

The Message of the Writing Prophets

A short form of volume 5 of the LEARN CHRIST commentaries is given here with a summary of "The Message of the Writing Prophets". That is primarily David with the four major Prophets and the 12 minor Prophets, so called because of the size not because of the relative importance of the messages. What we will indeed find in that volume and in this summary, especially in the Prophets themselves, is a repeating and singular message that is sort of a foreground for other messages like the "crucifixion and resurrection of the Christ", the Gospel, and so on; and that "the message" always entails a disaster judgment on God's people. However, also in every case, it first comes inevitable because God's people are not acting like God's people. We will use the background provided by the last chapter and by the Prophet Isaiah to present that "the message". After all, that is a good starting place both for the Writing Prophets and for the many explanations in his 14 letters where the Apostle Paul quoted from these Writing Prophets, and Isaiah is and has always been considered the foremost of the Prophets. Even if a Bible scholar, you will be surprised to find that one of the most thorough descriptions of the shaking of heaven and earth that Paul refers to in Hebrews 12 is given in Isaiah.

The Message of the Writing Prophets as used in volume 5 and as summarized here is the non-predictive part of the message of the OT Prophets, that part which was primarily a message for God's people of their own time; however it is the same message that needs to be heard in this day and time. While a better way than the law is given for righteousness, the clarity of the cross and the provision of the new birth; God's people need to hear the same The Message of the Prophets today that came years

ago. Even if it were for no other reason than the 16 Writing Prophets and David are part of the Word of God, it would be necessary to listen; but in this day of the Falling Away, not from churches as in many cases attendance is going up, but rather a falling away from God, Christ, and the Bible. A Falling Away that is not a classical criticism of the youth since if the second falling away of this generation is like the first falling away of God's people in the wilderness, all youth 19 years of age and younger are safe. It is the Falling Away that Paul makes so clear in I Thessalonians as coming before the Second Coming of Christ; the falling away that Jesus described near the end times as "because sin will abound, the love of many will wax cold, and it is what Paul warned about in his thorough treatment of the Falling Away in the book of Hebrews, where he wrote to God's people, "take heed brethren, lest their be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God."

Here is a very short form of that The Message from all the Prophets: "God's people are not acting like God's people; and they are going to pay for it in disasters, and while the primary disaster will be eternity without God and all that is good, second to that is the blindness that will again come over God's people as it did Israel, an inability to see real spiritual reality which the Prophets called a spirit of slumber, and third to that is natural disasters which must inevitable increase as the groaning of all creation continues and magnifies to the final shaking of both heaven and earth. In other words, according to the Word of God that came through the Prophets natural disasters as earthquakes, hurricanes, floods or all other natural forms of "fire, blood, and vapor of smoke before that great and notable Day of the LORD" are also ways in which God's people will pay for not acting like God's people. The form of that disaster or disasters which will come upon God's people, depends on the specific message of the Prophet."

Granted that you do have a lot of itching ears, would-be contemporary "prophets" like John Haggai who would lead you to believe if you consider yourself to be a member of the church, the body of Christ, that because of your desire which like your other desires as a church member lead you to turn from sound doctrine, that ignore the sound doctrine of the Falling Away which must precede the Second Coming and would have you believe that you will be caught up in the air before the Falling Away and the final tribulation. Not so! How wrong and out of Bible context and enamored with the Scofield Reference Bible notes are those who think that the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit from earth is nothing less than a historical event of the Falling Away. {Some like to claim the only withdrawal of the Holy Spirit as given in I Thessalonians is simply a matter of the Spirit inside of believers. Wow, what a perversion of the simplicity of the Bible; and another case on eschatology of taking a verse and going everywhere preaching. I am often reminded when hearing such weird sounding doctrine of the statement "just let the Bible say what it wants to say". It takes more than a wind bag with all the answers, a deep voice, and

the confidence that comes from popularity for itching ears Bible teachers to subvert such clear and obvious teachings that go all the way back to Daniel of how “when the power of the holy people is completely shattered” then the other last events start taking place, that shattering requires both the Falling Away of God’s people and the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit which in turn releases Satan from bondage and leads to the world revelation of the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition. God’s history, or workings in history change; and we just can not expect the world to be the same before and after the Fullness of the Gentiles is complete, before and after the Falling Away has started, before and after the impending signs in the skies above and the earth beneath escalate, before and after the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit and the release from bondage of Satan, before and after the world sees the Man of Sin. It is amazing how history under the direction of God repeats itself; and that is one reason why many people like to call the messages of the OT Prophets as having double and triple meanings, while it is really the full spectrum of the sweeps of God of repeating history. God’s people, chosen as a group by God, did not act like God’s people, except for a few of them like Caleb, Joshua, and Moses, in the 40 years in the wilderness, in the period of the judges except for occasional revival as the spirit came on a judge like Samson, in the United Kingdom which steadily deteriorated from the kingdom of Saul, David, and Samson, and the ups and downs on righteous and evil kings of the Divided Kingdoms, likewise of the people, and then of the rejection by the majority of the people called God’s people during the time of Jesus, that is the nation of Israel. Likewise the Gentiles led by the United States will again as God’s people repeat the history of the Falling Away. This can be recognized as a trend by the Prophets and also the Apostle Paul, although it was also given to them as a divine revelation as part of the Word of God, that the “Spirit speaks expressedly that in the latter times, some will depart from the faith”; and then II Timothy is a more detailed description of the Falling Away as church members have a form of godliness that denies the power of God, as church members become intolerant toward sound doctrine, as church members heap out Bible teachers without itching ears and heap up and in Bible teachers with itching ears, as church members are motivated more by their own desires of comfort, security, and status than they are to hear the sound Word of God, as they turn away from the truth, and as God subsequently turns them into fables, where eternal realities no longer seem real and imaginations and superficialities seem more real. {The mechanics of how this specifically happens for individuals although the security of the believer is unquestionable sound doctrine of the Bible is given in the previous commentaries of “Snatching, Stumbling, and the Falling Away” and “What the Churches Don’t Want You to Hear” as well as the shorter version of this latter commentary on Mark, “A Cup of Water”. A clue is given to you to listen to the lack of sound doctrine in the teaching and preaching of an instantaneous new birth which denies the similarity of the first and physical birth which requires 9 months.}

4-1: Isaiah Summarizes the History of Israel by Witness and Prediction.

Also you will find that Isaiah is easily divided into three parts, Isaiah 1-39 where that Prophet describes Israel and Judah during his short lifetime of only 38 years and from 739 - 701 B.C., Isaiah 40-55 describes the history of Israel {I am using it in the sense of the northern and southern kingdoms} BY PREDICTION from 605 - 539 B.C., and Isaiah 56-66 predicting the events and disasters of the period of from 539 - 400 B.C. The actual Biblical history and spiritual welfare of God's people of this last period of the OT comes to us in the books of Haggai, Zechariah, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Malachi, the three Prophets of which will form part of this chapter outline, immediately after Isaiah 56-66. {Likewise the preceding Writing Prophets--Jonah, Amos, and Hosea as a grouping will precede the Isaiah 1-39 division of 739 -701 like they preceded the life and writings of the Prophet Isaiah; the 40-55 division of the predictive Isaiah of 700 to 604, 605 to 539 will be followed by the chronicles of the history and the messages of the time--Daniel, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah; and so on.}

We now know that Bishop Usher in his dating scheme was a little off, especially on the exact date of the birth of Jesus, however it is still a good approximation. Approximately 1500 B.C. the children of Israel were in and rescued from Egyptian bondage to start their 40 years of wilderness wanderings; approximately 1420 B.C. under the leadership of Joshua God's people came into the promised land of Canaan; approximately 1095 after years under the judges and priests the people chose their first king, Saul, of the kingship of David from approximately 1048 to 1018 and then Solomon {Solomon reigned 40 years, 1 Kings 11:42} and then in approximately 975 the divided kingdom with Judah on the south and Israel on the north, so that when in 739 we come to the history of Isaiah, we are still in the divided kingdoms and facing captivities from Assyrian and Babylon. As general mental guidelines, we can summarize the history of God's group people, the nation of Israel, as truly beginning with the people in the land of Canaan approximately 1420, then (1) 125 years under judges and priests before a king; (2) 120 years under kings and the United Kingdom; (3) a passage of united kingdom history of approximately 236 years before Isaiah started writing the current history of the kingdoms. And for further perspective if you would consider the Pre-Isaiah history of Israel as before 739, starting with into the land of Canaan that would be in the ballpark of 700 years, and post-Isaiah period as another 700 years; so that what you might call the official existence of Israel as a nation and a divided nation is centered around Isaiah. And after in Isaiah 1-39, as presented above, Isaiah records the history in Israel of his own times, then first in 40-55 Isaiah predicts accurately the history for the another 66 years {from 605 - 539} and beyond that to still another 139 years {539 - 400 B.C} bringing up to the end of Malachi and the beginning of the 400 year before Christ intrabiblical period. Of course the ability of the Prophet Isaiah to accurately predict the subsequent history of Israel, with

correspondingly accurate predictions on the life and death of the Christ, has caused many, especially those of historical criticism, to doubt Isaiah until a complete copy was found in the Dead Sea scrolls dated far before the life and death of Jesus. However, what we should really say is that God predicted history through Isaiah; for what you find often in Isaiah is "thus saith the LORD", or words like "God said" or the LORD spoke. We must think of the words of Isaiah on this subject.

"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, 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." (Isaiah 55:10,11)

{Oh to be among the remnant of God's people of any time, the sowers who receive seed and the eaters who receive the bread of life, those who beyond living by bread alone live by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God. Those people of God of Israel for the most part were blind, completely cutoff from the knowledge and salvation of God a few years after they cutoff the Messiah. Yet Paul in answer to his own question in Romans of "what profit is it then to be a Jew?" Answers because to them were given the Oracles of God. Israel became custodians of the Word of God, written by a few believing Apostles and Prophets, in spite of the majority opinion which rejected faith in God and Christ.}

4-2: Pre-Isaiah Prophets.

Amos, and Hosea predate Isaiah. Once again if we approximate with Ussher, then Hosea wrote 785 and Amos 787. **{Obadiah and Jonah will not be discussed now as they deal with the sins of other than God's people.}** Most of this can be verified by the historical books such as I Kings and the habit of the Prophets of dating their books in reference as to who were the kings. **{For Amos in verse 1:1 speaks of writing concerning all of Israel when Uzziah was king of Judah and Jeroboam was king of Israel, two years before the great earthquake.}** However dates are very secondary to us as compared to the message of the prophets, and what we are after is to briefly find the specifics in each Prophet of the Message of the time for God's people. Exegesis here is just like good Bible expositor's will demand of the book of Revelation that primarily the message had to be first of all a message to the people to whom it was written. That The Message will be the same "The Message" for us! And we will turn to the New International Commentaries for help in outlining, which have remained up-to-date and conservative while scholarly, as compared to most commentators like most Bible teachers have gone astray, missing the ASI and carried away with historical criticism; also to the outlines of the Writing Prophets in the DISCIPLES STUDY BIBLE.

1. Part of an Outline of Amos on The Message.

Unfortunately, or fortunately, the whole book of Amos deals with The Message, primarily the first half which we will quickly look at in the outline of the study Bible mentioned above. It outlines Amos 1:1 through 6:14 as "God confronts the sin of His people." **{First, we should mention that this study Bible finds as the gift of Amos, "God's Call to Practical Righteousness", and isn't that the equivalent of saying that "God's people are not acting like God's people"?)}**

(1). God's Word is revealed in human words, 1:1-2 and following.

"The LORD roars {you know immediate that God is unhappy with His own people} from Zion, and utters His voice from Jerusalem (1:2)...Thus says the LORD (1:3)...Thus says the LORD (1:6)...Thus says the LORD (1:9)..." and so on through Amos so that you get the idea that Amos like other books of the Bible claim to be the very word of God. Here is the phenomenon of a book of 66 books in the world, a piece of historical evidence, which claims to be the very Word of God; and on which there is no middle ground, since it claims to be the Word of God, you must accept it for what it is or as a fraud of false claims that can not be trusted, and I make this latter statement rhetorically to show the foolhardiness of the alternative argument to accepting the Bible as the Word of God. Just like on Jesus of Nazareth who claimed to be the very Son of God, the claim itself leaves no middle ground between complete acceptance and complete rejection. Unfortunately, most of God's chosen group people rejected both claims to the Word and to the Son of God.

(2). The specific four sins of God's people in Judah and Israel are enumerated with a little of their history to justify the impending judgment, 2:4-15.

"For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because {one} they have despised the law of the LORD, {two} and have not kept His commandments. {three} Their lies lead them astray, {four} Lies which their fathers followed. But I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem." (Amos 2:4,5)

Here the impending disaster that God will send on His own people is "fire" on Judah and on Jerusalem. Is this literal fire or destruction represented by fire? I think you can answer that immediately as the literal fire of an earthquake, since Amos according to the introduction and for a reason mentioned the great earthquake that would come in two years. The part that people have trouble accepting today is that God the Father would send an earthquake on His own people, but it is true; and we deserve far more than that, as for example the first total destruction of the earth by God in the flood and the final destruction, which by the way is also by fire. The above is for the southern kingdom of Judah, how about for the northern kingdom of Israel?

"For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, {one} Because they sell the righteous for silver, and the poor for a

pair of sandals {taking advantage of the poor in the land by the rich is as always in the Prophets and in the US a sin against God}. {Two} They pant after the dust of the earth which is on the head of the poor {they covet their land and houses}, and pervert the way of the humble {they actually mislead the humble in order to achieve personal gain}. {Three} A man and his father go in to the same girl, to defile My holy name {adultery is always twofold in the Bible, adultery toward God and adultery and fornication toward a fellow human being}. {Four} They lied down by every altar on clothes taken in pledge {the poor borrow against their clothing, and the rich confiscate and enjoy it}, and drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god {a constant habit of God's people of injustice in the courts while the rich judges and their friends have the gall to drink the very wine of the condemned in the house of God itself--they go to church to celebrate and rejoicing in their prosperity from God when the prosperity has come through injustice and perversion of the poor, and does that remind you of Enron and other executives, all active church members, who fleeced their own poorer employees of their 401ks in order to line their own pockets?} (Amos 2:6-8)

The impending punishment for God's people in Israel not acting like God's people is given in Amos 3:11 as (one) an "adversary shall be all around you", (two) the adversary will sap all of Israel's strength, and (three) the palaces will be plundered. This was predicted in 787 B.C. and we know it happened approximately 65 years later in 722 B.C. with the Assyrian Captivity of the northern kingdom. As background for this punishment, a little history of the blessings of God is given in Amos 2:9-12 with the disappointing response of God's people: (one) God destroyed the mighty Emirates who were in the land of Canaan before them in order to make room for His people; (two) God brought His people before that out of the land of Egypt and led them for 40 years in the wilderness; (three) God raised up in the land some of their sons to be Prophets and some to be Nazirites; (four) but God's people perversely influence the Nazirites with wine and (five) commanded the Prophets not to speak.

(3). God condemns empty religion, 3:1-15.

Even as Paul condemns a "form of godliness without the power of God" in II Timothy, so also the Prophet Amos, but really God through Amos, condemns a similar "empty religion" in Amos 3:1-15.

"For they do not know to do right, says the LORD, who store up violence and robbery in their palaces." (Amos 3:10)

It is bad enough for God's people, today and then, to not do right by fellow citizens and the strangers in the land; but to be so blind as to not "know" how to do right is the greater sin!

(4). God's love confronts His disobedient people in judgment, 4:1-5:3.

“Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who are on the mountain of Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to your husbands, ‘Bring wine, let us drink!’ The Lord GOD has sworn by His holiness: Behold, the days shall come upon you when He will take you away with fishhooks, and your posterity with fishhooks....” (Amos 4:1-2)

“The virgin of Israel has fallen; she will rise no more. She lies forsaken on her land; there is no one to raise her up...The city that goes out by a thousand shall have a hundred left, and that which goes out by a hundred shall have ten left of the house of Israel.” (Amos 5:2-3)

(5). Examples of mistreatment of the people by God’s people and yet a ray of hope for a remnant after Captivity, 5:4-27.

“Therefore, because you tread down the poor and take grain taxes from them; you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink wine from them for I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sin: afflicting the just and taking bribes; diverting the poor from justice at the gate....Seek good and not evil, that you may live....it may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.” (Amos 5:11-15)

2. Part of an Outline of Hosea on The Message.

The part of the study Bible outline pertinent to the message is the outline of Hosea 4:1-9:9 and entitled “unfaithfulness is the basis of God’s controversy with His people” with the 13 divisions of (1) unfaithful people break covenant commitments, (2) unfaithful ministers bring judgment on the people and on themselves, (3) an alien spirit dominates unfaithful people, (4) God chastises His unfaithful people, (5) surface repentance does not satisfy the sovereign God, (6) sharp judgment comes upon fleeting loyalty, (7) loyal love and personal knowledge of God meet His requirements, (8) covenant-breaking hinders restoration of God’s people, (9) making leaders by power politics shuts God out of the process, (10) compromise leads to loss of strength and alienation from God, (11) diplomatic duplicity interferes with God’s redemptive activity, (12) religious perversion ends in apostasy and bondage, and (13) God’s unfaithful people reap more than they sow. Now we only have time and space to look at the subheadings under the outline of (4). Under (4), “God chastises His unfaithful people”, God through Hosea lists (one) God disciplines unfaithful leaders in 5:1,2; (two) God disciplines because He knows His people fully in 5:3; (three) Pride prevents repentance and promotes stumbling in 5:4,5; (four) extravagant giving is no substitute for lapses in living in 5:6-7, and (five) God is the agent of punishment for His people in 5:8-14.

(4). God chastises His unfaithful people, Hosea 5.

One, God disciplines the unfaithful leaders, 5:1,2.

"Hear this, O priests! Take heed, O house of Israel! Give ear, O house of the king! For yours is the judgment..." (Hosea 5:1)

Two, God disciplines because He knows His people, 5:3.

"And Israel is not hidden from Me... Israel is defiled." (Hosea 5:3)

Three, the people of God has misdirected their deeds and have the wrong spirit, 5:4,5.

"They do not direct their deeds toward turning to their God, for the spirit of harlotry is in their midst, and they do not know the LORD." (Hosea 5:4)

Four, Extravagant giving is no substitute for lapses in living, 5:6-7.

"With their flocks and herds they shall go to seek the LORD, but they will not find Him; He has withdrawn Himself from them. They have dealt treacherously with the LORD..." (Hosea 5:6,7)

Five, God is the agent of punishment for His people, 5:8-14. And can you buy that, that God Himself is the mover and maker of disaster for His own people?

"I, even I, will tear them and go away; I will take them away, and no one shall rescue." (Hosea 5:14b)

4-3: Isaiah 1-39.

Now in 739 to 701 we come to Isaiah 1-39 which is the history and message of Isaiah of his own lifetime, and once again looking for The Message for his generation which is the same message for our generation. First a little history of this 39 years of the lifetime of Isaiah: the period of the rise of the last greatness of Assyria, ended finally in 609 BC by the Medo-Babylonian coalition {recall how commentators like Carroll like to summarize the before and after of the Assyrian period as first the Prophets of the Assyrian Period and then as the Prophets of the Chaldean period, Chaldea being a summary territory of both the Medes and the Babylonians, also of Persia}; the beginning weaknesses of Assyrians rulers gave all their neighbors including Judah and Israel relief from their expansions, the two kingdoms therefore enjoying a period of peace and prosperity not known since King Solomon; Jeroboam {the second King by that name} was King in Israel and Azariah or Uzziah was king in Judah; this long period of peace and prosperity lead the kings and the subjects to think that God was pleased with them; Amos and Hosea had been sent by God to counter the false sense of security; Judah was a little less corrupted by apostasy; apostasy was defined as spiritual and actual prostitution with idolatry, adultery, and oppression of the people; King Menahem of Israel as early as 752 BC had to pay tribute to Assyria (II Kings 15:19-20), and in 731 the Assyrian King {Pul} took possession of Galilee which was north of the Jezreel Valley (II Kings 15:29); Judah called together her court to decide about being pro or anti-Assyrian, but with Ahaz as King in Judah (735 BC), the foreign policy became Pro, prompting an attack the same year

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from the King of Israel and Damascus which lead Ahaz in turn to seek help from King Tiglath-pileser of Assyria (II Kings 16:7-9); Isaiah launched out in 1:21-23 and 2:12-17 that Judah should be rather pro-God than pro or con Assyria; they according to Isaiah would take all offered and the rest by force (Isaiah 8:5-8); after Tiglathpileser destroyed Damascus, King Ahaz was forced to make a more binding treaty (II Kings 16:10-16 and Isaiah 7:14-16) which demanded recognition of the gods of Assyria, which gave Ahaz and Judah rest for a time but which Isaiah insists they would have had anyway since Tiglathpileser III died in 727; King Hoshea of Israel, a former vassal, made insurrection against the then king of Assyria, Shalmaneser and in 724 BC started a three year siege against Samaria, the horrors of which are described in II Kings 6:24-29, and the forecasts of their disaster by Amos (3:9-11) and Hoses (8:5-6;14:1) came true though approximately 50 years before the actual event; after Shalmaneser died, the king of Assyria was Sargon who experienced revolts all over his kingdom including one to the south in Babylon and especially in Chaldea, the southern part of Mesopotamia, also problems to the north with the Medes; the son of Ahaz in Judah, Hezekiah reigned with a foreign policy that was anti-Assyrian, shifting toward dependence on the weak Egypt {Isaiah denounced this policy also in 29-31 since Egypt was weak}; Hezekiah, according to the Bible was a good king, purging the land of idolatry and the temple of paganized worship, also a revival of the Mosaic law and an aggressive ruler who extended the borders of the kingdom of Judah; Hezekiah attempted to lure some from the northern kingdom of Israel, captive to Assyria; Sargon having achieved dominance over the kingdoms north and south, and as described in Isaiah 14 deemed himself to be "lord of the universe"; Sargon died on the battlefield in 706, being replaced by an also powerful King Sennacherib against whom Hezekiah made an alliance with Philistia, Judah, Edom, and Moab with the coalition attacking the Philistines, also encouraged by Egypt {Isaiah all this politics and scheming as an affront to God, Isaiah 22:5-14; 29:15-16; and 30:1-18}; in the campaigns of the first three years of Sennacherib he defeated Babylon, restored his eastern border, and stood at the gates of Jerusalem in Judah; he attacked the frontier fortresses of Judah, later Hezekiah paid him tribute, in spite of which he came against Jerusalem demanding surrender and deportation (Isaiah 36:16-18); Isaiah told Hezekiah of deliverance from God, and a plague destroyed the Assyrian Army on the northern border of Egypt while they sought to pursue the Egyptian army.

And with this brief historical background of Isaiah 1-39, we are ready to pursue the main purpose in this chapter of The Message of Isaiah 1-39. If we select from John Oswalt's outline on Isaiah 1-29 in the NEW INTERNATIONAL COMMENTARIES, we find most of what applies to The Message in Roman Numeral One, "The Present and Future of God's People, 1:1-5:30.

- (1). Israel has forsaken God and provoked His anger, 1:2-9.

"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." (Isaiah 1:4)

(2). God Desires Justice, not hypocritical worship, 1:10-20.

"Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear...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; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow." (Isaiah 1:15b-17)

(3). The Before and After of Jerusalem, 1:21-23.

"How the faithful city has become a harlot! {Sounds Hosea} It was full of justice; righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers. Your silver has become dross, your wine mixed with water. 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." (Isaiah 1:21-23)

(4). Judgment and Restoration for Jerusalem, 1:24-26.

"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. I will turn My hand against you, and thoroughly purge away your dross, and take away all your alloy. 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.'" (1:24-26)

We know that while there was a few years of respite in order that the Messiah might live, die, and be resurrected before Israel and Jerusalem were completely cut off with blindness, the theme by and large has passed from earth to eternity, from the old Jerusalem to the new Jerusalem which be lowered from heaven after the Second Coming of Christ. You see this judgment to be on all people of the earth as well as on God's people, the two being divided by "adversaries" {and you know that to be a term for God's people who are not acting like God's people and the "enemies" for the rest of the world}. You also see that in the following verses of 1:27-31 where the "destruction of transgressors and of sinners shall be together, and those who forsake the Lord shall be consumed (1:28), also in the "both will burn together, and no one shall quench them (1:31b).

(5). Eternal Honor in the "latter days" for Judah and Jerusalem, 2:1-4.

"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 all nations shall flow to it....nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." (Isaiah 2:1 and 2:4b)

I feel sorry for the disciples of Darby and Scofield who try to read into this another revival for Israel, past the momentary respite with return from Persian Captivity in order for Christ to be born...that is try to read into this another time on earth past now and before eternity, a millennium of peace and the restoration of Jerusalem. Stay in context, how can you miss that time is over when all the above takes place. Herein is the major problem of the fundamentalists and others, taking such Scriptures out of context they read in an Age between the Falling Away and the Second Coming with rapture of believers and judgment of the world with rewards and punishments for the wheat and the tares. It takes far more imagination, running everywhere with a verse of Scripture, picking and choosing from the Bible, than to just admit that this is for the very end of this Age, the time of Eternity.

(6). That you must see this in the context of the end of all time and the beginning of eternity is further carried forth in context with the famous Day of the LORD of the OT which starts in 2:5 and runs through 2:22. First in 2:10 with the call for the house of Jacob as well as the whole earth to get inside the rock and to hide in the dirt in order to get away from the terror of the LORD, from the glory of His majesty. What is going to happen on the Day of the LORD? Well, 2:11 the lofty looks of man caused by pride are going to be humbled; the haughtiness of man is going to be bowed down by the reigning and returning Christ, even by the angels as having gathered men from the four corners of the earth they separate the sheep from the goats and tell them why; and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that Day of the LORD. Is that clear enough for you? Further characteristics, second of the Day of the LORD in 2:12 and following as that Day comes upon all proud and lofty, upon all lifted up which will be brought low, even upon the high trees and high mountains--you see it is on nature as well as humanity, on buildings, on other structures of man, on ships and sloops, on the loftiness of man and their haughtiness; and as all idols are abolished, the LORD alone will be exalted in that Day. Men will run into the caves of the rocks from the terror of the LORD at this Day "when He arises to shake the earth" (2:19 & 2:21b, repeated twice).

(7). Then the Day becomes a closer Day of Judgment in chapter 3 and following, a Day of near Judgment for Judah and Jerusalem as compared to the judgment of eternity and on the whole earth which was previously the province of the Day of the LORD. This is the nature of the Prophets, the Day of the LORD in the OT Prophets has two aspects: a day of more immediate and localized judgment with characteristics of the final Day, and a final Day of Judgment and justice with some characteristics of the more immediate and localized judgment. I like to call it sweeps rather than a duplicity of meaning and predictions. God has the same intentions in each case, to right the wrong and to reward the right. In one case, it is eternal justice at work and in the other case it is immediate and rectifying justice at work.

4-4: Isaiah 40-55, A Message of Hope for People in Exile.

1. Historical events of the world between 605-539 B.C.

While the 40-55 section of Isaiah is not tied to historical events like 1-39, we can easily recognize from the message and messages the God's people are in exile; and while in history no nation has ever returned from exile, it was predicted in Isaiah and happened in 539 B.C. During this 605-539 period of history world dominance shifted from Nineveh and Assyria to Babylon. In 609 a coalition of Babylon and the Medo-Persians dominated Assyria to become the world power. {Medes were a more north eastern group from Assyria and the Persian more eastern.} This world empire of 605-539 is generally called in history the Neo-Babylonian empire, primary under the leadership of King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon made famous in Daniel from the writing on the wall, but partly because of weaker kings which followed him {and the workings of God in history which determines the bounds of all nations, and over which angels are placed} the Persian Empire took over in 539. Jerusalem feel captive to the Babylonian Empire in 586 with a subsequent deportation of princes and other leaders like Daniel to their Empire {a foreign policy that had also been practiced by Assyrian against Israel in order to eliminate continued opposition}, with an earlier deportation in Judah of 598 as told in II Kings 24:8-17. {You will again recall that the Writing Prophets are divided into the two broad categories of first the Assyrian Captivity period and then the Chaldean period, Chaldea being the southern most part of Mesopotamia and where Abraham came from originally, Ur of Chaldea.}

"In his days Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoikim {the present king of Judah} became his vassal for three years. Then he turned and rebelled against him. And the LORD sent against him {notice that the Bible claims, and if we have the faith of the Bible and in the Bible we must believe it also, that God Himself sent the army of Babylon against God's people in Judah and Jerusalem because they had long ago ceased to act like God's people} raiding bands of Chaldeans {up to this point in the Prophets the impending disasters on God's people have been more so-called natural disasters, but now God sends "raiding bands of Chaldeans", seeing that there was more than one invasion}...bands of Syrians, bands of Moabites, and bands of the people of Ammon {and more than country sent bands}; He sent them against Judah to destroy it {the purpose of God here is clear--to destroy Judah as a nation, and the reason is to follow, but first we must be reminded as stated in Amos that God never does anything without first telling His people through the Prophets, and the Prophets did warn the people of Judah}, according to the word of the LORD which He had spoken by His servants the Prophets. Surely at the commandment of the LORD this came upon Judah {the writer of II Kings under the leadership of the Holy Spirit wants to remind us that this Captivity was commanded by God, the Great Maker of History}, to remove them from His sight because of

the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, and also because of the innocent blood that he had shed; for he had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, which the LORD would not pardon." (II Kings 24:1-4)

2. A Message of Isaiah 40-55 from God and through the Prophet Isaiah is that far from complete abandonment of His own people, God has chosen them through whom to show His power over the deities of Babylon. God can and will: (1) destroy the idols of Babylon, (2) redeem His people from their sins, always a personal message to individuals and more important than the prosperity of non-captivity, and (3) to bring the people back to their homeland which has never happened in history. God chose the first king of the Persian Empire, Cyrus, through whom to do this in 539 when the Medo-Persians completed the conquest of the NeoBabylonian Empire that they had been working on for 75 years rebuilding. From the perspective of Cyrus, he adopted a foreign policy of soliciting obedience from dominated subjects by pleasing them, thus as recorded in Ezra 1:1-4 he granted exiles the right to go home and provided money for the rebuilding of their national shrines.

3. God as in Isaiah 40-55 has always demanded that His people recognize Him as the only real God, and further that His activities through His people should lead the rest of the world to know that there is no other god such as Marduk, Ashur, Bel, and Amon-Re.

"I am the LORD, and there is no other; There is no God besides Me. I will gird you, through you have not known Me. 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; I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity; I, the LORD, do all these things." (Isaiah 45:5-6)

(1). The same God who created light and darkness, yea all the universe, also rules over human history creating nations and the boundaries of nations.

(2). God controls history by bringing calamities and by subverting calamities.

(3). God brings both natural disasters and the calamities of warfare from other nations. If you do not see this, then the God of your mentality is only half a God of the Bible, therefore not God at all but more like the idols. Of course, this is only in your mind; and like Phillips said years in his book, "Your God is too Small". What has developed beyond Phillips is that American Society with a Christian and Bible influence has created an American Conscience, where the social and political conscience itself as become a god--summarized as I do what I think is right and what my conscience tells me is right--and based on the American Democratic Faith. This Faith, unlike the faith of Christ and the Bible, (one) adheres to the majority as right, (two) adheres to a toleration that allows intolerance toward the sound doctrine of the Bible, (three) that promotes the peace which the world gives over the peace which Christ gives and which divides society into two groups--tares and wheat, sheep and goats, believers and nonbelievers. You can bet that in the recent

diasters in this nation of Katrina, tornadoes, and earthquakes as well as other manifestations of “blood, fire, and vapor of smoke” that must come before that great and notable Day of the LORD and Lord, are denied by the American Democratic Faith as calamities from God, even as is 911.

4. The Message in Isaiah 40-55 is more the redemptive aspect of God’s chastisement of His people. Still God’s people must act like God’s people without false gods, the first of the Ten Commandments exist as always and as from God, not to make graven images even if in the mind, not to worship other gods but to worship the Lord your God with all your heart mind and soul as explained by Jesus and as quoted from the OT, and not to take the name of the LORD your God in vain, a practice that we see increasingly in American even among church members and which is one of the primary signs that we are in the Falling Away of God’s people from God, Christ, and the Bible. It is also an immutable law of God that ruin, or calamity or disaster, follows wickedness as surely as the night follows the day.

The Disciples Study Bible summarizes 40-55 as “God’s Word for His Confused People” with the aspects of (1) God comes to His people when judgment has passed, 40:1-31, (2) God holds His people by the hand, 41:1-29, (3) The light of truth in darkness, 42:1-25, (4) God alone is Savior of His people, 43:1-28, (5) Homemade gods can never save {we would include in that the idols which God’s people tend to make today in their own minds, according to their own desires, and based on the collective American Conscience with the American Democratic Faith for justification}, (6) God may use an unbeliever, 45:1-25 {**after God is the creator of all and the ultimate controller of the universe, although He allows certain natural laws like gravity and certain freedoms to Satan without His intervention except when necessary in the answer to pray or guidance**}, (7) False gods make life’s load heavier, 46:1-13, (8) Ruin follows wickedness as night follows day, 47:1-15 {this is also an immutability law of God which is based on His character, personality, and holiness}, (8) Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, 48:1-52:15, (9) Healing comes to many through the suffering of One, 53:1-12, (10) God keeps His promises (54:1-17), and (11) God’s finest invitation of Return to Me, 55:1-13.

(1). The Message of Isaiah 40.

As in NT times the complete Bible message, often called prophesy, has three aspects--exhortation, rebuke, and comfort--so chapter 40 of Isaiah can be considered the Comfort chapter of the Message. To use some of the descriptive words of the NT on the character of God: “God is not willing that any should perish”; “God is longsuffering and patient”; “God is slow to anger”; and God is quick to repent, or change His mind when faced with a change of attitude and action on the part of His creations. Of course, you must realize that we have a very unique set of circumstances of history with which we are dealing here as God has already punished Judah and Jerusalem with the calamity of captivity, and now His forgiveness and mercy are

tended to His own people: (one) the warfare of God against Jerusalem is ended; (two) God has pardoned the iniquity of the people of Jerusalem; (three) the punishment is behind them as they have now received double from God for all their sins; (four) here is the real message of comfort which will come in approximately 500 years, preparations will be made for the nation and in the nation for the coming of the Messiah, most often in Isaiah called the suffering servant or the Son of Man; (five) Cry out about this comfort and what shall we cry--that all flesh is lovely but like vanishing grass, cry out about the good tidings of the One to come who is your God, cry out that God through the Christ will feed His sheep like a flock, cry out that the God of all knowledge and wisdom is about to act definitively in history, cry out that all nations are to God like a drop in the bucket, nothing, and the isles {that is us Gentiles led by the US} are lifted up as a small thing {as we consider God working through history, especially in Daniel, we realize how insignificant the US is although surely the leader in the Fullness of the Gentiles and in the spreading of the Gospel to every nation; however also in the Falling Away; and that God's center of gravity is always north and south of the holy land}, cry out you can not liken God to something to be carved from wood; (six) have you not heard that from the very beginning of Creation that God sits on the circle of the earth and controls human history, bringing the princes and the judges to nothing, God blows on them shortly after they are established and they wither, sometimes He uses the whirlwind to take them away like stubble; (seven) who is like God or equal to God, look at in the creations of the universe at all His might and power; (eight) it is folly to say like Israel that the way they are living is hidden from God and that God is ignoring their just claim for justice; (nine) God does not weary or faint, His understanding of man and the ways of man and nations has no measure, God gives power to the weak and increases strength to those without might.

(2). Truth in darkness, the message of Isaiah 42.

We know from the NT that "in the fullness of time, God sent forth His son"; and that is exactly what is the truth in darkness that is being offered to God's people here. {Never forget also that the real blessing on Abraham as a nation of believers, beyond the blessing of a innumerable number of people as a nation, was for the seed to be the Promised Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, and that for He to be the savior of believing Jews and Gentiles, here in Isaiah those Gentiles are describes as those of the "coastlands".}

"Behold! My Servant {the Messiah and the Lord Jesus Christ} whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights {God the Father acknowledges at baptism, through John the Baptist, through the Spirit descending in the form of a dove, and on the mount of transfiguration how pleased He was with His Son and what He was doing, not to mention showing His pleasure with granted miracles and signs, and primarily in the resurrection from the dead!} I have pu

My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth {you want real justice, God's people or all, look for it in the teachings and the life of Jesus as for example in the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus demands the seeking first of the kingdom of God}. He will not fail nor be discouraged, till he has established justice in the earth {what did Jesus do during His life on earth, He established justice and the kingdom of God on earth}; and the coastlands shall wait for His Law {that is us Gentiles led by the US, but that is behind us now for we are near the end of the Fullness of the Gentiles, well into the Falling Away of God's Gentile people led by the US, and much closer to the Second Coming at which point it will be too late for any major human decisions for repentance--in fact the "now is the time" of Hebrews begs the very issue of the Falling Away in that you do not know at what point God will say of each of His present people, that is enough of the "evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God" though your idols in your own brains have been finely developed by the American Conscience and the American Democratic Faith, enough because after over 40 years of wilderness wanderings in unbelief, you have passed the point of no return for Promise and Eternity with God.} (Isaiah 42:1-4)

(3). However judgment is still on the way before the Comfort of the Messiah, God's people are as good as already "robbed" and "plundered" in Isaiah 42:21-25.

"Who among you will give ear to this? {the equivalent from God Himself of saying like the Prophets did, "who has believed our report?"}...Who will listen and hear from the time to come? Who gave Jacob for plunder, and Israel to the robbers? {the answer of God's people should be that the Almighty God, ruler of heaven and earth, the God of all power and all seeing, gave first the northern kingdom to Assyria for robbery and then the southern kingdom of Jacob and Judah to Babylon for plunder}...Was it not the LORD, He against whom we have sinned? For they would not walk in His ways {a repeat of The Message of the Writing Prophets that God's people are not acting like God's people}, nor were they obedient to His law." (Isaiah 42:23-24)

4-5: Ezekiel 1-30, the Impending Peril of the Captivity of Judah.

God's people of Judah, knowing they were more righteous than the northern kingdom of Israel that had gone into captivity, considered themselves like the US does today as the unique recipients of divine providence. They would not face up to the prospect of Captivity in Babylon as Ezekiel warned them in 1-30.

1. The historical circumstances of Ezekiel.

The Prophet Ezekiel was first a priest; but five years after he was carried captive with King Jehoiachin and others to Babylon in 598 B.C., he was called to do the work of a Prophet with a message for the Jewish captives by the river Chebar in lower

Babylon. Twenty-five when taken from home, Ezekiel was thirty when with a vision of the glory of God, he came to recognize God as universal, controlling all person and nations of the world. Like Isaiah he was first a priest, like Daniel he was taken captive to Babylon, and like Jeremiah was a Prophet also concerned with a Captivity message. Ezekiel and his wife with 10,000 other carefully chosen captives were marched to Babylon according to II Kings 24:14. The priests and craftsman, accustomed to respectable and status in Jerusalem, were despised in Babylon, treated like slaves and thieves; and the captors taunted them about their God "Yahweh", harassing that He was inferior to their own gods.

2. The message of judgment on Judah already happened to the rebellious people of God in captivity, Ezekiel 1-24. Far from being surprised that there were only 16 Writing Prophets of the captivities and restoration, we should be surprised that there were that many in light of The Message that God's people had to receive from all the called of God Prophets that "God's people were not acting like God's people". While in Jerusalem they had refused to listen to Jeremiah, and now in Babylon they were still rebellious. Of course in the whole captivity period, Assyrian and Chaldean, there were many more false prophets and priests, often preaching peace when there would be no peace for the nation for years to come.

(1). Behind the vision of God was the call of Ezekiel to be a Prophet to a rebellious people that might not listen to him, Ezekiel 2. **{This is extra-informative in that it is a detailed example of the Spirit of God and the voice of God moving a Prophet to receive revelations of the Word of God. So unique is the revelations of Scriptures through men called Prophets that it only happened approximately 20 times in the OT, setting this far apart from the contemporary teachers of itching ears who would claim extra-biblical revelations with the magic words "God told me".}**

"So when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of One speaking. And He said to me, 'Son of man {a favorite word for Ezekiel, repeated often in the book to signify his identification with God's people}, stand on your feet, and I will speak to you.' Then the Spirit entered me when He spoke to me, and set me on my feet {evidently Ezekiel still could not stand up, so God stood him up as He spoke}; and I heard Him who spoke to me. And He said to me: 'Son of man, I am sending you to the children of Israel {although it is primarily Judah in captivity, God still calls them the children of Israel}, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against Me; they and their fathers have transgressed against Me to this very day {God's people not acting like God's people was still going on in captivity}. For they are impudent and stubborn children. {Can we say that likewise of God's people today and in America as they begin to pass through the historical event of the Falling Away?} I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God'. {Always a telltale revelation through a Prophet or Apostle, that he has been enlisted by God Himself to deliver the very words of God and from God.} As for them {you see, it

really doesn't matter that much about them as far as the deliverance of the message}, whether they hear of whether they refuse--for they are a rebellious house--yet they will know that a prophet has been among them. {What was important for them to know that a Prophet of God was among them, which within itself showed that God still cared.} (Ezekiel 2:1-5)

(2). Jeremiah in Jerusalem and Ezekiel in Babylon warned of the complete destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, which happened in 587 B.C., which did happen 11 years after Ezekiel arrived in Babylon and six years after He prophesied it, Ezekiel 4:1-5:17.

Even now the false prophets spoke of a speedy return home; yet Ezekiel spoke of a total collapse of the kingdom of Judah still to come and a total destruction of Jerusalem; it was a message of warning and threat which we might say is the equivalent of The Message of God's people are not acting like God's people so that they are going to pay for it, the extent of the penalty and the time of the penalty having been determined by God. {Later will be Daniel that gives us most of the time details of what will happen to the people of God.}

"And I will do among you {the details are of the destruction of Jerusalem in the context} what I have never done, and the like of which I will never do again, because of all your abominations." (Ezekiel 5:9)

(3). God through Ezekiel condemns the idolatry and sins of Jerusalem, 6:1-7:27.

"Thus says the Lord God: 'A disaster, a singular disaster; behold, it has come! An end has come, the end has come; it has dawned for you; behold, it has come! Doom has come to you, you who sell in the land; the time has come, a day of trouble is near, and not of rejoicing in the mountains. Now upon you I will soon pour out My fury, and spend My anger upon you; I will judge you according to your ways, and I will repay you for all your abominations.'" (Ezekiel 7:5-8)

(4). Why glory departed from the city of Jerusalem, 8:1-11:25.

"And you shall know that I am the LORD; for you have not walked in My statutes nor executed My judgments, but have done according to the customs of the Gentiles which are all around you." (Ezekiel 11:12)

(5). God will preserve in captivity a remnant, 6:8.

"Yet I will leave a remnant, so that you may have some who escape the sword among the nations, when you are scattered through the countries." (Ezekiel 6:8)

(6). False prophets and prophetess will be swept away by storm, Ezekiel 13.

4-6: The Mighty Prayer of Daniel that sent Gabriel.

The Prayer of Daniel in Daniel 9 for his own people, confessing the past sins of his people is a summary also of the Message of the Writing Prophets.

1. The historical context of Daniel is just that now like in Ezekiel we look at the other side of the coin, from the perspective of the captives in Babylon.

(1). Daniel starts with simple statements of history, but history under the control of God.

"In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand {this was the doing of God, the Great Maker of History}..." (Daniel 1:1,2a)

(2). Belshazzar took the place of his father as king of Babylon, getting in trouble as he did not honor God as did his father and during a feast for thousands he showed off the golden vessels his father had taken from the temple, consequently seeing the writing on the wall (Daniel 5). Part of the message on the wall when interpreted by Daniel stated that the kingdom would be given to the Medes and Persians (5:28), which of course is more of the control of God of history.

"That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain. And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old." (Daniel 5:30,31)

(3). King Darius set up over the kingdom 120 satraps {recall that **Syro-Palestine was one satraps with the possible headquarters at Damascus**}, over those three governors and Daniel was appointed as one of those governors.

"So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian." (Daniel 6:28)

Darius was the Mede and Cyrus the Persian.

(4). During the first year of the reign of Darius, king over the realm of the Chaldeans, Daniel was reading from Jeremiah of how Jerusalem and the captivity would be 70 years long. (Daniel 9:2)

2. On this occasion and in this time in history, the governor Daniel started praying so earnestly that the angel Gabriel was dispatched immediately from heaven to fly swift to answer the fervent prayer of Daniel as to what would be the fate of God's people, Daniel 9.

(1). The end goal of the prayer is given in 16-19 is for mercy and rescue of God's city and God's people.

First it is a prayer for the righteous God to turn His anger and fury away from Jerusalem.

"O Lord, according to all Your righteousness, I pray, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem. Your holy mountains, because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people are a reproach to all those around us." (Daniel 9:16)

Recall how Paul states in Romans that because of the Jewish religious leaders the name of God is blasphemed among all the nations.

Second it is a prayer that God will again make His face to shine on His sanctuary for His own name's sake. In other words to salvage His own reputation in the world.

"Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord's sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate." (Daniel 9:17)

Third based on, not the righteous deeds of the people but rather because of God's "great mercies", Daniel continues to fervently pray that God take a fresh look at the desolations of the city that is called by God's name.

"O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies." (Daniel 9:18)

Fourth, Daniel pleads for God to: (1) forgive, (2) listen, (3) act, and (4) not delay; and all this for the city and the people that are called by His name.

"O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name." (Daniel 9:19)

Daniel did get an answer to his prayer. In fact many answers which told the future history of God's people, of Jerusalem, and of the nation of Israel. God sent Gabriel to lay it out for him and Daniel recorded it in Daniel 9:24-27, starting with the 70 years of captivity foretold by Jeremiah, somewhat veiled in the message from Gabriel as "seventy weeks" (9:24). The bottom line answer went something like this: there would be an on schedule short restoration {seven weeks and sixty-two weeks} of God's people to Jerusalem with the rebuilding of the temple long enough for the Messiah to come, but after God's people kill the Messiah there will only be a few years until permanent desolations will come on the city and the temple, indeed on all of those presently called God's people.

(2). In the prayer of Daniel 9:3-19 we see the history of God's people as a wicked and rebellious history.

First, Daniel prayed "to the LORD my God, and made confession (9:3). Notice the God that Daniel addresses: it is the "great and awesome God"; the God Who keeps His covenant and mercy only with those who love Him and keep His commandments.

Second in 9:4,5 Daniel lists some of the things "we the people" of God have done throughout our history **departed**: (a) we have sinned and committed iniquity; (b) we have done wickedly and rebelled; (c) we have departed from Your precepts and Your judgments; and (d) we have not heeded the prophets, the servants of God, that

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spoke in God's name to our kings, our princes, our fathers, and to all the people in the land.

Third Daniel contrasts the righteousness which belongs to God to the shame that belongs to the people of God. What is the shame of face to the people of God? Daniel identifies first the people of God as: (a) the men of Judah, (b) to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, (c) also the inhabitants of all Israel, this would include the northern kingdom, (d) includes those left in the land and those captive in other far away countries where God, the great maker of History, "has driven them".

Fourth Daniel echoes again in 9:7b how God's people did not act like God's people, God driving them out of the land because of "the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You."

Fifth in 9:8 since God's people "have sinned against God", their shame of face has come on their kings, princes, and fathers.

Sixth in 9:9 another contrast between the mercy and forgiveness of God and the rebellion of the people.

Seventh, another way in which God's people did not in their history act like the people of God--they did not obey in 9:10 the voice of God to walk {live} in His laws as given through His servants the Prophets.

Eighth, Daniel recalls the covenant made between God and man under the leadership of Moses and in front of God at Mount Sinai, a covenant that include a promise of blessings in the land if they obeyed and that included a curse with an oath if they did not obey. Daniel acknowledges in his prayer that the people of God, those called by the name of God, did not obey God's voice and transgressed the law.

Ninth in 9:12 Daniel acknowledges in his continued and fervent prayer that God had "confirmed" His words of covenant with curse by bringing a DI SASTER upon them.

**"And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done in Jerusalem."
(Daniel 9:12)**

This made history in disasters far beyond even Katrina. Never has a city been called by God's name and a people called by God's name had God destroy them as did Jerusalem. And in 9:13, Daniel references the record law of Moses {first five books of the Bible} of how this promised disaster would come on the people of God is the covenant with the stipulations of obedience was not obeyed.

Tenth in 9:13, Daniel acknowledges that "we the people" of God still have not made our prayer before our God, a prayer of confession of iniquity and a prayer to understand the truth of God.

God has in 9:14: (a) kept the disaster in mind, and (b) brought the disaster upon us, and (c) all the works like this which God has done are done in righteousness. Daniel of all Prophets, but rather typical of all prophets, saw God as the great maker of history. It was God and God alone who brought the Assyrians and the Babylonians upon God's people because of their sins; and though subsequently He had punished them through the loss of their kingdoms, the disaster and desolation still remained on Jerusalem and Israel.

4-7: Isaiah 56-66, The Message of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

Those three minor Prophets--Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, give the same picture of God's people back in the Promised Land, and religiously complacent as Isaiah 56-66, Isaiah 56-66 by prediction and those minor Prophets by observation. The description of God's people back in and restored in the Promised Land if only until a few years after the cutoff of the Messiah covers the history of 539--as you recall when Cyrus sent the exiles home--until 400, the end of the Bible history in Malachi and the beginning of the intrabiblical period.

1. A short brief on the history of 539-400.

After Cyrus made the formal decree of freedom and backing, Zerubbabel led, according to Ezra in 2:64-65, a group of 50,000 of God's people back to Judah and Jerusalem. Leaving businesses and homes in Babylon, those who could prove their Jewish lineage back to Judah, were encouraged by the hopes of "the promised land" and of how they could purge out those errors in the nation that had led to the Captivity in the first place, but once there the realities were perhaps harsher and dominating over the hopes: those descendants left behind did not welcome them, treating them with hostility and suspicion, work on the Temple was quickly abandoned as survival in the land dominated, and it took 20 more years for Haggai and Zechariah to motivate a continuation on the work. The second temple was completed in 516 B.C. {you recall that the first magnificent Temple was built by Solomon}. When a second wave of returnees came in 75 years with Ezra and Nehemiah, the civil and religious life in Judah was at a low; and with the new leadership, a revival of Jewish identity developed among God's people, which by the way were about to be assimilated by the culture around them. Judah was still a unit of the Persian Empire, called the Fifth Satrapy and the region beyond the Euphrates River. {today would be called **SyroPalestine**}, probably the capital city was Damascus.

2. Haggai with a message to God's people to reconsider priorities.

The Message of the Writing Prophets to God's people changes slightly back in the Glorious Land.

(1). Materialistic pride and greed can not take priority over the seeking first of God's priorities, priorities for the righteousness of God and His kingdom to use the words of Jesus.

“Now this is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much, but have harvest^{ed} little. You eat, but never have enough, You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it.” (Haggai 1:5,6)

(2). God withholds blessing and fertility from a selfish people who do not glorify Him.

“Therefore because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops. I called for a drought on the fields and the mountains, on the grain, the new wine, the oil and whatever the ground produces, on men and cattle, and on the labor of your hands.” (Haggai 1:10,11)

God through the Prophet Haggai says that He is in control of nature and the disasters of nature, and since God makes that claim we must both believe it and heed it. God controls the dew, the blessings on crops, God controls the droughts, God controls blessings on men and cattle and on the fruit of men's labors when they are His people. And all God wants is the glory and honor that is due to His name.

3. Zechariah with a message to God's people places the emphasis on another complete day of restoration of God's people, on the Day of the LORD. Announcement of the Day of the LORD.

“A day of the LORD is coming...” (Zechariah 14:1)

4. Malachi with The Message to God's people with an emphasis, also needed today, of how behavior is more determined by the surrounding people than by true reverence for God.

“Then you shall again discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him.” (Malachi 3:18)