
Like thorns cut up they shall
 be burned in the fire.
- 13 Hear, you *who are* afar off, what I have done;
 And you *who are* near,
 acknowledge My might."
- 14 The sinners in Zion are afraid;
 Fearfulness has seized the hypocrites:
 "Who among us shall dwell with
 the devouring fire?
 Who among us shall dwell with
 everlasting burnings?"
- 15 He who walks righteously and
 speaks uprightly,
 He who despises the gain of oppressions,
 Who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes,
 Who stops his ears from
 hearing of bloodshed,

- And shuts his eyes from seeing evil:
 16 He will dwell on high;
 His place of defense *will be*
 the fortress of rocks;
 Bread will be given him,
 His water *will be* sure.

The Land of the Majestic King

- 17 Your eyes will see the King in His beauty;
 They will see the land that is very far off.
- 18 Your heart will meditate on terror:
 "Where *is* the scribe?
 Where *is* he who weighs?
 Where *is* he who counts the towers?"
- 19 You will not see a fierce people,
 A people of obscure speech,
 beyond perception,
 Of a stammering tongue *that*
 you cannot understand.
- 20 Look upon Zion, the city of
 our appointed feasts;
 Your eyes will see Jerusalem, a quiet home,
 A tabernacle *that* will not be taken down;
 Not one of its stakes will ever be removed,
 Nor will any of its cords be broken.
- 21 But there the majestic LORD *will be* for us
 A place of broad rivers *and* streams,
 In which no galley with oars will sail,
 Nor majestic ships pass by
- 22 (For the LORD *is* our Judge,
 The LORD *is* our Lawgiver,
 The LORD *is* our King;
 He will save us);
- 23 Your tackle is loosed,
 They could not strengthen their mast,
 They could not spread the sail.
- Then the prey of great plunder is divided;
 The lame take the prey.
- 24 And the inhabitant will not say, "I am sick";
 The people who dwell in it *will*
 be forgiven *their* iniquity.

Judgment on the Nations

- 34** Come near, you nations, to hear;
 And heed, you people!
 Let the earth hear, and all that is in it,
 The world and all things that
 come forth from it.

33:8^a Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Dead Sea Scrolls read *witnesses*; Septuagint omits *cities*; Targum reads *They have been removed from their cities*.

- 2 For the indignation of the LORD
is against all nations,
And His fury against all their armies;
He has utterly destroyed them,
He has given them over to the slaughter.
- 3 Also their slain shall be thrown out;
Their stench shall rise from their corpses,
And the mountains shall be
melted with their blood.
- 4 All the host of heaven shall be dissolved,
And the heavens shall be
rolled up like a scroll;
All their host shall fall down
As the leaf falls from the vine,
And as *fruit* falling from a fig tree.
- 5 “For My sword shall be bathed in heaven;
Indeed it shall come down on Edom,
And on the people of My
curse, for judgment.
- 6 The sword of the LORD is filled with blood,
It is made overflowing with fatness,
With the blood of lambs and goats,
With the fat of the kidneys of rams.
For the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah,
And a great slaughter in the land of Edom.
- 7 The wild oxen shall come
down with them,
And the young bulls with
the mighty bulls;
Their land shall be soaked with blood,
And their dust saturated with fatness.”
- 8 For *it is* the day of the LORD’s vengeance,
The year of recompense for
the cause of Zion.
- 9 Its streams shall be turned into pitch,
And its dust into brimstone;
Its land shall become burning pitch.
- 10 It shall not be quenched night or day;
Its smoke shall ascend forever.
From generation to generation
it shall lie waste;
No one shall pass through
it forever and ever.
- 11 But the pelican and the porcupine
shall possess it,
Also the owl and the raven shall dwell in it.
And He shall stretch out over it
The line of confusion and the
stones of emptiness.
- 12 They shall call its nobles to the kingdom,
But none *shall be* there, and all its
princes shall be nothing.
- 13 And thorns shall come up in its palaces,
Nettles and brambles in its fortresses;
It shall be a habitation of jackals,
A courtyard for ostriches.
- 14 The wild beasts of the desert shall
also meet with the jackals,
And the wild goat shall bleat
to its companion;
Also the night creature shall rest there,
And find for herself a place of rest.
- 15 There the arrow snake shall make
her nest and lay *eggs*
And hatch, and gather *them*
under her shadow;
There also shall the hawks be gathered,
Every one with her mate.
- 16 “Search from the book of the
LORD, and read:
Not one of these shall fail;
Not one shall lack her mate.
For My mouth has commanded it, and
His Spirit has gathered them.
- 17 He has cast the lot for them,
And His hand has divided it among
them with a measuring line.
They shall possess it forever;
From generation to generation
they shall dwell in it.”

The Future Glory of Zion

- 35** The wilderness and the wasteland
shall be glad for them,
And the desert shall rejoice and
blossom as the rose;
- 2 It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice,
Even with joy and singing.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
The excellence of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the LORD,
The excellency of our God.
- 3 Strengthen the weak hands,
And make firm the feeble knees.
- 4 Say to those *who are* fearful-hearted,
“Be strong, do not fear!
Behold, your God will come *with* vengeance,
With the recompense of God;
He will come and save you.”
- 5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.
- 6 Then the lame shall leap like a deer,
And the tongue of the dumb sing.

- For waters shall burst forth
in the wilderness,
And streams in the desert.
- 7 The parched ground shall become a pool,
And the thirsty land springs of water;
In the habitation of jackals,
where each lay,
There shall be grass with reeds and rushes.
- 8 A highway shall be there, and a road,
And it shall be called the
Highway of Holiness.
The unclean shall not pass over it,
But it *shall be* for others.
Whoever walks the road, although a fool,
Shall not go astray.
- 9 No lion shall be there,
Nor shall *any* ravenous beast go up on it;
It shall not be found there.
But the redeemed shall walk *there*,
- 10 And the ransomed of the
LORD shall return,
And come to Zion with singing,
With everlasting joy on their heads.
They shall obtain joy and gladness,
And sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Sennacherib Boasts Against the LORD

36 Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. ²Then the king of Assyria sent *the Rabshakeh*^a with a great army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. And he stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller's Field. ³And Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came out to him.

⁴Then *the Rabshakeh* said to them, "Say now to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: "What confidence is this in which you trust? ⁵I say you speak of having plans and power for war; but *they are mere words*. Now in whom do you trust, that you rebel against me? ⁶Look! You are trusting in the staff of this broken reed, Egypt, on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So *is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him*.

⁷"But if you say to me, 'We trust in the LORD our God,' *is it not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away, and said to Judah and Jerusalem, 'You shall worship before this altar?'*" ⁸Now therefore, I urge you, give

a pledge to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses—if you are able on your part to put riders on them! ⁹How then will you repel one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put your trust in Egypt for chariots and horsemen? ¹⁰Have I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it? The LORD said to me, 'Go up against this land, and destroy it!'"

¹¹Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to *the Rabshakeh*, "Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand *it*; and do not speak to us in Hebrew^a in the hearing of the people who *are on the wall*."

¹²But *the Rabshakeh* said, "Has my master sent me to your master and to you to speak these words, and not to the men who sit on the wall, who will eat and drink their own waste with you?"

¹³Then *the Rabshakeh* stood and called out with a loud voice in Hebrew, and said, "Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria! ¹⁴Thus says the king: 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you; ¹⁵nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, "The LORD will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.'" ¹⁶Do not listen to Hezekiah; for thus says the king of Assyria: 'Make *peace* with me *by a present* and come out to me; and every one of you eat from his own vine and every one from his own fig tree, and every one of you drink the waters of his own cistern; ¹⁷until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards. ¹⁸*Beware* lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, "The LORD will deliver us." Has any one of the gods of the nations delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria? ¹⁹Where *are* the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where *are* the gods of Sepharvaim? Indeed, have they delivered Samaria from my hand? ²⁰Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?"

²¹But they held their peace and answered him not a word; for the king's commandment was, "Do not answer him." ²²Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who *was* over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with *their* clothes torn, and told him the words of *the Rabshakeh*.

36:2^a A title, probably *Chief of Staff or Governor*
36:11^a Literally *Judean*

Isaiah Assures Deliverance

37 And so it was, when King Hezekiah heard *it*, that he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. ²Then he sent Eliakim, who *was* over the household, Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. ³And they said to him, “Thus says Hezekiah: “This day *is* a day of trouble and rebuke and blasphemy; for the children have come to birth, but *there is* no strength to bring them forth. ⁴It may be that the LORD your God will hear the words of *the* Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to reproach the living God, and will rebuke the words which the LORD your God has heard. Therefore lift up *your* prayer for the remnant that is left.”

⁵So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah. ⁶And Isaiah said to them, “Thus you shall say to your master, “Thus says the LORD: “Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me. ⁷Surely I will send a spirit upon him, and he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.””

Sennacherib's Threat and Hezekiah's Prayer

⁸Then *the* Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah, for he heard that he had departed from Lachish. ⁹And the king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, “He has come out to make war with you.” So when he heard *it*, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, ¹⁰“Thus you shall speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying: ‘Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you, saying, “Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.” ¹¹Look! You have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by utterly destroying them; and shall you be delivered? ¹²Have the gods of the nations delivered those whom my fathers have destroyed, Gozan and Haran and Rezeph, and the people of Eden who *were* in Telassar? ¹³Where *is* the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?”

¹⁴And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. ¹⁵Then Hezekiah prayed to the LORD, saying: ¹⁶“O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, *the One* who dwells *between* the cherubim, You *are* God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of

the earth. You have made heaven and earth. ¹⁷Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God. ¹⁸Truly, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations and their lands, ¹⁹and have cast their gods into the fire; for they *were* not gods, but the work of men's hands—wood and stone. Therefore they destroyed them. ²⁰Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You *are* the LORD, You alone.”

The Law of Navigation: The Role of Planning and Praying

Isaiah 37:1–37

King Hezekiah provides an example of a leader who does what is humanly possible, then leans on God for the outcome. God had to do what the king could not do. A place exists for both preparation and prayer. To employ only one is naïve and incomplete.

The Word of the LORD Concerning Sennacherib

²¹Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel, ‘Because you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, ²²this *is* the word which the LORD has spoken concerning him:

“The virgin, the daughter of Zion,
Has despised you, laughed you to scorn;
The daughter of Jerusalem
Has shaken *her* head behind your back!

²³“Whom have you reproached
and blasphemed?
Against whom have you raised *your* voice,
And lifted up your eyes on high?
Against the Holy One of Israel.

²⁴By your servants you have
reproached the Lord,
And said, ‘By the multitude of my chariots
I have come up to the height
of the mountains,
To the limits of Lebanon;
I will cut down its tall cedars
And its choice cypress trees;
I will enter its farthest height,
To its fruitful forest.

25 I have dug and drunk water,
And with the soles of my
feet I have dried up
All the brooks of defense.'

26 "Did you not hear long ago
How I made it,
From ancient times that I formed it?
Now I have brought it to pass,
That you should be
For crushing fortified cities
into heaps of ruins.

27 Therefore their inhabitants
had little power;
They were dismayed and confounded;
They were *as* the grass of the field
And the green herb,
As the grass on the housetops
And *grain* blighted before it is grown.

28 "But I know your dwelling place,
Your going out and your coming in,
And your rage against Me.

29 Because your rage against
Me and your tumult
Have come up to My ears,
Therefore I will put My hook in your nose
And My bridle in your lips,
And I will turn you back
By the way which you came."

30 "This *shall be* a sign to you:

You shall eat this year such
as grows of itself,
And the second year what
springs from the same;
Also in the third year sow and reap,
Plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them.

31 And the remnant who have escaped
of the house of Judah
Shall again take root downward,
And bear fruit upward.

32 For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant,
And those who escape from Mount Zion.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

33 "Therefore thus says the LORD concerning
the king of Assyria:

'He shall not come into this city,
Nor shoot an arrow there,
Nor come before it with shield,
Nor build a siege mound against it.

34 By the way that he came,
By the same shall he return;
And he shall not come
into this city,'
Says the LORD.

35 'For I will defend this city,
to save it
For My own sake and for My
servant David's sake.'

Sennacherib's Defeat and Death

³⁶Then the angel^a of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when *people* arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead. ³⁷So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned *home*, and remained at Nineveh. ³⁸Now it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. Then Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.

Hezekiah's Life Extended

38 In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, went to him and said to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.'"

²Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the LORD, ³and said, "Remember now, O LORD, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done *what is* good in Your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

⁴And the word of the LORD came to Isaiah, saying, ⁵"Go and tell Hezekiah, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will add to your days fifteen years. ⁶I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city.'" ⁷And this *is* the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing which He has spoken: ⁸Behold, I will bring the shadow on the sundial, which has gone down with the sun on the sundial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward." So the sun returned ten degrees on the dial by which it had gone down.

⁹This is the writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick and had recovered from his sickness:

^{37:36}^a Or *Angel*

- 10 I said,
 “In the prime of my life
 I shall go to the gates of Sheol;
 I am deprived of the remainder of my years.”
- 11 I said,
 “I shall not see YAH,
 The LORD^a in the land of the living;
 I shall observe man no more among
 the inhabitants of the world.^b
- 12 My life span is gone,
 Taken from me like a shepherd’s tent;
 I have cut off my life like a weaver.
 He cuts me off from the loom;
 From day until night You
 make an end of me.
- 13 I have considered until morning—
 Like a lion,
 So He breaks all my bones;
 From day until night You
 make an end of me.
- 14 Like a crane or a swallow, so I chattered;
 I mourned like a dove;
 My eyes fail from looking upward.
 O LORD,^a I am oppressed;
 Undertake for me!
- 15 “What shall I say?
 He has both spoken to me,^a
 And He Himself has done it.
 I shall walk carefully all my years
 In the bitterness of my soul.
- 16 O Lord, by these *things men* live;
 And in all these *things is* the life of my spirit;
 So You will restore me and make me live.
- 17 Indeed *it was* for *my own* peace
 That I had great bitterness;
 But You have lovingly *delivered* my
 soul from the pit of corruption,
 For You have cast all my sins
 behind Your back.
- 18 For Sheol cannot thank You,
 Death cannot praise You;
 Those who go down to the pit
 cannot hope for Your truth.
- 19 The living, the living man, he shall praise You,
 As I *do* this day;
 The father shall make known
 Your truth to the children.
- 20 “The LORD *was ready* to save me;
 Therefore we will sing my songs
 with stringed instruments
 All the days of our life, in the
 house of the LORD.”
- 21 Now Isaiah had said, “Let them take a lump
 of figs, and apply *it* as a poultice on the boil, and
 he shall recover.”
- 22 And Hezekiah had said, “What *is* the sign
 that I shall go up to the house of the LORD?”

38:11^a Hebrew YAH, YAH ^b Following some Hebrew manuscripts; Masoretic Text and Vulgate read *rest*; Septuagint omits *among the inhabitants of the world*; Targum reads *land*. 38:14^a Following Bomberg; Masoretic Text and Dead Sea Scrolls read *Lord*. 38:15^a Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Dead Sea Scrolls and Targum read *And shall I say to Him*; Septuagint omits first half of this verse.

PROFILE in Leadership

Hezekiah:

The Art of Thanksgiving

Isaiah 38:9–20

Nothing brings out gratefulness like a reprieve from imminent death.

When King Hezekiah of Judah, a good and godly king, heard from the prophet Isaiah that he was about to die, he immediately turned to the God he had faithfully served. He begged God for an extension of life—and the Lord granted him an additional 15 years. When Hezekiah learned that the Lord would lengthen his life, he did what any godly leader would do: He

thanked and praised his God. Upon his recovery, he wrote to the Lord a poem of thanksgiving and praise for the good He had done.

As the godly king meditated on God’s goodness, he realized that the Lord had used even his sickness for his good. In verse 17 he wrote, “Indeed it was for my own peace that I had great bitterness”—the same sentiment expressed many years before by his revered ancestor, David: “It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes” (Ps. 119:71).

Hezekiah’s hymn of gratitude not only thanked the Lord for sparing his life, it also expressed his commitment to “sing my songs with stringed instruments all the days of [my] life” (Is. 38:20). He realized that expressing gratitude to God ought to be more than a onetime event; it must be a lifestyle.

The Babylonian Envoys

39 At that time Merodach-Baladan^a the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that he had been sick and had recovered. ²And Hezekiah was pleased with them, and showed them the house of his treasures—the silver and gold, the spices and precious ointment, and all his armory—all that was found among his treasures. There was nothing in his house or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them.

³Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah, and said to him, “What did these men say, and from where did they come to you?”

So Hezekiah said, “They came to me from a far country, from Babylon.”

⁴And he said, “What have they seen in your house?”

So Hezekiah answered, “They have seen all that *is* in my house; there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them.”

⁵Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: ⁶‘Behold, the days are coming when all that *is* in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,’ says the LORD. ⁷‘And they shall take away *some* of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.’”

⁸So Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “The word of the LORD which you have spoken *is* good!” For he said, “At least there will be peace and truth in my days.”

God’s People Are Comforted

40 “Comfort, yes, comfort My people!” Says your God.

² “Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her,
That her warfare is ended,
That her iniquity is pardoned;
For she has received from the LORD’s hand
Double for all her sins.”

³ The voice of one crying in the wilderness:
“Prepare the way of the LORD;
Make straight in the desert^a
A highway for our God.

⁴ Every valley shall be exalted
And every mountain and hill brought low;
The crooked places shall be made straight
And the rough places smooth;

⁵ The glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
And all flesh shall see *it* together;
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

⁶ The voice said, “Cry out!”
And he^a said, “What shall I cry?”

“All flesh *is* grass,
And all its loveliness *is* like
the flower of the field.

39:1^a Spelled *Berodach-Baladan* in 2 Kings 20:12
40:3^a Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate;
Septuagint omits *in the desert*. 40:6^a Following
Masoretic Text and Targum; Dead Sea Scrolls,
Septuagint, and Vulgate read *I*.

The Model for Leadership

Isaiah 40:1–31

We must never forget that the greatest model for leadership always comes from the life of God Himself. Isaiah 40 makes it clear that God, as the Ultimate Leader, models:

1. Comfort and Security

God supplies comfort and cleansing to His people (vv. 1, 2).

2. Empowerment and Delegation

God makes the path straight for others, then has them speak His words (vv. 3–8).

3. Shepherding and Direction

God proclaims good news and guides His people like a Shepherd (vv. 9–11).

4. Power and Authority

No one can challenge God’s strength. He is a Leader with unequalled power (vv. 12–17).

5. Creator and Developer

God is the transcendent Leader who builds and develops others (vv. 21–26).

6. Wise Counselor and Provider

God is the source for every need we may have (vv. 27–31).

- 7 The grass withers, the flower fades,
Because the breath of the
LORD blows upon it;
Surely the people *are* grass.
- 8 The grass withers, the flower fades,
But the word of our God stands forever.”
- 9 O Zion,
You who bring good tidings,
Get up into the high mountain;
O Jerusalem,
You who bring good tidings,
Lift up your voice with strength,
Lift *it* up, be not afraid;
Say to the cities of Judah,
“Behold your God!”
- 10 Behold, the Lord GOD shall come
with a strong *hand*,
And His arm shall rule for Him;
Behold, His reward *is* with Him,
And His work before Him.
- 11 He will feed His flock like a shepherd;
He will gather the lambs with His arm,
And carry *them* in His bosom,
And gently lead those who are with young.
- 12 Who has measured the waters^a
in the hollow of His hand,
Measured heaven with a span
And calculated the dust of the
earth in a measure?
Weighed the mountains in scales
And the hills in a balance?
- 13 Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD,
Or *as* His counselor has taught Him?
14 With whom did He take counsel,
and *who* instructed Him,
And taught Him in the path of justice?
Who taught Him knowledge,
And showed Him the way
of understanding?
- 15 Behold, the nations *are* as a
drop in a bucket,
And are counted as the small
dust on the scales;
Look, He lifts up the isles as
a very little thing.
- 16 And Lebanon *is* not sufficient to burn,
Nor its beasts sufficient for a burnt offering.
- 17 All nations before Him *are* as nothing,
And they are counted by Him less
than nothing and worthless.
- 18 To whom then will you liken God?
Or what likeness will you compare to Him?
- 19 The workman molds an image,
The goldsmith overspreads it with gold,
And the silversmith casts silver chains.
- 20 Whoever *is* too impoverished
for *such* a contribution
Chooses a tree *that* will not rot;
He seeks for himself a skillful workman
To prepare a carved image *that* will not totter.
- 21 Have you not known?
Have you not heard?
Has it not been told you from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the
foundations of the earth?
- 22 *It is* He who sits above the
circle of the earth,
And its inhabitants *are* like grasshoppers,
Who stretches out the heavens
like a curtain,
And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.
- 23 He brings the princes to nothing;
He makes the judges of the earth useless.
- 24 Scarcely shall they be planted,
Scarcely shall they be sown,
Scarcely shall their stock take
root in the earth,
When He will also blow on them,
And they will wither,
And the whirlwind will take
them away like stubble.
- 25 “To whom then will you liken Me,
Or *to whom* shall I be equal?”
says the Holy One.
- 26 Lift up your eyes on high,
And see who has created these *things*,
Who brings out their host by number;
He calls them all by name,
By the greatness of His might
And the strength of *His* power;
Not one is missing.
- 27 Why do you say, O Jacob,
And speak, O Israel:
“My way is hidden from the LORD,
And my just claim is passed
over by my God”?

40:12^a Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Dead Sea Scrolls read *waters of the sea*; Targum reads *waters of the world*.

28 Have you not known?
Have you not heard?
The everlasting God, the LORD,
The Creator of the ends of the earth,
Neither faints nor is weary.
His understanding is unsearchable.

29 He gives power to the weak,
And to *those who have* no might
He increases strength.

30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary,
And the young men shall utterly fall,

31 But those who wait on the LORD
Shall renew *their* strength;
They shall mount up with wings like eagles,
They shall run and not be weary,
They shall walk and not faint.

Israel Assured of God's Help

41 "Keep silence before Me, O coastlands,
And let the people renew *their* strength!
Let them come near, then let them speak;
Let us come near together for judgment.

2 "Who raised up one from the east?
Who in righteousness called
him to His feet?
Who gave the nations before him,
And made *him* rule over kings?
Who gave *them* as the dust *to* his sword,
As driven stubble to his bow?

3 Who pursued them, *and* passed safely
By the way *that* he had not
gone with his feet?

4 Who has performed and done *it*,
Calling the generations from the beginning?
'I, the LORD, am the first;
And with the last I *am* He.'

5 The coastlands saw *it* and feared,
The ends of the earth were afraid;
They drew near and came.

6 Everyone helped his neighbor,
And said to his brother,
"Be of good courage!"

7 So the craftsman encouraged the goldsmith;
He who smooths *with* the hammer
inspired him who strikes the anvil,
Saying, "It is ready for the soldering";
Then he fastened it with pegs,
That it might not totter.

8 "But you, Israel, *are* My servant,
Jacob whom I have chosen,
The descendants of Abraham My friend.

9 *You* whom I have taken from
the ends of the earth,
And called from its farthest regions,
And said to you,
'*You are* My servant,
I have chosen you and have
not cast you away:

10 Fear not, for I *am* with you;
Be not dismayed, for I *am* your God.
I will strengthen you,
Yes, I will help you,
I will uphold you with My
righteous right hand.'

11 "Behold, all those who were
incensed against you
Shall be ashamed and disgraced;
They shall be as nothing,
And those who strive with
you shall perish.

12 You shall seek them and not find them—
Those who contended with you.
Those who war against you
Shall be as nothing,
As a nonexistent thing.

13 For I, the LORD your God, will
hold your right hand,
Saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you.'

14 "Fear not, you worm Jacob,
You men of Israel!
I will help you," says the LORD
And your Redeemer, the
Holy One of Israel.

15 "Behold, I will make you into a new
threshing sledge with sharp teeth;
You shall thresh the mountains
and beat *them* small,
And make the hills like chaff.

16 You shall winnow them, the wind
shall carry them away,
And the whirlwind shall scatter them;
You shall rejoice in the LORD,
And glory in the Holy One of Israel.

17 "The poor and needy seek water,
but *there is* none,
Their tongues fail for thirst.
I, the LORD, will hear them;
I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them.

18 I will open rivers in desolate heights,
And fountains in the midst of the valleys;
I will make the wilderness a pool of water,
And the dry land springs of water.

- 19 I will plant in the wilderness the
cedar and the acacia tree,
The myrtle and the oil tree;
I will set in the desert the
cypress tree *and* the pine
And the box tree together,
20 That they may see and know,
And consider and understand together,
That the hand of the LORD has done this,
And the Holy One of Israel has created it.

The Futility of Idols

- 21 "Present your case," says the LORD.
"Bring forth your strong *reasons*,"
says the King of Jacob.
22 "Let them bring forth and show
us what will happen;
Let them show the former
things, what they *were*,
That we may consider them,
And know the latter end of them;
Or declare to us things to come.
23 Show the things that are to
come hereafter,
That we may know that you *are* gods;
Yes, do good or do evil,
That we may be dismayed
and see *it* together.
24 Indeed you *are* nothing,
And your work *is* nothing;
He who chooses you *is* an abomination.
25 "I have raised up one from the north,
And he shall come;
From the rising of the sun he
shall call on My name;
And he shall come against
princes as *though* mortar,
As the potter treads clay.
26 Who has declared from the
beginning, that we may know?
And former times, that we may
say, '*He is* righteous?'
Surely *there is* no one who shows,
Surely *there is* no one who declares,
Surely *there is* no one who
hears your words.
27 The first time *I said* to Zion,
'Look, there they are!'
And I will give to Jerusalem one
who brings good tidings.
28 For I looked, and *there was* no man;
I looked among them, but *there*
was no counselor,

Who, when I asked of them,
could answer a word.

- 29 Indeed they *are* all worthless;^a
Their works *are* nothing;
Their molded images *are*
wind and confusion.

The Servant of the LORD

- 42 "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold,
My Elect One *in whom* My soul delights!
I have put My Spirit upon Him;
He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.
2 He will not cry out, nor raise *His voice*,
Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.
3 A bruised reed He will not break,
And smoking flax He will not quench;
He will bring forth justice for truth.
4 He will not fail nor be discouraged,
Till He has established justice in the earth;
And the coastlands shall wait for His law."
5 Thus says God the LORD,
Who created the heavens and
stretched them out,
Who spread forth the earth and
that which comes from it,
Who gives breath to the people on it,
And spirit to those who walk on it:
6 "I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness,
And will hold Your hand;
I will keep You and give You as a
covenant to the people,
As a light to the Gentiles,
7 To open blind eyes,
To bring out prisoners from the prison,
Those who sit in darkness
from the prison house.
8 I *am* the LORD, that *is* My name;
And My glory I will not give to another,
Nor My praise to carved images.
9 Behold, the former things have come to pass,
And new things I declare;
Before they spring forth I tell you of them."

Praise to the LORD

- 10 Sing to the LORD a new song,
And His praise from the ends of the earth,
You who go down to the sea,
and all that is in it,
You coastlands and you inhabitants of them!

41:29^a Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Dead Sea Scrolls, Syriac, and Targum read *nothing*; Septuagint omits the first line.

- 11 Let the wilderness and its
cities lift up *their voice*,
The villages *that* Kedar inhabits.
Let the inhabitants of Sela sing,
Let them shout from the top
of the mountains.
- 12 Let them give glory to the LORD,
And declare His praise in the coastlands.
- 13 The LORD shall go forth like a mighty man;
He shall stir up *His* zeal like a man of war.
He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud;
He shall prevail against His enemies.

Promise of the LORD's Help

- 14 "I have held My peace a long time,
I have been still and restrained Myself.
Now I will cry like a woman in labor,
I will pant and gasp at once.
- 15 I will lay waste the mountains and hills,
And dry up all their vegetation;
I will make the rivers coastlands,
And I will dry up the pools.
- 16 I will bring the blind by a way
they did not know;
I will lead them in paths they
have not known.
I will make darkness light before them,
And crooked places straight.
These things I will do for them,
And not forsake them.
- 17 They shall be turned back,
They shall be greatly ashamed,
Who trust in carved images,
Who say to the molded images,
'*You are our gods.*'
- 18 "Hear, you deaf;
And look, you blind, that you may see.
- 19 Who *is* blind but My servant,
Or deaf as My messenger *whom* I send?
Who *is* blind as *he who is* perfect,
And blind as the LORD's servant?
- 20 Seeing many things, but you do not observe;
Opening the ears, but he does not hear."

Israel's Obstinate Disobedience

- 21 The LORD is well pleased for
His righteousness' sake;
He will exalt the law and make *it* honorable.
- 22 But this *is* a people robbed and plundered;
All of them are snared in holes,
And they are hidden in prison houses;
They are for prey, and no one delivers;
For plunder, and no one says, "Restore!"

- 23 Who among you will give ear to this?
Who will listen and hear for
the time to come?
- 24 Who gave Jacob for plunder, and
Israel to the robbers?
Was it not the LORD,
He against whom we have sinned?
For they would not walk in His ways,
Nor were they obedient to His law.
- 25 Therefore He has poured on him
the fury of His anger
And the strength of battle;
It has set him on fire all around,
Yet he did not know;
And it burned him,
Yet he did not take *it* to heart.

The Redeemer of Israel

- 43** But now, thus says the LORD,
who created you, O Jacob,
And He who formed you, O Israel:
"Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have called *you* by your name;
You are Mine.
- 2 When you pass through the
waters, *I will be* with you;
And through the rivers, they
shall not overflow you.
When you walk through the fire,
you shall not be burned,
Nor shall the flame scorch you.
- 3 For I *am* the LORD your God,
The Holy One of Israel,
your Savior;
I gave Egypt for your ransom,
Ethiopia and Seba in your place.
- 4 Since you were precious in My sight,
You have been honored,
And I have loved you;
Therefore I will give men for you,
And people for your life.

The Law of Sacrifice

Isaiah 43:1-7

God, as the Ultimate Leader, consistently practices the Law of Sacrifice. Leaders will do the illogical and surrender valuable possessions in order to fulfill and capture their dream. Fortunately for us, we are God's dream. Only through the prophet Isaiah does God say directly to His people, "I love you."

5 Fear not, for I *am* with you;
I will bring your descendants
from the east,
And gather you from the west;

6 I will say to the north, 'Give them up!'
And to the south, 'Do not
keep them back!'
Bring My sons from afar,
And My daughters from the
ends of the earth—

7 Everyone who is called by My name,
Whom I have created for My glory;
I have formed him, yes,
I have made him."

8 Bring out the blind people
who have eyes,
And the deaf who have ears.

9 Let all the nations be gathered together,
And let the people be assembled.
Who among them can declare this,
And show us former things?
Let them bring out their witnesses,
that they may be justified;
Or let them hear and say, "*It is truth.*"

10 "You *are* My witnesses," says the LORD,
"And My servant whom I have chosen,
That you may know and believe Me,
And understand that I *am* He.
Before Me there was no God formed,
Nor shall there be after Me.

11 I, *even I, am* the LORD,
And besides Me *there is* no savior.

12 I have declared and saved,
I have proclaimed,
And *there was* no foreign *god* among you;
Therefore you *are* My witnesses,"
Says the LORD, "that I *am* God.

13 Indeed before the day *was*, I *am* He;
And *there is* no one who can
deliver out of My hand;
I work, and who will reverse it?"

14 Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer,
The Holy One of Israel:
"For your sake I will send to Babylon,
And bring them all down as fugitives—
The Chaldeans, who rejoice in their ships.

15 I *am* the LORD, your Holy One,
The Creator of Israel, your King."

16 Thus says the LORD, who
makes a way in the sea
And a path through the mighty waters,

17 Who brings forth the chariot and horse,
The army and the power
(They shall lie down together,
they shall not rise;
They are extinguished, they are
quenched like a wick):

18 "Do not remember the former things,
Nor consider the things of old.

19 Behold, I will do a new thing,
Now it shall spring forth;
Shall you not know it?
I will even make a road in the wilderness
And rivers in the desert.

20 The beast of the field will honor Me,
The jackals and the ostriches,
Because I give waters in the wilderness
And rivers in the desert,
To give drink to My people, My chosen.

21 This people I have formed for Myself;
They shall declare My praise.

Pleading with Unfaithful Israel

22 "But you have not called
upon Me, O Jacob;
And you have been weary
of Me, O Israel.

23 You have not brought Me the sheep
for your burnt offerings,
Nor have you honored Me
with your sacrifices.
I have not caused you to serve
with grain offerings,
Nor wearied you with incense.

24 You have bought Me no sweet
cane with money,
Nor have you satisfied Me with
the fat of your sacrifices;
But you have burdened Me
with your sins,
You have wearied Me with your iniquities.

25 "I, *even I, am* He who blots out your
transgressions for My own sake;
And I will not remember your sins.

26 Put Me in remembrance;
Let us contend together;
State your *case*, that you may be acquitted.

27 Your first father sinned,
And your mediators have
transgressed against Me.

28 Therefore I will profane the
princes of the sanctuary;
I will give Jacob to the curse,
And Israel to reproaches.

God's Blessing on Israel

- 44** “Yet hear now, O Jacob My servant,
And Israel whom I have chosen.
2 Thus says the LORD who made you
And formed you from the womb,
who will help you:
‘Fear not, O Jacob My servant;
And you, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen.
3 For I will pour water on him
who is thirsty,
And floods on the dry ground;
I will pour My Spirit on
your descendants,
And My blessing on your offspring;
4 They will spring up among the grass
Like willows by the watercourses.’
5 One will say, ‘I am the LORD’s’;
Another will call *himself* by
the name of Jacob;
Another will write *with* his
hand, ‘The LORD’s,’
And name *himself* by the name of Israel.

There Is No Other God

- 6 “Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel,
And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts:
‘I am the First and I am the Last;
Besides Me *there is* no God.

- 7 And who can proclaim as I do?
Then let him declare it and
set it in order for Me,
Since I appointed the ancient people.
And the things that are coming
and shall come,
Let them show these to them.
8 Do not fear, nor be afraid;
Have I not told you from that
time, and declared *it*?
You *are* My witnesses.
Is there a God besides Me?
Indeed *there is* no other Rock;
I know not *one*.”

Idolatry Is Foolishness

- 9 Those who make an image, all
of them *are* useless,
And their precious things shall not profit;
They *are* their own witnesses;
They neither see nor know, that
they may be ashamed.
10 Who would form a god or mold an image
That profits him nothing?
11 Surely all his companions
would be ashamed;
And the workmen, they *are* mere men.
Let them all be gathered together,

Revival Fire: Man-Made or God-Given?

Isaiah 44:1–8

What godly leader has no desire in their heart to see the fire of God? We all long for fire to descend from heaven to empower us to accomplish a great task. Sometimes, however, when it seems hard to wait for the “heavenly” fire, we resort to “homemade” fire. Consider four kinds of homemade fire:

1. **The fire of association:** We feel this fire when we’re enjoying a revival atmosphere. It serves as a hot poker.
2. **The fire of yesterday:** This fire comes from hearing testimonies of saints who talk about the good old days.
3. **The fire of selfish desires:** This fire comes as a spark when we see how it will benefit me to serve God today.
4. **The fire of tradition:** This fire comes when we feel warm and comfortable with the way we’ve always done it.

So what distinguishes divine fire from man-made fire?

Man-Made Fires

1. Have a tendency to go out
2. Are not sufficient for today
3. Are not contagious

God-Given Fires

1. Remain as long as our focus stays on Him
2. Are more than enough to meet our needs
3. Are contagious for those who see them

- Let them stand up;
Yet they shall fear,
They shall be ashamed together.
- 12 The blacksmith with the tongs
works one in the coals,
Fashions it with hammers,
And works it with the strength
of his arms.
Even so, he is hungry, and
his strength fails;
He drinks no water and is faint.
- 13 The craftsman stretches out *his* rule,
He marks one out with chalk;
He fashions it with a plane,
He marks it out with the compass,
And makes it like the figure of a man,
According to the beauty of a man,
that it may remain in the house.
- 14 He cuts down cedars for himself,
And takes the cypress and the oak;
He secures *it* for himself among
the trees of the forest.
He plants a pine, and the rain nourishes *it*.
- 15 Then it shall be for a man to burn,
For he will take some of it
and warm himself;
Yes, he kindles *it* and bakes bread;
Indeed he makes a god and worships *it*;
He makes it a carved image,
and falls down to it.
- 16 He burns half of it in the fire;
With this half he eats meat;
He roasts a roast, and is satisfied.
He even warms *himself* and says,
“Ah! I am warm,
I have seen the fire.”
- 17 And the rest of it he makes into a god,
His carved image.
He falls down before it and worships *it*,
Prays to it and says,
“Deliver me, for you *are* my god!”
- 18 They do not know nor understand;
For He has shut their eyes, so
that they cannot see,
And their hearts, so that they
cannot understand.
- 19 And no one considers in his heart,
Nor *is there* knowledge nor
understanding to say,
“I have burned half of it in the fire,

- Yes, I have also baked bread
on its coals;
I have roasted meat and eaten *it*;
And shall I make the rest of
it an abomination?
Shall I fall down before a
block of wood?”
- 20 He feeds on ashes;
A deceived heart has turned him aside;
And he cannot deliver his soul,
Nor say, “*Is there* not a lie in
my right hand?”

Israel Is Not Forgotten

- 21 “Remember these, O Jacob,
And Israel, for you *are* My servant;
I have formed you, you *are* My servant;
O Israel, you will not be forgotten by Me!
- 22 I have blotted out, like a thick
cloud, your transgressions,
And like a cloud, your sins.
Return to Me, for I have redeemed you.”
- 23 Sing, O heavens, for the LORD has done *it!*
Shout, you lower parts of the earth;
Break forth into singing, you mountains,
O forest, and every tree in it!
For the LORD has redeemed Jacob,
And glorified Himself in Israel.

Judah Will Be Restored

- 24 Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer,
And He who formed you from the womb:
“I *am* the LORD, who makes all *things*,
Who stretches out the heavens all alone,
Who spreads abroad the earth by Myself;
- 25 Who frustrates the signs of the babblers,
And drives diviners mad;
Who turns wise men backward,
And makes their knowledge foolishness;
- 26 Who confirms the word of His servant,
And performs the counsel
of His messengers;
Who says to Jerusalem, ‘You
shall be inhabited,’
To the cities of Judah, ‘You shall be built,’
And I will raise up her waste places;
- 27 Who says to the deep, ‘Be dry!’
And I will dry up your rivers’;
- 28 Who says of Cyrus, ‘*He is* My shepherd,
And he shall perform all My pleasure,
Saying to Jerusalem, “You shall be built,”
And to the temple, “Your
foundation shall be laid.”’

Cyrus, God's Instrument

45 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:

² I will go before you
And make the crooked places^a straight;
I will break in pieces the gates of bronze
And cut the bars of iron.

³ I will give you the treasures of darkness
And hidden riches of secret places,
That you may know that I, the LORD,
Who call *you* by your name,
Am the God of Israel.

⁴ For Jacob My servant's sake,
And Israel My elect,
I have even called you by your name;
I have named you, though you
have not known Me.

⁵ *I am* the LORD, and *there is* no other;
There is no God besides Me.
I will gird you, though you
have not known Me,

⁶ That they may know from the rising
of the sun to its setting
That *there is* none besides Me.
I am the LORD, and *there is* no other;

⁷ I form the light and create darkness,
I make peace and create calamity;
I, the LORD, do all these *things*.[']

⁸ "Rain down, you heavens, from above,
And let the skies pour down
righteousness;
Let the earth open, let them
bring forth salvation,
And let righteousness spring
up together.
I, the LORD, have created it.

⁹ "Woe to him who strives with his Maker!
Let the potsherd *strive* with the
potsherds of the earth!
Shall the clay say to him who forms
it, 'What are you making?'
Or shall your handiwork *say*,
'He has no hands?'

¹⁰ Woe to him who says to *his* father,
'What are you begetting?'
Or to the woman, 'What have
you brought forth?'"

¹¹ Thus says the LORD,
The Holy One of Israel, and his Maker:
"Ask Me of things to come
concerning My sons;
And concerning the work of My
hands, you command Me.

¹² I have made the earth,
And created man on it.
I—My hands—stretched out the heavens,
And all their host I have commanded.

¹³ I have raised him up in righteousness,
And I will direct all his ways;
He shall build My city
And let My exiles go free,
Not for price nor reward,"
Says the LORD of hosts.

The LORD, the Only Savior

¹⁴ Thus says the LORD:

"The labor of Egypt and merchandise of Cush
And of the Sabbeans, men of stature,
Shall come over to you, and
they shall be yours;
They shall walk behind you,
They shall come over in chains;
And they shall bow down to you.
They will make supplication to you,
saying, 'Surely God *is* in you,
And *there is* no other;
There is no other God.'"

¹⁵ Truly You *are* God, who hide Yourself,
O God of Israel, the Savior!

¹⁶ They shall be ashamed
And also disgraced, all of them;
They shall go in confusion together,
Who are makers of idols.

¹⁷ *But* Israel shall be saved by the LORD
With an everlasting salvation;
You shall not be ashamed or disgraced
Forever and ever.

¹⁸ For thus says the LORD,
Who created the heavens,
Who is God,
Who formed the earth and made it,
Who has established it,
Who did not create it in vain,
Who formed it to be inhabited:
"*I am* the LORD, and *there is* no other.

45:2^a Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint read *mountains*;
Targum reads *I will trample down the walls*; Vulgate
reads *I will humble the great ones of the earth*.

- 19 I have not spoken in secret,
In a dark place of the earth;
I did not say to the seed of Jacob,
'Seek Me in vain';
I, the LORD, speak righteousness,
I declare things that are right.
- 20 "Assemble yourselves and come;
Draw near together,
You *who have* escaped from the nations.
They have no knowledge,
Who carry the wood of their carved image,
And pray to a god *that* cannot save.
- 21 Tell and bring forth *your case*;
Yes, let them take counsel together.
Who has declared this from ancient time?
Who has told it from that time?
Have not I, the LORD?
And *there is* no other God besides Me,
A just God and a Savior;
There is none besides Me.
- 22 "Look to Me, and be saved,
All you ends of the earth!
For I *am* God, and *there is* no other.
- 23 I have sworn by Myself;
The word has gone out of My
mouth *in* righteousness,
And shall not return,
That to Me every knee shall bow,
Every tongue shall take an oath.
- 24 He shall say,
'Surely in the LORD I have
righteousness and strength.
To Him *men* shall come,
And all shall be ashamed
Who are incensed against Him.
- 25 In the LORD all the descendants of Israel
Shall be justified, and shall glory."

Dead Idols and the Living God

- 46** Bel bows down, Nebo stoops;
Their idols were on the
beasts and on the cattle.
Your carriages *were* heavily loaded,
A burden to the weary *beast*.
- 2 They stoop, they bow down together;
They could not deliver the burden,
But have themselves gone into captivity.
- 3 "Listen to Me, O house of Jacob,
And all the remnant of the house of Israel,
Who have been upheld *by Me* from birth,
Who have been carried from the womb:

- 4 Even *your* old age, I *am* He,
And *even* to gray hairs I will carry *you!*
I have made, and I will bear;
Even I will carry, and will deliver *you*.
- 5 "To whom will you liken Me,
and make *Me* equal
And compare Me, that we should be alike?
- 6 They lavish gold out of the bag,
And weigh silver on the scales;
They hire a goldsmith, and
he makes it a god;
They prostrate themselves,
yes, they worship.
- 7 They bear it on the shoulder, they carry it
And set it in its place, and it stands;
From its place it shall not move.
Though *one* cries out to it,
yet it cannot answer
Nor save him out of his trouble.
- 8 "Remember this, and show yourselves men;
Recall to mind, O you transgressors.
- 9 Remember the former things of old,
For I *am* God, and *there is* no other;
I *am* God, and *there is* none like Me,
- 10 Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times *things*
that are not *yet* done,
Saying, 'My counsel shall stand,
And I will do all My pleasure,'
- 11 Calling a bird of prey from the east,
The man who executes My
counsel, from a far country.
Indeed I have spoken *it*;
I will also bring it to pass.
I have purposed *it*;
I will also do it.

- 12 "Listen to Me, you stubborn-hearted,
Who *are* far from righteousness:
- 13 I bring My righteousness near,
it shall not be far off;
My salvation shall not linger.
And I will place salvation in Zion,
For Israel My glory.

The Humiliation of Babylon

- 47** "Come down and sit in the dust,
O virgin daughter of Babylon;
Sit on the ground without a throne,
O daughter of the Chaldeans!
For you shall no more be called
Tender and delicate.

- 2 Take the millstones and grind meal.
Remove your veil,
Take off the skirt,
Uncover the thigh,
Pass through the rivers.
- 3 Your nakedness shall be uncovered,
Yes, your shame will be seen;
I will take vengeance,
And I will not arbitrate with a man.”
- 4 As for our Redeemer, the LORD
of hosts is His name,
The Holy One of Israel.
- 5 “Sit in silence, and go into darkness,
O daughter of the Chaldeans;
For you shall no longer be called
The Lady of Kingdoms.
- 6 I was angry with My people;
I have profaned My inheritance,
And given them into your hand.
You showed them no mercy;
On the elderly you laid your
yoke very heavily.
- 7 And you said, ‘I shall be a lady forever,’
So that you did not take these
things to heart,
Nor remember the latter end of them.
- 8 “Therefore hear this now, *you who*
are given to pleasures,
Who dwell securely,
Who say in your heart, ‘I am, and
there is no one else besides me;
I shall not sit as a widow,
Nor shall I know the loss of children’;
9 But these two *things* shall come to you
In a moment, in one day:
The loss of children, and widowhood.
They shall come upon you in their fullness
Because of the multitude of your sorceries,
For the great abundance of
your enchantments.
- 10 “For you have trusted in your wickedness;
You have said, ‘No one sees me’;
Your wisdom and your knowledge
have warped you;
And you have said in your heart,
‘I am, and *there is no one else besides me.*’
- 11 Therefore evil shall come upon you;
You shall not know from where it arises.
And trouble shall fall upon you;
You will not be able to put it off.

And desolation shall come
upon you suddenly,
Which you shall not know.

- 12 “Stand now with your enchantments
And the multitude of your sorceries,
In which you have labored
from your youth—
Perhaps you will be able to profit,
Perhaps you will prevail.
- 13 You are wearied in the multitude
of your counsels;
Let now the astrologers, the stargazers,
And the monthly prognosticators
Stand up and save you
From what shall come upon you.
- 14 Behold, they shall be as stubble,
The fire shall burn them;
They shall not deliver themselves
From the power of the flame;
It shall not be a coal to be warmed by,
Nor a fire to sit before!
- 15 Thus shall they be to you
With whom you have labored,
Your merchants from your youth;
They shall wander each one to his quarter.
No one shall save you.

Israel Refined for God's Glory

- 48** “Hear this, O house of Jacob,
Who are called by the name of Israel,
And have come forth from the
wellsprings of Judah;
Who swear by the name of the LORD,
And make mention of the God of Israel,
But not in truth or in righteousness;
2 For they call themselves after the holy city,
And lean on the God of Israel;
The LORD of hosts is His name:
- 3 “I have declared the former things
from the beginning;
They went forth from My mouth,
and I caused them to hear it.
Suddenly I did *them*, and they came to pass.
- 4 Because I knew that you *were* obstinate,
And your neck *was* an iron sinew,
And your brow bronze,
- 5 Even from the beginning I
have declared *it* to you;
Before it came to pass I proclaimed *it* to you,
Lest you should say, ‘My idol has done them,
And my carved image and my molded image
Have commanded them.’

- 6 “You have heard;
See all this.
And will you not declare *it*?
I have made you hear new
things from this time,
Even hidden things, and you
did not know them.
- 7 They are created now and not
from the beginning;
And before this day you have
not heard them,
Lest you should say, ‘Of course I knew them.’
- 8 Surely you did not hear,
Surely you did not know;
Surely from long ago your
ear was not opened.
For I knew that you would deal
very treacherously,
And were called a transgressor
from the womb.
- 9 “For My name’s sake I will defer My anger,
And *for* My praise I will restrain it from you,
So that I do not cut you off.
- 10 Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver;
I have tested you in the
furnace of affliction.
- 11 For My own sake, for My own
sake, I will do *it*;
For how should *My name* be profaned?
And I will not give My glory to another.

God’s Ancient Plan to Redeem Israel

- 12 “Listen to Me, O Jacob,
And Israel, My called:
I *am* He, I *am* the First,
I *am* also the Last.
- 13 Indeed My hand has laid the
foundation of the earth,
And My right hand has stretched
out the heavens;
When I call to them,
They stand up together.
- 14 “All of you, assemble yourselves, and hear!
Who among them has
declared these *things*?
The LORD loves him;
He shall do His pleasure on Babylon,
And His arm *shall be against* the Chaldeans.
- 15 I, *even* I, have spoken;
Yes, I have called him,
I have brought him, and his
way will prosper.

- 16 “Come near to Me, hear this:
I have not spoken in secret
from the beginning;
From the time that it was, I *was* there.
And now the Lord GOD and His Spirit
Have^a sent Me.”
- 17 Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer,
The Holy One of Israel:
“I *am* the LORD your God,
Who teaches you to profit,
Who leads you by the way you should go.
- 18 Oh, that you had heeded My
commandments!
Then your peace would have been like a river,
And your righteousness like
the waves of the sea.
- 19 Your descendants also would
have been like the sand,
And the offspring of your body
like the grains of sand;
His name would not have been cut off
Nor destroyed from before Me.”
- 20 Go forth from Babylon!
Flee from the Chaldeans!
With a voice of singing,
Declare, proclaim this,
Utter it to the end of the earth;
Say, “The LORD has redeemed
His servant Jacob!”
- 21 And they did not thirst
When He led them through the deserts;
He caused the waters to flow
from the rock for them;
He also split the rock, and the
waters gushed out.
- 22 “*There is no peace,*” says the
LORD, “for the wicked.”

The Servant, the Light to the Gentiles

- 49** “Listen, O coastlands, to Me,
And take heed, you peoples from afar!
The LORD has called Me from the womb;
From the matrix of My mother He
has made mention of My name.
- 2 And He has made My mouth
like a sharp sword;
In the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me,
And made Me a polished shaft;
In His quiver He has hidden Me.”

^a48:16 The Hebrew verb is singular.

3 “And He said to me,
 ‘You *are* My servant, O Israel,
 In whom I will be glorified.’

4 Then I said, ‘I have labored in vain,
 I have spent my strength for
 nothing and in vain;
 Yet surely my just reward *is* with the LORD,
 And my work with my God.’”

5 “And now the LORD says,
 Who formed Me from the
 womb *to be* His Servant,
 To bring Jacob back to Him,
 So that Israel is gathered to Him^a
 (For I shall be glorious in the
 eyes of the LORD,
 And My God shall be My strength),

6 Indeed He says,
 ‘It is too small a thing that You
 should be My Servant
 To raise up the tribes of Jacob,
 And to restore the preserved
 ones of Israel;
 I will also give You as a light
 to the Gentiles,
 That You should be My salvation
 to the ends of the earth.’”

7 Thus says the LORD,
 The Redeemer of Israel, their Holy One,
 To Him whom man despises,
 To Him whom the nation abhors,
 To the Servant of rulers:
 “Kings shall see and arise,
 Princes also shall worship,

Because of the LORD who is faithful,
 The Holy One of Israel;
 And He has chosen You.”

⁸Thus says the LORD:

“In an acceptable time I have heard You,
 And in the day of salvation
 I have helped You;

I will preserve You and give You
 As a covenant to the people,
 To restore the earth,
 To cause them to inherit the
 desolate heritages;

⁹ That You may say to the prisoners, ‘Go forth,’
 To those who *are* in darkness,
 ‘Show yourselves.’

“They shall feed along the roads,
 And their pastures *shall be* on
 all desolate heights.

¹⁰ They shall neither hunger nor thirst,
 Neither heat nor sun shall strike them;

For He who has mercy on
 them will lead them,
 Even by the springs of water
 He will guide them.

¹¹ I will make each of My mountains a road,
 And My highways shall be elevated.

¹² Surely these shall come from afar;
 Look! Those from the north and the west,
 And these from the land of Sinim.”

^{49:5^a} Qere, Dead Sea Scrolls, and Septuagint read *is gathered to Him*; Kethib reads *is not gathered*.

The Mission and Vision of a Leader

Isaiah 49:1–3

Leaders must give their lives to causes that count. They must sense that what they do matters to God. Only then will they feel deep satisfaction for their work. Isaiah speaks some incredible words about the Messiah's mission as a Leader:

1. He was called from His mother's womb (v. 1).
2. He was gifted with specific resources (v. 2).
3. He was protected supernaturally by God (v. 2).
4. He was given a particular divine mission (v. 2).
5. He was ordained to reflect God's glory (v. 3).

While any leader might well covet these descriptions, only in the life of the Messiah, God's servant sent from heaven to redeem earth, were they perfectly fulfilled. Yet they serve as a model for us as we pursue our God-given mission and vision.

13 Sing, O heavens!
Be joyful, O earth!
And break out in singing, O mountains!
For the LORD has comforted His people,
And will have mercy on His afflicted.

God Will Remember Zion

14 But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me,
And my Lord has forgotten me."

15 "Can a woman forget her nursing child,
And not have compassion on
the son of her womb?
Surely they may forget,
Yet I will not forget you.

16 See, I have inscribed you on
the palms of My hands;
Your walls are continually before Me.

17 Your sons^a shall make haste;
Your destroyers and those
who laid you waste
Shall go away from you.

18 Lift up your eyes, look around and see;
All these gather together and come to you.
As I live," says the LORD,
"You shall surely clothe yourselves
with them all as an ornament,
And bind them on you as a bride does.

19 "For your waste and desolate places,
And the land of your destruction,
Will even now be too small
for the inhabitants;
And those who swallowed you
up will be far away.

20 The children you will have,
After you have lost the others,
Will say again in your ears,
'The place is too small for me;
Give me a place where I may dwell.'

21 Then you will say in your heart,
'Who has begotten these for me,
Since I have lost my children
and am desolate,
A captive, and wandering to and fro?
And who has brought these up?
There I was, left alone;
But these, where were they?'"

22 Thus says the Lord God:

"Behold, I will lift My hand in
an oath to the nations,
And set up My standard for the peoples;

They shall bring your sons in their arms,
And your daughters shall be
carried on their shoulders;

23 Kings shall be your foster fathers,
And their queens your nursing
mothers;

They shall bow down to you with
their faces to the earth,
And lick up the dust of your feet.
Then you will know that I am the LORD,
For they shall not be ashamed
who wait for Me."

24 Shall the prey be taken from the mighty,
Or the captives of the righteous^a
be delivered?

25 But thus says the LORD:

"Even the captives of the mighty
shall be taken away,
And the prey of the terrible be delivered;
For I will contend with him
who contends with you,
And I will save your children.

26 I will feed those who oppress
you with their own flesh,
And they shall be drunk with their
own blood as with sweet wine.
All flesh shall know
That I, the LORD, am your Savior,
And your Redeemer, the
Mighty One of Jacob."

The Servant, Israel's Hope

50 Thus says the LORD:

"Where is the certificate of your
mother's divorce,
Whom I have put away?
Or which of My creditors is it to
whom I have sold you?
For your iniquities you have
sold yourselves,
And for your transgressions your
mother has been put away.

2 Why, when I came, was there no man?
Why, when I called, was there
none to answer?

49:17^a Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate read *builders*. 49:24^a Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Dead Sea Scrolls, Syriac, and Vulgate read *the mighty*; Septuagint reads *unjustly*.

Is My hand shortened at all
that it cannot redeem?
Or have I no power to deliver?
Indeed with My rebuke I dry up the sea,
I make the rivers a wilderness;
Their fish stink because *there is* no water,
And die of thirst.
3 I clothe the heavens with blackness,
And I make sackcloth their covering.”

4 “The Lord GOD has given Me
The tongue of the learned,
That I should know how to speak
A word in season to *him who is* weary.
He awakens Me morning by morning,
He awakens My ear
To hear as the learned.
5 The Lord GOD has opened My ear;
And I was not rebellious,
Nor did I turn away.
6 I gave My back to those who struck Me,
And My cheeks to those who
plucked out the beard;
I did not hide My face from
shame and spitting.

7 “For the Lord GOD will help Me;
Therefore I will not be disgraced;
Therefore I have set My face
like a flint,
And I know that I will not be ashamed.
8 *He is* near who justifies Me;
Who will contend with Me?
Let us stand together.
Who *is* My adversary?
Let him come near Me.
9 Surely the Lord GOD will help Me;
Who *is* he *who* will condemn Me?
Indeed they will all grow
old like a garment;
The moth will eat them up.

10 “Who among you fears the LORD?
Who obeys the voice of His Servant?
Who walks in darkness
And has no light?
Let him trust in the name of the LORD
And rely upon his God.

11 Look, all you who kindle a fire,
Who encircle *yourselves* with sparks:
Walk in the light of your fire and in
the sparks you have kindled—
This you shall have from My hand:
You shall lie down in torment.

The LORD Comforts Zion

51 “Listen to Me, you who follow
after righteousness,
You who seek the LORD:
Look to the rock *from which* you were hewn,
And to the hole of the pit *from
which* you were dug.
2 Look to Abraham your father,
And to Sarah *who* bore you;
For I called him alone,
And blessed him and increased him.”
3 For the LORD will comfort Zion,
He will comfort all her waste places;
He will make her wilderness like Eden,
And her desert like the garden of the LORD;
Joy and gladness will be found in it,
Thanksgiving and the voice of melody.
4 “Listen to Me, My people;
And give ear to Me, O My nation:
For law will proceed from Me,
And I will make My justice rest
As a light of the peoples.
5 My righteousness *is* near,
My salvation has gone forth,
And My arms will judge the peoples;
The coastlands will wait upon Me,
And on My arm they will trust.
6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens,
And look on the earth beneath.
For the heavens will vanish away like smoke,
The earth will grow old like a garment,
And those who dwell in it will
die in like manner;
But My salvation will be forever,
And My righteousness will not be abolished.
7 “Listen to Me, you who know righteousness,
You people in whose heart *is* My law:
Do not fear the reproach of men,
Nor be afraid of their insults.
8 For the moth will eat them up like a garment,
And the worm will eat them like wool;
But My righteousness will be forever,
And My salvation from generation
to generation.”
9 Awake, awake, put on strength,
O arm of the LORD!
Awake as in the ancient days,
In the generations of old.
Are You not *the* arm that cut Rahab apart,
And wounded the serpent?

10 *Are You not the One* who dried up the sea,
The waters of the great deep;
That made the depths of the sea a road
For the redeemed to cross over?

11 So the ransomed of the LORD shall return,
And come to Zion with singing,
With everlasting joy on their heads.
They shall obtain joy and gladness;
Sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

12 “I, *even I, am* He who comforts you.
Who *are you* that you should be afraid
Of a man *who* will die,
And of the son of a man *who*
will be made like grass?

13 And you forget the LORD your Maker,
Who stretched out the heavens
And laid the foundations of the earth;
You have feared continually every day
Because of the fury of the oppressor,
When *he has* prepared to destroy.
And where *is* the fury of the oppressor?

14 The captive exile hastens, that
he may be loosed,
That he should not die in the pit,
And that his bread should not fail.

15 But I *am* the LORD your God,
Who divided the sea whose waves roared—
The LORD of hosts *is* His name.

16 And I have put My words in your mouth;
I have covered you with the
shadow of My hand,
That I may plant the heavens,
Lay the foundations of the earth,
And say to Zion, “You *are* My people.”

God's Fury Removed

17 Awake, awake!
Stand up, O Jerusalem,
You who have drunk at the hand of the LORD
The cup of His fury;
You have drunk the dregs of
the cup of trembling,
And drained it out.

18 *There is* no one to guide her
Among all the sons she has brought forth;
Nor *is there any* who takes her by the hand
Among all the sons she has brought up.

19 These two *things* have come to you;
Who will be sorry for you?—
Desolation and destruction,
famine and sword—
By whom will I comfort you?

20 Your sons have fainted,
They lie at the head of all the streets,

Like an antelope in a net;
They are full of the fury of the LORD,
The rebuke of your God.

21 Therefore please hear this, you afflicted,
And drunk but not with wine.

22 Thus says your Lord,
The LORD and your God,
Who pleads the cause of His people:
“See, I have taken out of your hand
The cup of trembling,
The dregs of the cup of My fury;
You shall no longer drink it.

23 But I will put it into the hand of
those who afflict you,
Who have said to you,^a
‘Lie down, that we may walk over you.’
And you have laid your body like the ground,
And as the street, for those who walk over.”

God Redeems Jerusalem

52 Awake, awake!
Put on your strength, O Zion;
Put on your beautiful garments,
O Jerusalem, the holy city!
For the uncircumcised and the unclean

Shall no longer come to you.
2 Shake yourself from the dust, arise;
Sit down, O Jerusalem!
Loose yourself from the bonds of your neck,
O captive daughter of Zion!

³For thus says the LORD:

“You have sold yourselves for nothing,
And you shall be redeemed without money.”

⁴For thus says the Lord GOD:

“My people went down at first
Into Egypt to dwell there;
Then the Assyrian oppressed
them without cause.

5 Now therefore, what have I
here,” says the LORD,
“That My people are taken away for nothing?
Those who rule over them
Make them wail,”^a says the LORD,
“And My name *is* blasphemed
continually every day.

51:23^aLiterally *your soul* 52:5^aDead Sea Scrolls read *Mock*; Septuagint reads *Marvel and wail*; Targum reads *Boast themselves*; Vulgate reads *Treat them unjustly*.

- 6 Therefore My people shall know My name;
Therefore *they shall know* in that day
That I *am* He who speaks:
‘Behold, *it is I.*’
- 7 How beautiful upon the mountains
Are the feet of him who
brings good news,
Who proclaims peace,
Who brings glad tidings of good *things*,
Who proclaims salvation,
Who says to Zion,
“Your God reigns!”
- 8 Your watchmen shall lift up *their* voices,
With their voices they shall sing together;
For they shall see eye to eye
When the LORD brings back Zion.
- 9 Break forth into joy, sing together,
You waste places of Jerusalem!
For the LORD has comforted His people,
He has redeemed Jerusalem.
- 10 The LORD has made bare His holy arm
In the eyes of all the nations;
And all the ends of the earth shall see
The salvation of our God.
- 11 Depart! Depart! Go out from there,
Touch no unclean *thing*;
Go out from the midst of her,
Be clean,
You who bear the vessels of the LORD.
- 12 For you shall not go out with haste,
Nor go by flight;
For the LORD will go before you,
And the God of Israel *will be* your rear guard.
- The Sin-Bearing Servant**
- 13 Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently;
He shall be exalted and extolled
and be very high.
- 14 Just as many were astonished at you,
So His visage was marred
more than any man,
And His form more than the sons of men;
- 15 So shall He sprinkle^a many nations.
Kings shall shut their mouths at Him;
For what had not been told
them they shall see,
And what they had not heard
they shall consider.
- 53** Who has believed our report?
And to whom has the arm of
the LORD been revealed?
- 2 For He shall grow up before
Him as a tender plant,
And as a root out of dry ground.
He has no form or comeliness;
And when we see Him,
There is no beauty that we should desire Him.
- 52:15 ^aOr *startle*

Servant Leadership Modeled by the Messiah

Isaiah 52:13—53:12

Beyond all question, Jesus Christ modeled the Law of Sacrifice. He gave up for a time the riches of heaven in order to fulfill his divinely ordained role on earth.

Isaiah 53 describes what is often called “the exchanged life.” Jesus took our sin, pain, and failures so we could have His righteousness, healing, and victory. While He offers this package to everyone, leaders have the opportunity to benefit from this sacrifice in a particularly tangible fashion.

Ponder for a moment what Christ gave up and what we obtain. Imagine what might happen if you were to implement the entire gift of redemption that Christ paid for on your behalf! He sacrificed greatly so that we might enjoy the following gifts:

His Sacrifice

1. Grief, infirmities, insecurities
2. Sins and transgressions
3. Sicknesses and diseases
4. Mental turmoil and pain
5. Weaknesses

Our Gain

1. Security and solid emotions
2. Forgiveness from guilt
3. Health and wholeness
4. Peace of mind
5. His strength

- 3 He is despised and rejected by men,
A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.
And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him;
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.
- 4 Surely He has borne our griefs
And carried our sorrows;
Yet we esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten by God, and afflicted.
- 5 But He *was* wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities;
The chastisement for our
 peace was upon Him,
And by His stripes we are healed.
- 6 All we like sheep have gone astray;
We have turned, every one, to his own way;
And the LORD has laid on Him
 the iniquity of us all.
- 7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted,
Yet He opened not His mouth;
He was led as a lamb to the slaughter,
And as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
So He opened not His mouth.
- 8 He was taken from prison
 and from judgment,
And who will declare His generation?
For He was cut off from the land of the living;
For the transgressions of My
 people He was stricken.
- 9 And they^a made His grave with the wicked—
But with the rich at His death,
Because He had done no violence,
Nor *was any* deceit in His mouth.
- 10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him;
He has put *Him* to grief.
When You make His soul an offering for sin,
He shall see *His* seed, He shall
 prolong *His* days,
And the pleasure of the LORD
 shall prosper in His hand.
- 11 He shall see the labor of His
 soul,^a *and* be satisfied.
By His knowledge My righteous
 Servant shall justify many,
For He shall bear their iniquities.
- 12 Therefore I will divide Him a
 portion with the great,
And He shall divide the spoil with the strong,
Because He poured out His soul unto death,
And He was numbered with
 the transgressors,
And He bore the sin of many,
And made intercession for the transgressors.

A Perpetual Covenant of Peace

- 54 “Sing, O barren,
You *who* have not borne!
Break forth into singing, and cry aloud,
You *who* have not labored with child!
For more *are* the children of the desolate
Than the children of the married
 woman,” says the LORD.
- 2 “Enlarge the place of your tent,
And let them stretch out the
 curtains of your dwellings;
Do not spare;
Lengthen your cords,
And strengthen your stakes.
- 3 For you shall expand to the
 right and to the left,
And your descendants will
 inherit the nations,
And make the desolate cities inhabited.
- 4 “Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed;
Neither be disgraced, for you
 will not be put to shame;
For you will forget the shame of your youth,
And will not remember the reproach
 of your widowhood anymore.
- 5 For your Maker *is* your husband,
The LORD of hosts *is* His name;
And your Redeemer *is* the
 Holy One of Israel;
He is called the God of the whole earth.
- 6 For the LORD has called you
Like a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit,
Like a youthful wife when you were refused,”
Says your God.
- 7 “For a mere moment I have forsaken you,
But with great mercies I will gather you.
- 8 With a little wrath I hid My face
 from you for a moment;
But with everlasting kindness I
 will have mercy on you,”
Says the LORD, your Redeemer.
- 9 “For this *is* like the waters of Noah to Me;
For as I have sworn
 That the waters of Noah would
 no longer cover the earth,
So have I sworn
 That I would not be angry with
 you, nor rebuke you.

53:9^aLiterally *he* or *He* 53:11^aFollowing Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint read *From the labor of His soul He shall see light*.

- 10 For the mountains shall depart
And the hills be removed,
But My kindness shall not depart from you,
Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed,”
Says the LORD, who has mercy on you.
- 11 “O you afflicted one,
Tossed with tempest, *and* not comforted,
Behold, I will lay your stones
with colorful gems,
And lay your foundations with sapphires.
12 I will make your pinnacles of rubies,
Your gates of crystal,
And all your walls of precious stones.
13 All your children *shall be*
taught by the LORD,
And great *shall be* the peace
of your children.
14 In righteousness you shall be established;
You shall be far from oppression,
for you shall not fear;
And from terror, for it shall
not come near you.
15 Indeed they shall surely assemble,
but not because of Me.
Whoever assembles against you
shall fall for your sake.
- 16 “Behold, I have created the blacksmith
Who blows the coals in the fire,
Who brings forth an instrument
for his work;
And I have created the spoiler to destroy.
- 17 No weapon formed against
you shall prosper,
And every tongue *which* rises
against you in judgment
You shall condemn.
This is the heritage of the
servants of the LORD,
And their righteousness *is* from Me,”
Says the LORD.

An Invitation to Abundant Life

55 “Ho! Everyone who thirsts,
Come to the waters;
And you who have no money,
Come, buy and eat.
Yes, come, buy wine and milk
Without money and without price.

2 Why do you spend money for
what is not bread,
And your wages for *what* does
not satisfy?

Listen carefully to Me, and eat
what is good,
And let your soul delight
itself in abundance.

3 Incline your ear, and come to Me.
Hear, and your soul shall live;
And I will make an everlasting
covenant with you—
The sure mercies of David.

4 Indeed I have given him *as a*
witness to the people,
A leader and commander for the people.

The Law of Victory: Leaders Communicate Until They See Results

Isaiah 55:1–11

Isaiah 55 offers the words of a great communicator. In this passage God invites everyone to participate in His offer to quench their thirst. He tries to convince His hearers that He alone can fulfill their desires and permanently meet their needs. Then He beckons them to seek Him while He may be found.

Verses 10–12 contain a marvelous promise. God says that just as the rain and snow fall from the sky and do not return without watering the earth, so His Word will also accomplish the goals He sets for it. God’s Word will bear fruit. From these three simple verses, note how God evaluates good communication:

1. His Word will get results (v. 10).
2. His Word will furnish tools and resources (v. 10).
3. His Word will meet needs (v. 10).
4. His Word will perform His will (v. 11).
5. His Word will satisfy the soul of the hearers (v. 12).

How about you? Can you, as a leader, make those claims? How do you evaluate your communication? What fruit does your communication produce?

- 5 Surely you shall call a nation
you do not know,
And nations *who* do not know
you shall run to you,
Because of the LORD your God,
And the Holy One of Israel;
For He has glorified you.”
- 6 Seek the LORD while He may
be found,
Call upon Him while He is near.
- 7 Let the wicked forsake his way,
And the unrighteous man his thoughts;
Let him return to the LORD,
And He will have mercy on him;
And to our God,
For He will abundantly pardon.
- 8 “For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts,
Nor *are* your ways My ways,”
says the LORD.
- 9 “For *as* the heavens are higher
than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts.
- 10 “For as the rain comes down, and
the snow from heaven,
And do not return there,
But water the earth,
And make it bring forth and bud,
That it may give seed to the sower
And bread to the eater,
- 11 So shall My word be that goes
forth from My mouth;
It shall not return to Me void,
But it shall accomplish what I please,
And it shall prosper *in the thing*
for which I sent it.
- 12 “For you shall go out with joy,
And be led out with peace;
The mountains and the hills
Shall break forth into singing
before you,
And all the trees of the field
shall clap *their* hands.
- 13 Instead of the thorn shall come
up the cypress tree,
And instead of the brier shall
come up the myrtle tree;
And it shall be to the LORD for a name,
For an everlasting sign *that*
shall not be cut off.”

Salvation for the Gentiles

56 Thus says the LORD:

- “Keep justice, and do righteousness,
For My salvation *is* about to come,
And My righteousness to be revealed.
- 2 Blessed *is* the man *who* does this,
And the son of man *who* lays hold on it;
Who keeps from defiling the Sabbath,
And keeps his hand from
doing any evil.”
- 3 Do not let the son of the foreigner
Who has joined himself to the LORD
Speak, saying,
“The LORD has utterly separated
me from His people”;
Nor let the eunuch say,
“Here I am, a dry tree.”
- 4 For thus says the LORD:
“To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths,
And choose what pleases Me,
And hold fast My covenant,
5 Even to them I will give in My house
And within My walls a place
and a name
Better than that of sons and daughters;
I will give them^a an everlasting name
That shall not be cut off.
- 6 “Also the sons of the foreigner
Who join themselves to the
LORD, to serve Him,
And to love the name of the
LORD, to be His servants—
Everyone who keeps from
defiling the Sabbath,
And holds fast My covenant—
7 Even them I will bring to
My holy mountain,
And make them joyful in My
house of prayer.
Their burnt offerings and
their sacrifices
Will be accepted on My altar;
For My house shall be called a house
of prayer for all nations.”
- 8 The Lord GOD, who gathers the
outcasts of Israel, says,
“Yet I will gather to him
Others besides those who are
gathered to him.”

56:5^aLiterally *him*

Israel's Irresponsible Leaders

- 9 All you beasts of the field, come to devour,
All you beasts in the forest.
- 10 His watchmen *are* blind,
They are all ignorant;
They *are* all dumb dogs,
They cannot bark;
Sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.
- 11 Yes, *they are* greedy dogs
Which never have enough.
And they *are* shepherds
Who cannot understand;
They all look to their own way,
Every one for his own gain,
From his *own* territory.
- 12 "Come," *one says*, "I will bring wine,
And we will fill ourselves with
intoxicating drink;
Tomorrow will be as today,
And much more abundant."

Israel's Futile Idolatry

- 57** The righteous perishes,
And no man takes *it* to heart;
Merciful men *are* taken away,
While no one considers
That the righteous is taken away from evil.
- 2 He shall enter into peace;
They shall rest in their beds,
Each one walking in his uprightness.
- 3 "But come here,
You sons of the sorceress,
You offspring of the adulterer
and the harlot!
- 4 Whom do you ridicule?
Against whom do you make a wide mouth
And stick out the tongue?
Are you not children of transgression,
Offspring of falsehood,
- 5 Inflaming yourselves with gods
under every green tree,
Slaying the children in the valleys,
Under the clefts of the rocks?
- 6 Among the smooth *stones* of the stream
Is your portion;
They, they, *are* your lot!
Even to them you have poured
a drink offering,
You have offered a grain offering.
Should I receive comfort in these?
- 7 "On a lofty and high mountain
You have set your bed;

- Even there you went up
To offer sacrifice.
- 8 Also behind the doors and their posts
You have set up your remembrance;
For you have uncovered yourself
to those other than Me,
And have gone up to them;
You have enlarged your bed
And made *a covenant* with them;
You have loved their bed,
Where you saw *their* nudity.^a
- 9 You went to the king with ointment,
And increased your perfumes;
You sent your messengers far off,
And *even* descended to Sheol.
- 10 You are wearied in the length of your way;
Yet you did not say, "There is no hope."
You have found the life of your hand;
Therefore you were not grieved.
- 11 "And of whom have you been afraid, or feared,
That you have lied
And not remembered Me,
Nor taken *it* to your heart?
Is it not because I have held
My peace from of old
That you do not fear Me?
- 12 I will declare your righteousness
And your works,
For they will not profit you.
- 13 When you cry out,
Let your collection of *idols* deliver you.
But the wind will carry them all away,
A breath will take *them*.
But he who puts his trust in Me
shall possess the land,
And shall inherit My holy mountain."

Healing for the Backslider

- 14 And one shall say,
"Heap it up! Heap it up!
Prepare the way,
Take the stumbling block out of
the way of My people."
- 15 For thus says the High and Lofty One
Who inhabits eternity, whose name *is* Holy:
"I dwell in the high and holy *place*,
With him *who* has a contrite
and humble spirit,
To revive the spirit of the humble,
And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

57:8^a Literally *hand*, a euphemism

- 16 For I will not contend forever,
Nor will I always be angry;
For the spirit would fail before Me,
And the souls *which* I have made.
- 17 For the iniquity of his covetousness
I was angry and struck him;
I hid and was angry,
And he went on backsliding in
the way of his heart.
- 18 I have seen his ways, and will heal him;
I will also lead him,
And restore comforts to him
And to his mourners.
- 19 “I create the fruit of the lips:
Peace, peace to *him who is far off*
and to *him who is near*,”
Says the LORD,
“And I will heal him.”
- 20 But the wicked *are* like the troubled sea,
When it cannot rest,
Whose waters cast up mire and dirt.
- 21 “*There is no peace,*”
Says my God, “for the wicked.”

Fasting that Pleases God

- 58** “Cry aloud, spare not;
Lift up your voice like a trumpet;
Tell My people their transgression,
And the house of Jacob their sins.
- 2 Yet they seek Me daily,
And delight to know My ways,
As a nation that did righteousness,
And did not forsake the
ordinance of their God.
They ask of Me the ordinances of justice;
They take delight in approaching God.
- 3 ‘Why have we fasted,’ *they say*,
‘and You have not seen?’
Why have we afflicted our souls,
and You take no notice?’
- “In fact, in the day of your fast
you find pleasure,
And exploit all your laborers.
- 4 Indeed you fast for strife and debate,
And to strike with the fist of wickedness.
You will not fast as *you do* this day,
To make your voice heard on high.
- 5 Is it a fast that I have chosen,
A day for a man to afflict his soul?
Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush,
And to spread out sackcloth and ashes?

Would you call this a fast,
And an acceptable day to the LORD?

- 6 “*Is this not the fast that I have chosen:*
To loose the bonds of wickedness,
To undo the heavy burdens,
To let the oppressed go free,
And that you break every yoke?
- 7 *Is it not* to share your bread
with the hungry,
And that you bring to your house
the poor who are cast out;
When you see the naked,
that you cover him,
And not hide yourself from your own flesh?
- 8 Then your light shall break
forth like the morning,
Your healing shall spring forth speedily,
And your righteousness shall go before you;
The glory of the LORD shall
be your rear guard.
- 9 Then you shall call, and the
LORD will answer;
You shall cry, and He will say, ‘Here I *am*.’

Leadership Must Reflect God's Values and Ethics

Isaiah 58:1–14

The practice of fasting goes much deeper than the act of going without food. God declares that He delights not merely in His people going without some daily staples, but in loosing the “bonds of wickedness” and undoing “heavy burdens” of those they have oppressed (Is. 58:6).

Leaders would do well to learn from these words. God is calling us to live from His set of values and ethics. Fasting is fine and good—and these days we don’t do it enough—but to fast while continuing to harbor destructive thoughts and oppressive attitudes does not reflect godly leadership. Ethics supply the foundation for our values. Values supply the power that drives our leadership. Consider what God expects from the “fasted life”:

1. Liberate those who are oppressed (v. 6).
2. Share resources with the needy (v. 7).
3. Provide shelter to the homeless (v. 7).
4. Supply clothing to the naked (v. 7).
5. Stop accusing and judging others (v. 9).

“If you take away the yoke from your midst,
 The pointing of the finger, and
 speaking wickedness,
 10 If you extend your soul to the hungry
 And satisfy the afflicted soul,
 Then your light shall dawn in the darkness,
 And your darkness shall *be* as the noonday.
 11 The LORD will guide you continually,
 And satisfy your soul in drought,
 And strengthen your bones;
 You shall be like a watered garden,
 And like a spring of water,
 whose waters do not fail.
 12 Those from among you
 Shall build the old waste places;
 You shall raise up the foundations
 of many generations;
 And you shall be called the
 Repairer of the Breach,
 The Restorer of Streets to Dwell In.
 13 “If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath,
 From doing your pleasure on My holy day,
 And call the Sabbath a delight,
 The holy *day* of the LORD honorable,
 And shall honor Him, not
 doing your own ways,
 Nor finding your own pleasure,
 Nor speaking *your own* words,
 14 Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD;
 And I will cause you to ride on
 the high hills of the earth,
 And feed you with the heritage
 of Jacob your father.
 The mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

Separated from God

59 Behold, the LORD’s hand
 is not shortened,
 That it cannot save;
 Nor His ear heavy,
 That it cannot hear.
 2 But your iniquities have separated
 you from your God;
 And your sins have hidden
 His face from you,
 So that He will not hear.
 3 For your hands are defiled with blood,
 And your fingers with iniquity;
 Your lips have spoken lies,
 Your tongue has muttered perversity.
 4 No one calls for justice,
 Nor does *any* plead for truth.

They trust in empty words and speak lies;
 They conceive evil and bring forth iniquity.
 5 They hatch vipers’ eggs and
 weave the spider’s web;
 He who eats of their eggs dies,
 And *from* that which is crushed
 a viper breaks out.
 6 Their webs will not become garments,
 Nor will they cover themselves
 with their works;
 Their works *are* works of iniquity,
 And the act of violence *is* in their hands.
 7 Their feet run to evil,
 And they make haste to shed innocent blood;
 Their thoughts *are* thoughts of iniquity;
 Wasting and destruction *are* in their paths.
 8 The way of peace they have not known,
 And *there is* no justice in their ways;
 They have made themselves crooked paths;
 Whoever takes that way shall
 not know peace.

Sin Confessed

9 Therefore justice is far from us,
 Nor does righteousness overtake us;
 We look for light, but there is darkness!
 For brightness, *but* we walk in blackness!
 10 We grope for the wall like the blind,
 And we grope as if *we had* no eyes;
 We stumble at noonday as at twilight;
 We *are* as dead *men* in desolate places.
 11 We all growl like bears,
 And moan sadly like doves;
 We look for justice, but *there is* none;
 For salvation, *but* it is far from us.
 12 For our transgressions are
 multiplied before You,
 And our sins testify against us;
 For our transgressions *are* with us,
 And *as for* our iniquities, we know them:
 13 In transgressing and lying
 against the LORD,
 And departing from our God,
 Speaking oppression and revolt,
 Conceiving and uttering from the
 heart words of falsehood.
 14 Justice is turned back,
 And righteousness stands afar off;
 For truth is fallen in the street,
 And equity cannot enter.
 15 So truth fails,
 And he *who* departs from evil
 makes himself a prey.

The Redeemer of Zion

Then the LORD saw *it*, and it displeased Him
That *there was* no justice.

16 He saw that *there was* no man,
And wondered that *there was* no intercessor;
Therefore His own arm brought
salvation for Him;
And His own righteousness,
it sustained Him.

17 For He put on righteousness as a breastplate,
And a helmet of salvation on His head;
He put on the garments of
vengeance for clothing,
And was clad with zeal as a cloak.

18 According to *their* deeds,
accordingly He will repay,
Fury to His adversaries,
Recompense to His enemies;
The coastlands He will fully repay.

19 So shall they fear
The name of the LORD from the west,
And His glory from the rising of the sun;
When the enemy comes in like a flood,
The Spirit of the LORD will lift up
a standard against him.

20 “The Redeemer will come to Zion,
And to those who turn from
transgression in Jacob,”
Says the LORD.

21 “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.”

The Gentiles Bless Zion

60 Arise, shine;
For your light has come!
And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you.

2 For behold, the darkness
shall cover the earth,
And deep darkness the people;
But the LORD will arise over you,
And His glory will be seen upon you.

3 The Gentiles shall come to your light,
And kings to the brightness of your rising.

4 “Lift up your eyes all around, and see:
They all gather together, they come to you;
Your sons shall come from afar,

And your daughters shall be
nursed at *your* side.

5 Then you shall see and become radiant,
And your heart shall swell with joy;
Because the abundance of the
sea shall be turned to you,
The wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you.

6 The multitude of camels shall
cover your *land*,
The dromedaries of Midian and Ephah;
All those from Sheba shall come;
They shall bring gold and incense,
And they shall proclaim the
praises of the LORD.

7 All the flocks of Kedar shall be
gathered together to you,
The rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you;
They shall ascend with
acceptance on My altar,
And I will glorify the house of My glory.

8 “Who *are* these *who* fly like a cloud,
And like doves to their roosts?
9 Surely the coastlands shall wait for Me;
And the ships of Tarshish *will come* first,
To bring your sons from afar,
Their silver and their gold with them,
To the name of the LORD your God,
And to the Holy One of Israel,
Because He has glorified you.

10 “The sons of foreigners shall
build up your walls,
And their kings shall minister to you;
For in My wrath I struck you,
But in My favor I have had mercy on you.

11 Therefore your gates shall be
open continually;
They shall not be shut day or night,
That *men* may bring to you the
wealth of the Gentiles,
And their kings in procession.

12 For the nation and kingdom which
will not serve you shall perish,
And *those* nations shall be utterly ruined.

13 “The glory of Lebanon shall come to you,
The cypress, the pine, and the
box tree together,
To beautify the place of My sanctuary;
And I will make the place of My feet glorious.

14 Also the sons of those who afflicted you
Shall come bowing to you,
And all those who despised you shall fall
prostrate at the soles of your feet;

And they shall call you The City of the LORD,
Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

15 “Whereas you have been forsaken and hated,
So that no one went through *you*,
I will make you an eternal excellence,
A joy of many generations.

16 You shall drink the milk of the Gentiles,
And milk the breast of kings;
You shall know that I, the
LORD, *am* your Savior
And your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

17 “Instead of bronze I will bring gold,
Instead of iron I will bring silver,
Instead of wood, bronze,
And instead of stones, iron.
I will also make your officers peace,
And your magistrates righteousness.

18 Violence shall no longer be
heard in your land,
Neither wasting nor destruction
within your borders;
But you shall call your walls Salvation,
And your gates Praise.

God the Glory of His People

19 “The sun shall no longer be your light by day,
Nor for brightness shall the
moon give light to you;

But the LORD will be to you
an everlasting light,
And your God your glory.

20 Your sun shall no longer go down,
Nor shall your moon withdraw itself;
For the LORD will be your everlasting light,
And the days of your mourning
shall be ended.

21 Also your people *shall* all *be* righteous;
They shall inherit the land forever,
The branch of My planting,
The work of My hands,
That I may be glorified.

22 A little one shall become a thousand,
And a small one a strong nation.
I, the LORD, will hasten it in its time.”

The Good News of Salvation

61 “The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon Me,
Because the LORD has anointed Me
To preach good tidings to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives,
And the opening of the prison
to those who are bound;

2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,
And the day of vengeance of our God;
To comfort all who mourn,
3 To console those who mourn in Zion,
To give them beauty for ashes,

The Purpose of God’s Anointing

Isaiah 61:1–3

What does God call His anointed Leader to do? Isaiah describes how God’s Servant comes to preach good tidings to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. God is the One who anoints, who prepares His leaders for service. But what is the purpose of the anointing?

God anoints leaders to enable them to speak the supernatural words and perform the supernatural tasks He has called them to do. Consider the purposes of God’s anointing, according to Isaiah:

1. To supernaturally enable men and women to perform their ministries
2. To bring hope and good news to the afflicted
3. To heal the brokenhearted
4. To proclaim liberty to the captives
5. To set prisoners free
6. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord
7. To announce the day of God’s vengeance and justice
8. To comfort all who mourn
9. To furnish beauty for those who have lost it
10. To provide happiness and a glad heart
11. To supply an opportunity to praise God’s name
12. To glorify the Lord and not man

The oil of joy for mourning,
 The garment of praise for the
 spirit of heaviness;
 That they may be called trees
 of righteousness,
 The planting of the LORD, that
 He may be glorified.”

4 And they shall rebuild the old ruins,
 They shall raise up the former desolations,
 And they shall repair the ruined cities,
 The desolations of many generations.

5 Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks,
 And the sons of the foreigner
Shall be your plowmen and
 your vinedressers.

6 But you shall be named the
 priests of the LORD,
 They shall call you the servants of our God.
 You shall eat the riches of the Gentiles,
 And in their glory you shall boast.

7 Instead of your shame *you shall*
have double honor,
 And *instead of* confusion they shall
 rejoice in their portion.
 Therefore in their land they
 shall possess double;
 Everlasting joy shall be theirs.

8 “For I, the LORD, love justice;
 I hate robbery for burnt offering;
 I will direct their work in truth,
 And will make with them an
 everlasting covenant.

9 Their descendants shall be known
 among the Gentiles,
 And their offspring among the people.
 All who see them shall acknowledge them,
 That they *are* the posterity *whom*
 the LORD has blessed.”

10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
 My soul shall be joyful in my God;
 For He has clothed me with the
 garments of salvation,
 He has covered me with the
 robe of righteousness,
 As a bridegroom decks *himself*
 with ornaments,
 And as a bride adorns *herself*
 with her jewels.

11 For as the earth brings forth its bud,
 As the garden causes the things that
 are sown in it to spring forth,

So the Lord GOD will cause
 righteousness and praise to spring
 forth before all the nations.

Assurance of Zion's Salvation

62 For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace,
 And for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
 Until her righteousness goes
 forth as brightness,
 And her salvation as a lamp *that* burns.

2 The Gentiles shall see your righteousness,
 And all kings your glory.
 You shall be called by a new name,
 Which the mouth of the LORD will name.

3 You shall also be a crown of glory
 In the hand of the LORD,
 And a royal diadem
 In the hand of your God.

4 You shall no longer be termed Forsaken,
 Nor shall your land any more
 be termed Desolate;
 But you shall be called Hephzibah,^a
 and your land Beulah;^b
 For the LORD delights in you,
 And your land shall be married.

5 For *as* a young man marries a virgin,
 So shall your sons marry you;
 And *as* the bridegroom rejoices
 over the bride,
 So shall your God rejoice over you.

6 I have set watchmen on your
 walls, O Jerusalem;
 They shall never hold their
 peace day or night.
 You who make mention of the
 LORD, do not keep silent,

7 And give Him no rest till He establishes
 And till He makes Jerusalem
 a praise in the earth.

8 The LORD has sworn by His right hand
 And by the arm of His strength:
 “Surely I will no longer give your grain
 As food for your enemies;
 And the sons of the foreigner shall
 not drink your new wine,
 For which you have labored.

9 But those who have gathered it shall eat it,
 And praise the LORD;
 Those who have brought it together
 shall drink it in My holy courts.”

62:4^aLiterally *My Delight Is in Her* ^bLiterally *Married*

- 10 Go through,
Go through the gates!
Prepare the way for the people;
Build up,
Build up the highway!
Take out the stones,
Lift up a banner for the peoples!
- 11 Indeed the LORD has proclaimed
To the end of the world:
“Say to the daughter of Zion,
‘Surely your salvation is coming;
Behold, His reward *is* with Him,
And His work before Him.’”
- 12 And they shall call them The Holy People,
The Redeemed of the LORD;
And you shall be called Sought Out,
A City Not Forsaken.

The LORD in Judgment and Salvation

63 Who *is* this who comes from Edom,
With dyed garments from Bozrah,
This *One who is* glorious in His apparel,
Traveling in the greatness of His strength?—

“I who speak in righteousness,
mighty to save.”

- 2 Why *is* Your apparel red,
And Your garments like one who
treads in the winepress?
- 3 “I have trodden the winepress alone,
And from the peoples no one *was* with Me.
For I have trodden them in My anger,
And trampled them in My fury;
Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments,
And I have stained all My robes.
- 4 For the day of vengeance *is* in My heart,
And the year of My redeemed has come.
- 5 I looked, but *there was* no one to help,
And I wondered
That *there was* no one to uphold;
Therefore My own arm brought
salvation for Me;
And My own fury, it sustained Me.
- 6 I have trodden down the peoples in My anger,
Made them drunk in My fury,
And brought down their
strength to the earth.”

God’s Mercy Remembered

- 7 I will mention the lovingkindnesses
of the LORD

- And the praises of the LORD,
According to all that the LORD
has bestowed on us,
And the great goodness toward
the house of Israel,
Which He has bestowed on them
according to His mercies,
According to the multitude of
His lovingkindnesses.
- 8 For He said, “Surely they *are* My people,
Children *who* will not lie.”
So He became their Savior.
- 9 In all their affliction He was afflicted,
And the Angel of His Presence saved them;
In His love and in His pity
He redeemed them;
And He bore them and carried them
All the days of old.
- 10 But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit;
So He turned Himself against
them as an enemy,
And He fought against them.

Daring Courage Comes from Deep Conviction

Isaiah 63:11–14

Isaiah recalls that Moses received his courage from his God-given convictions. Moses’ relationship with God came first; next came a foundation of convictions; and finally the courage to lead others without compromise. Popularity with God controlled Moses’ life, not popularity with people.

- 11 Then he remembered the days of old,
Moses *and* his people, *saying*:
“Where *is* He who brought
them up out of the sea
With the shepherd of His flock?
Where *is* He who put His Holy
Spirit within them,
- 12 Who led *them* by the right hand of Moses,
With His glorious arm,
Dividing the water before them
To make for Himself an everlasting name,
- 13 Who led them through the deep,
As a horse in the wilderness,
That they might not stumble?”
- 14 As a beast goes down into the valley,
And the Spirit of the LORD causes him to rest,

So You lead Your people,
To make Yourself a glorious name.

A Prayer of Penitence

- 15 Look down from heaven,
And see from Your habitation,
holy and glorious.
Where *are* Your zeal and Your strength,
The yearning of Your heart and
Your mercies toward me?
Are they restrained?
- 16 Doubtless You *are* our Father,
Though Abraham was ignorant of us,
And Israel does not acknowledge us.
You, O LORD, *are* our Father;
Our Redeemer from Everlasting
is Your name.
- 17 O LORD, why have You made us
stray from Your ways,
And hardened our heart from Your fear?
Return for Your servants' sake,
The tribes of Your inheritance.
- 18 Your holy people have possessed
it but a little while;
Our adversaries have trodden
down Your sanctuary.
- 19 We have become *like* those of old,
over whom You never ruled,
Those who were never called by Your name.

64 Oh, that You would rend the heavens!
That You would come down!
That the mountains might shake
at Your presence—

- 2 As fire burns brushwood,
As fire causes water to boil—
To make Your name known
to Your adversaries,
That the nations may tremble
at Your presence!
- 3 When You did awesome things
for which we did not look,
You came down,
The mountains shook at Your presence.
- 4 For since the beginning of the world
Men have not heard nor perceived by the ear,
Nor has the eye seen any God besides You,
Who acts for the one who waits for Him.
- 5 You meet him who rejoices and
does righteousness,
Who remembers You in Your ways.
You are indeed angry, for we have sinned—
In these ways we continue;
And we need to be saved.

- 6 But we are all like an unclean *thing*,
And all our righteousnesses
are like filthy rags;
We all fade as a leaf,
And our iniquities, like the wind,
Have taken us away.
- 7 And *there is* no one who calls on Your name,
Who stirs himself up to take hold of You;
For You have hidden Your face from us,
And have consumed us because
of our iniquities.

- 8 But now, O LORD,
You *are* our Father;
We *are* the clay, and You our potter;
And all we *are* the work of Your hand.
- 9 Do not be furious, O LORD,
Nor remember iniquity forever;
Indeed, please look—we all *are* Your people!
- 10 Your holy cities are a wilderness,
Zion is a wilderness,
Jerusalem a desolation.
- 11 Our holy and beautiful temple,
Where our fathers praised You,
Is burned up with fire;
And all our pleasant things are laid waste.
- 12 Will You restrain Yourself because
of these *things*, O LORD?
Will You hold Your peace, and
afflict us very severely?

The Righteousness of God's Judgment

- 65** "I was sought by *those who*
did not ask for Me;
I was found by *those who* did not seek Me.
I said, 'Here I am, here I am,'
To a nation *that* was not called by My name.
- 2 I have stretched out My hands all
day long to a rebellious people,
Who walk in a way *that is* not good,
According to their own thoughts;
- 3 A people who provoke Me to anger
continually to My face;
Who sacrifice in gardens,
And burn incense on altars of brick;
- 4 Who sit among the graves,
And spend the night in the tombs;
Who eat swine's flesh,
And the broth of abominable
things is *in* their vessels;
- 5 Who say, 'Keep to yourself,
Do not come near me,
For I am holier than you!'
These *are* smoke in My nostrils,
A fire that burns all the day.

6 “Behold, *it is* written before Me:
I will not keep silence, but will repay—
Even repay into their bosom—
7 Your iniquities and the iniquities
of your fathers together,”
Says the LORD,
“Who have burned incense
on the mountains
And blasphemed Me on the hills;
Therefore I will measure their former
work into their bosom.”

8 Thus says the LORD:

“As the new wine is found in the cluster,
And *one* says, ‘Do not destroy it,
For a blessing *is* in it,’
So will I do for My servants’ sake,
That I may not destroy them all.
9 I will bring forth descendants from Jacob,
And from Judah an heir of My mountains;
My elect shall inherit it,
And My servants shall dwell there.
10 Sharon shall be a fold of flocks,
And the Valley of Achor a place
for herds to lie down,
For My people who have sought Me.
11 “But you *are* those who forsake the LORD,
Who forget My holy mountain,
Who prepare a table for Gad,^a
And who furnish a drink offering for Meni.^b
12 Therefore I will number you for the sword,
And you shall all bow down
to the slaughter;
Because, when I called, you did not answer;
When I spoke, you did not hear,
But did evil before My eyes,
And chose *that* in which I do not delight.”

13 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

“Behold, My servants shall eat,
But you shall be hungry;
Behold, My servants shall drink,
But you shall be thirsty;
Behold, My servants shall rejoice,
But you shall be ashamed;
14 Behold, My servants shall
sing for joy of heart,
But you shall cry for sorrow of heart,
And wail for grief of spirit.
15 You shall leave your name as
a curse to My chosen;

For the Lord GOD will slay you,
And call His servants by another name;
16 So that he who blesses himself in the earth
Shall bless himself in the God of truth;
And he who swears in the earth
Shall swear by the God of truth;
Because the former troubles are forgotten,
And because they are hidden from My eyes.

The Glorious New Creation

17 “For behold, I create new heavens
and a new earth;
And the former shall not be
remembered or come to mind.
18 But be glad and rejoice forever
in what I create;
For behold, I create Jerusalem
as a rejoicing,
And her people a joy.
19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem,
And joy in My people;
The voice of weeping shall no
longer be heard in her,
Nor the voice of crying.
20 “No more shall an infant from
there *live but a few* days,
Nor an old man who has not
fulfilled his days;
For the child shall die one
hundred years old,
But the sinner *being* one hundred
years old shall be accursed.
21 They shall build houses and inhabit *them*;
They shall plant vineyards
and eat their fruit.
22 They shall not build and another inhabit;
They shall not plant and another eat;
For as the days of a tree, *so shall*
be the days of My people,
And My elect shall long enjoy
the work of their hands.
23 They shall not labor in vain,
Nor bring forth children for trouble;
For they *shall be* the descendants
of the blessed of the LORD,
And their offspring with them.
24 “It shall come to pass
That before they call, I will answer;
And while they are still speaking, I will hear.

65:11 ^a Literally *Troop* or *Fortune*, a pagan deity

^b Literally *Number* or *Destiny*, a pagan deity

25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together,
The lion shall eat straw like the ox,
And dust *shall be* the serpent's food.
They shall not hurt nor destroy
in all My holy mountain,"
Says the LORD.

True Worship and False

66

Thus says the LORD:

"Heaven *is* My throne,
And earth *is* My footstool.
Where *is* the house that you
will build Me?
And where *is* the place of My rest?"
2 For all those *things* My hand has made,
And all those *things* exist,"
Says the LORD.
"But on this *one* will I look:
On *him who is* poor and of a
contrite spirit,
And who trembles at My word.
3 "He who kills a bull *is as if* he slays a man;
He who sacrifices a lamb, *as if*
he breaks a dog's neck;
He who offers a grain offering, *as*
if he offers swine's blood;
He who burns incense, *as if*
he blesses an idol.
Just as they have chosen their own ways,
And their soul delights in
their abominations,
4 So will I choose their delusions,
And bring their fears on them;
Because, when I called, no one answered,
When I spoke they did not hear;
But they did evil before My eyes,
And chose *that* in which I do not delight."

The LORD Vindicates Zion

5 Hear the word of the LORD,
You who tremble at His word:
"Your brethren who hated you,
Who cast you out for My
name's sake, said,
'Let the LORD be glorified,
That we may see your joy.'
But they shall be ashamed."
6 The sound of noise from the city!
A voice from the temple!
The voice of the LORD,
Who fully repays His enemies!

7 "Before she was in labor, she gave birth;
Before her pain came,
She delivered a male child.
8 Who has heard such a thing?
Who has seen such things?
Shall the earth be made to
give birth in one day?
Or shall a nation be born at once?
For as soon as Zion was in labor,
She gave birth to her children.
9 Shall I bring to the time of birth, and
not cause delivery?" says the LORD.
"Shall I who cause delivery shut up
the womb?" says your God.
10 "Rejoice with Jerusalem,
And be glad with her, all you
who love her;
Rejoice for joy with her, all you
who mourn for her;
11 That you may feed and be satisfied
With the consolation of her bosom,
That you may drink deeply
and be delighted
With the abundance of her glory."

12 For thus says the LORD:

"Behold, I will extend peace
to her like a river,
And the glory of the Gentiles
like a flowing stream.
Then you shall feed;
On *her* sides shall you be carried,
And be dandled on *her* knees.
13 As one whom his mother comforts,
So I will comfort you;
And you shall be comforted
in Jerusalem."

The Reign and Indignation of God

14 When you see *this*, your heart
shall rejoice,
And your bones shall flourish
like grass;
The hand of the LORD shall be
known to His servants,
And *His* indignation to His enemies.
15 For behold, the LORD will come with fire
And with His chariots, like a whirlwind,
To render His anger with fury,
And His rebuke with flames of fire.
16 For by fire and by His sword
The LORD will judge all flesh;
And the slain of the LORD shall be many.

¹⁷ “Those who sanctify themselves
and purify themselves,
To go to the gardens
After an *idol* in the midst,
Eating swine’s flesh and the
abomination and the mouse,
Shall be consumed together,” says the LORD.

¹⁸ “For I *know* their works and their thoughts. It shall be that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory. ¹⁹I will set a sign among them; and those among them who escape I will send to the nations: *to Tarshish and Pul^a and Lud, who draw the bow, and Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles.* ²⁰Then they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the LORD out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem,” says the LORD, “as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD. ²¹And I

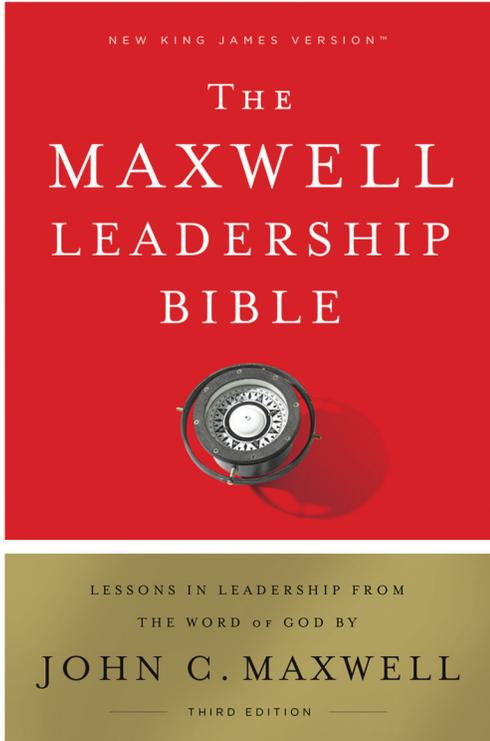
will also take some of them for priests *and Levites,*” says the LORD.

²² “For as the new heavens and the new earth
Which I will make shall remain
before Me,” says the LORD,
“So shall your descendants and
your name remain.

²³ And it shall come to pass
That from one New Moon to another,
And from one Sabbath to another,
All flesh shall come to worship
before Me,” says the LORD.

²⁴ “And they shall go forth and look
Upon the corpses of the men
Who have transgressed against Me.
For their worm does not die,
And their fire is not quenched.
They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.”

66:19^a Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint reads *Put* (compare Jeremiah 46:9).



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