

Isaiah 21



"The burden of the desert of the sea. As whirlwinds in the south pass through; so it cometh from the desert, from a terrible land." (Isaiah 21)

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ISAIAH CHAPTER 21

Isa. 21:1 - "The burden of the desert of the sea. As whirlwinds in the south pass through; so it cometh from the desert, from a terrible land."

The twenty-first chapter of Isaiah opens in a mysterious way, for it does not pinpoint what is involved but simply mentions trouble coming from a desert land. "The burden of the desert of the sea" is the theme of the subsequent admonition for the Christian at the end of the age. What is puzzling is that "desert" and "sea" do not seem to go together. The significance of the Hebrew is "the burden of the desert as *a sea*"; that is, the desert is likened to the sea. Many have compared the desert to a sea because of the ripples and undulations of the topography. In fact, fluent Arabic writers often describe the desert as an ocean and camels as ships in the desert. In the real desert, everything is rounded with the sand. There are no trees, and it is very difficult to find even a large rock that provides shade. In addition, there is no friction to block or shield one from the wind that arises in desert storms, which can be severe. For example, when Cambyses, the Persian general, went with 50,000 men to conquer a city in Egypt, not only did he and his soldiers never come back because of a sandstorm in the desert that buried them alive, but also no one knows where they are to this day.

The chapter begins with a vision of turmoil that is likened to a storm, to trouble, which purposely causes the reader to question, What is the meaning? Wars are sometimes given code names, and from a Scriptural standpoint, this chapter could be given the code name "Desert Storm." Verse 1, then, is the theme text for chapter 21.

"As whirlwinds in the south pass through; so it cometh from the desert, from a terrible land." The word "south" is synonymous with Negev, which is a particular desert in southern Israel. One portion of this desert is a howling wilderness because of the storms that arise.

Isa. 21:2 - "A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth. Go up, O Elam: besiege, O Media; all the sighing thereof have I made to cease."

The Prophet Isaiah stated that a "grievous vision" was declared to him. "The treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth." Then the account reads, "Go up, O Elam: besiege, O Media; all the sighing thereof have I made to cease." Verse 2 is so puzzling that no narrator has discussed it in any depth. Who is the "treacherous dealer"? Who is the "spoiler [that] spoileth"?

"Go up, O Elam: besiege, O Media" is a change of venue. This portion of verse 2 has some cognition, for it pertains to the overthrow of the Babylonian Empire in olden times by Darius the Mede and Cyrus the Persian. The point is that this prophecy in Isaiah is an *end-time prophecy*, as later clues will show. What once happened in the distant past is to

be repeated in the future, that is, in the end time, whenever that will come. We believe that, to a certain extent, we are in the end-time period based on events currently transpiring, plus other prophecies.

Right away a clue is given that the account is speaking about the origination of trouble from a desert land, and interestingly, sprinkled throughout this particular chapter, names are given. The first names are Elam and Media. Elam is an ancient term that eventually, for 1,200 years, became the monarchy of Persia (Gen. 10:22; 14:1,9). Finally Persia became Iran, so that the "Elam" of present-day geography is Iran. Media is a vague name that corresponds today to Afghanistan and Pakistan, which occupy a large area. These lands are occupied by Muslims.

This vision of Isaiah 21 is an end-time prophecy, and so is Psalm 83, but the two are not related, even though Psalm 83 is a prophecy about the Arab countries immediately surrounding Israel. These two prophecies do not conflict in any way, but they must be kept separate, for trying to integrate them will result in confusion. The question would be, In what way are some of the areas in Psalm 83 coincidental with those mentioned here in Isaiah 21? In presenting an end-time prophecy from a literal geographic perspective, Psalm 83 is talking about the lands that literally surround present-day Israel; that is, something will happen in the near future regarding that location and those people. Some of these same principals, or characters, are included in the prophecy of Isaiah 21, but they are to be considered completely differently and at a higher level. Both of these end-time prophecies -Psalm 83 and Isaiah 21-are future in fulfillment.

Of these two end-time prophecies, Isaiah 21 presents more of a *religious* standpoint. Of course the war of Psalm 83 is also, to a certain extent, a religious perspective in the sense that the lands are Arab. We made the distinction in a prior talk that an Arab is a Muslim, generally speaking, but a Muslim is not necessarily an Arab, examples of the latter being Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to the north.

The origin of some of the Muslims is the desert east of Israel. For instance, when Ishmael became an outcast from Abraham, he went on the east side of the Jordan River, and Keturah's children did likewise. Isaiah 21 is using Elam and Media from the perspective that the Muslim religion originated from there. Consider Muhammad, who was a caravan leader between these countries and Egypt, going back and forth. Today one who is born in any of these Muslim countries may live the majority of his life in another land, yet he is still of that Muslim origin. People can travel thousands of miles in one day by plane. Today, therefore, distance is not an inhibiting factor as it was back there when people traveled on foot, horse, camel, etc., and could go only a few miles in a day. During the war between Russia and Afghanistan, for instance, Muslims from this country and Europe went to Afghanistan to fight what they felt was a war for Allah.

The Isaiah 21 end-time prophecy supplies the names Elam and Media to give some idea of what is involved. One characteristic of those who live in lands east of the Jordan

River is that they are a "treacherous" people. Elam and Media deal *treacherously*. The Muslim religion teaches that the end justifies the means and that lying, brutality, violence, and murder are permissible when done for Allah's benefit and praise. In fact, the teaching is that one *is rewarded* for such acts. Muhammad lost a war, but intending to win the next time, he negotiated a treaty in which he lied as to his intentions. Then, at a propitious moment, he invaded under the guise of a friend. As a result, the enemy was not prepared, and Muhammad successfully captured Medina. This is treachery -talking with a forked tongue, talking out of two sides of the mouth.

Now we can see that the earlier part of verse 2, "The treacherous dealer dealth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth," represents the characteristic of the peoples who are involved in the equation of this prophecy. This characteristic is seen today. A graphic example is that Muslim suicide bombers often wear uniforms resembling Israeli soldiers. Thus disguised in this deceitful, surreptitious fashion, they have the motive of spoiling and destroying. These people, then, believe that the end justifies the means if the result is the subjugation and the occupation of others so that the dominion of their religion might become worldwide. This tendency or attitude is similar to that of the Roman Catholic religion during the Dark Ages, although the manner was not as forcible as what we see today.

The Prophet Isaiah did not tell the details of this vision. As the chapter is pursued, the reader is never satisfied with clarifying details of the exact manner in which the deception will occur. That information was purposely omitted because the Scriptures indicate that in the end time of this age, all will be deceived except the very elect (Matt. 24:24). Protestants say that a mysterious man of sin will occupy the stage and lead the peoples and that he will be regarded as a savior. Although there is some truth in that thought, much more is involved.

Isa. 21:3 - "Therefore are my loins filled with pain: pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth: I was bowed down at the hearing of it; I was dismayed at the seeing of it."

Isa. 21:4 - "My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me: the night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me."

As a result of the vision Isaiah saw, his loins were filled with pain; that is, he bent over with grief, holding his stomach like a woman in labor. "Pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth: I was bowed down at the hearing of it; I was dismayed at the seeing of it." Isaiah was given a graphic representation of the end-time period. What he saw and heard affected him very dramatically, but he did not provide information as to exactly what disturbed him so much. He did tell about other things he saw that have a bearing on the matter, but they do not totally clear up the situation. When Isaiah went to bed fatigued, instead of having rest and peace and the pleasure of a decent night's sleep, he ended up having a vision that was like a nightmare. The vision

was so troublesome that it was hard to put into words. The hearing and the seeing of the vision were just unbelievable. Even his heart "panted" (skipped a beat). The vision was so troubling that it physically distressed him. "I was dismayed at the seeing of it.... the night of [what I thought would be] my pleasure ... [was] turned into fear [a nightmare]." Then the vision stopped - period.

At first, Isaiah was bowed over with pain that was like the travail of a woman, but he became resigned to the spiritual vision because he saw that it was the Lord's intent. As a prophet, he was being told what would happen sometime in the future, and he had to utter it as a prophecy.

Isa. 21:5 - "Prepare the table, watch in the watchtower, eat, drink: arise, ye princes, and anoint the shield."

Verse 5 is an abrupt change. Whatever Isaiah saw, he felt that something had to be done as a safety measure against what would occur. In view of this dreadful foreboding that would arise from the desert and come upon the land, the "princes" have to be ready. As the Lord said with regard to end-time experiences, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:41).

The phrase "watch in the watchtower" belongs in another verse. In the Hebrew versions, the wording is "spread the rugs." In preparing to eat outdoors in ancient times, people spread rugs on the ground as a table. Then they sat down and ate their repast, even a full meal. Thus Isaiah admonished, "Prepare the table, spread the rugs, eat, drink [to acquire information, substance, and nutriment to offset the experience that is about to occur]."

Next Isaiah said, "Arise, ye princes, and anoint the shield." The "princes" represent the Church in the flesh, namely, Christians who are being informed of this experience to occur in the end time. The hope of the consecrated is to be kings and priests, but in the present time, they are princes, that is, heirs to the throne but not on the throne yet. The hymn "Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war" indicates a fight of faith, a fight against the onslaughts of the Adversary, a fight about the weaknesses of the flesh, and a fight in other circumstances that Christians have to endure to prove faithful to their covenant to be followers of Jesus. Jesus told his disciples to take up their cross and follow him (Matt. 16:24). In the present life, Christians have to become experienced and educated for the reward of a future work. When this development is accomplished, those who are "faithful unto death" will receive a "crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).

Thus the princes are being admonished to "prepare the table" and "eat" and "drink" from God's Word with regard to the subject matter of Isaiah 21. The prophecy becomes more valuable and pertinent now because we are living in the end time. Stated another way, Christians who are living today should be proportionately interested in what the Bible predicts about the end time. Most Christians, being emotional by nature, prefer

character-building lessons. Such lessons are important, but so is prophecy, for it alerts Christians to the responsibilities of the time in which they exist.

The shield that is anointed is the shield of *faith*. Back in actual wars, when soldiers were preparing to fight an enemy, the custom was to pour olive oil on the shield and then to rub the oil all over the shield with the hands. By this means, not only was there a metallic shield to deflect any spear, dart, or arrow, but also enemy instruments tended to slip off the shield. Of course Christians must put on the shield of faith as a buckler, and the anointing of God's Holy Spirit signifies that the Lord's people are being informed how to react faithfully to experiences that come suddenly upon them.

Isa. 21:6 - "For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he seeth."

"For thus hath the Lord said unto me [that is, to Isaiah], Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he seeth." In other words, instruction was to be given to those with a hearing ear. The "watchman" is a special individual in the end time of the Gospel Age who would arise to prepare the Lord's people for what would yet come to pass -events that, as far as others are concerned, would be thoroughly unexpected. He would dutifully tell what he saw developing in the distance. Others would be unprepared for what is to occur, but God's people are instructed under those circumstances.

Sometime back, the Lord raised up the Pastor, who established an organization that subsequently, after his death, became contaminated by not following through with the principles of the divine plan for the restitution of mankind in the next age and by discarding some of the important teachings of the message he brought forth. The Pastor was not an apostle, but he was a servant whom God raised up. Luther, likewise, was an "angel" to the Church, as were Wycliffe and even Arius, who was considered the arch-heretic of his day by orthodoxy. Arius had a profound knowledge of the Old Testament and was faithful to it.

Isa. 21:7 - "And he saw a chariot with a couple of horsemen,* a chariot of asses, and a chariot of camels; and he hearkened diligently with much heed:"

According to the Hebrew, the corrected translation of verse 7 should read as follows: "And he [the watchman] saw a rider [singular-from the Hebrew *raw-kab*, meaning *to ride on an animal*], a pair of horsemen' [plural -the implication being *a paired cavalcade* in double-file formation], a rider [singular] on an ass [singular], and a rider [singular] on a camel [singular]; and he [the watchman]' hearkened *diligently* with *much heed*."

The account now tells us about the watchman. What the watchman saw and what Isaiah previously saw are two different things because God told Isaiah to listen to what the watchman would declare. Accordingly, the Lord's people recognize that this watchman has dispensational truth.

The watchman "saw a chariot with a couple of horsemen, a chariot of asses, and a chariot of camels; and ...

* "Horsemen" is the Hebrew parashim (plural); the primary root means "to separate" -- in *this case*, signifying the parted legs of a rider on an animal that is not necessarily a horse, as proven by the clause that follows, namely, "on an ass ... on a camel."

...he hearkened diligently with much heed." The Hebrew word translated "chariot" in the twenty-first chapter of Isaiah should be rendered differently in every instance. One of the definitions in *Strong's Concordance*, No. 7393, shows that the *same* Hebrew root word can have four different meanings depending upon pronunciation, which is based on vowels. None of the ancient Hebrew manuscripts contained vowels. Therefore, vowels were added about AD 1000. At that time the Masoretes, a segment of Jewry, inserted vowels which they thought would assist the reader in understanding. However, the word each time should be "rider" (*rakab*), not "chariot" (*rekeb*). The *rider* is being discussed, even though the Hebrew word can be rendered "chariot" according to context, and it is so used 114 times in the Old Testament. Sprinkled throughout the Scriptures-which the concordances do not pick up readily unless the English equivalent of those phrases is read-are much fewer definitions along the lines of a rider.

What about the horsemen? The watchman saw a cavalry, a cavalcade, a procession, coming in the distance. As they approached him, he noticed that, collectively speaking, there were pairs of riders. They were paired as partners-two people abreast-a rider on a camel and a rider on an ass. The pairs were one behind the other, approaching the watchman, and in front of the cavalcade was the most important man. However, the watchman in the vision was so surprised-dumbfounded, in fact-to see the cavalcade approaching that at first, he did not speak about the man in front.

To repeat, the watchman saw a cavalcade of riders traveling in pairs -- a rider on a camel and a rider on an ass. It was *most unusual* (and puzzling) to see the two side by side. Incidentally, the two animals could not have been pulling one chariot because the Law forbids the yoking together of an ox and a donkey with their unequal tread, and the same principle would apply to a camel and an ass. Therefore, the two animals had to be *separate*: a rider on a camel and a rider on an ass.

As the animals approached, the watchman bowed down with pain. He bowed his head, not believing what he was seeing, and he watched intently, *very intently*.

Isa. 21:8 - "And he cried, A lion: My lord, I stand continually upon the watchtower in the daytime, and I am set in my ward whole nights:"

The watchman cried *as a lion* (see King James margin and some of the other

versions). In other words, the watchman did not see a lion on the watchtower but cried as a lion. One proof is that when the Hebrew is read astutely, if the thought is "a lion," the lion would have to be on the tower, not on the ground, which would be a complete anomaly. No, the watchman cried as a lion, which *roars*. In other words, the watchman spoke *forcibly, positively, and instructively* because that was his duty. A watchman is supposed to cry out and warn those who are down below of the approaching enemy, but in this case, he saw not an enemy but a good cavalcade approaching.

The watchman cried in effect, "My lord [that is, Isaiah the prophet, who had set the watchman on the tower], I stand on my tower continually; I am stationed at my post whole nights-and look! Look! Here comes a rider, a man, a pair, *twins* on horses!" Now the watchman was seeing that at the forefront not only was another individual involved, but the individual himself was paired and riding a horse. In the vision, then, were riders on camels, riders on asses, and riders on two horses, and the riders had distinctive features or characteristics. One individual was leading this cavalcade -one man on a horse and next to him, side by side, a replication of the same individual likewise on a separate horse. What is indicated by the riders and the animals? The riders on the two horses were *twins*. They looked alike -they were meant to look alike -but they have different meanings, as will be discussed.

The easiest animal to identify is the camel. When Rebekah (representing the Church) went to meet Isaac (Jesus) in the field, the one she was to marry, she left a foreign land and came with Eliezer, traveling on a camel (Gen. 24:61-64). Basically, throughout most of the Gospel Age, the Church has been figuratively riding on a camel, an animal that is known to be a carrier of great quantities of water. During much of the long period of the Gospel Age, the only way to get the truth, the water of the Word, was through the Catholic or the Protestant churches because translations of the Bible were in their hands. To know about God and the Old and New Testaments, one had to rely on the churches, which were given custodianship of the Scriptures to supposedly benefit the people. Therefore, even though Christians were in the nominal system, which professed Christianity, they were able to make their calling and election sure on the basis of their understanding because of their desire and hunger for God's Word; that is, they survived and made their calling and election sure, even though they had to go to churches for the Bible and have someone read it to them. Not until about AD 1500 were printed Bibles available, and even then, they were expensive, so people who had the means sometimes shared their Bibles with others.

The type of Rebekah continues. Her stepping off the camel and going down on the ground to meet Isaac in the field at eventide represents the time period of the Harvest, the close of the Gospel Age, when Bibles are readily available. No longer do the people have to attend the churches to get the Scriptures. Rebekah's going to meet Isaac in the field is related to Jesus' statement "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself" (John 14:3). Even though Jesus has been with the Christian all down the Gospel Age, he comes personally at the end of the age to meet his Bride.

How startling that in the cavalcade following the leader, the *same* rider was on both animals -the person on the camel was also on the ass! With the twins, the paired riders, the one on the camel represents the Christian who is being developed in the present life. However, to ride on an ass signifies a position of *esteem and authority*, for in Old Testament times, did not the judges go through Israel riding on asses, and usually white asses? Therefore, when the rider is on the ass, he is a judge, a king, beyond the veil. Stated another way, the fact that the same rider was on both an ass and a camel signifies that the Church has gone home.

The ass is a remarkable animal -- it is a gentle, delicate, and clean-cut creature that can bear great weight. At his First Advent, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a colt, the foal of an ass (Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:5). Here, in the twenty-first chapter of Isaiah, the rider on the ass represents the Christian who overcame and was faithful. In other words, a Christian who dies during the Gospel Age, being faithful unto death, is the *same* individual when changed to spirit nature. Likewise, Jesus is the *same* individual as during his earthly ministry but now has a different nature or appearance. He was a man at his First Advent, and then he was changed back into a spirit being, but he is the same individual, the same character, as he stated after his resurrection (Luke 24:38,39). Thus this is a pairing of *twins* because the rider on the ass represents the *same* individual resurrected. Jesus died for sin and was in the grave until the third day, when he was raised. Although he appeared as a man after his resurrection, he was actually like an angel. Angels can appear as men, but they are not human beings; they do not possess the human nature but are spirit beings who assume the appearance of a human being.

Isa. 21:9 - "And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground."

A corrected translation of the first part of verse 9, based on the Hebrew, is as follows: "And, behold, here cometh *a rider, a man, a pair* of horsemen [that is, two men on horseback]." During Jesus' earthly ministry, he was pictured as riding on an ass, but in the end-time period, or Harvest, of the Gospel Age, both *before* and *after* Babylon's fall, the Master is represented as a rider on both horses. The first horse, signifying rulership over his saints, is followed by the second horse, which signifies kingship over the world.

After repentance, we gave our heart to Jesus and made a covenant of consecration. At that time, Jesus became our Lord and Savior-but underneath the Father, who begot us with the Holy Spirit. The Father called us out of darkness into light, but He used Jesus as the informant, as the spokesperson, to communicate with us. Jesus became our Advocate from then on.

During the Gospel Age prior to 1878, there were no riders of the Church on asses, for all were on camels and they died in that situation. In the vision here in Isaiah, there are three types of animals -a horse, a camel, and an ass-but only the man in front has the

horse, showing he is the leader. And he is the one who tells us something: "And he [the man on the horse, who was accompanied by a twin resemblance of himself riding alongside on another horse] answered and said [to the man in the watchtower up above], Babylon is [has] fallen, is [has] fallen; and all the graven images [statues] of her gods he hath broken [smashed] unto the ground." *Shabar*, the Hebrew word for "broken," means shattered, that is, shattered to the ground. This shattering is comparable to the smiting of the image in the second chapter of Daniel.

Verse 9 is saying, in effect, that in this vision, the watchman realized that Babylon had fallen-not just the fall from favor, the being spewed out of Jesus' mouth, but the smashing of the images to the ground -- and the Church will be complete beyond the veil before this event takes place because the Church will do the smashing. One of the promises to the Church shows their participation in this act: "He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: ... as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father" (Rev. 2:26,27). What Jesus promised to one period of the Church, he promised to all periods of the Church. Therefore, when the smashing takes place, the Little Flock will be with the Master.

Although the Pastor did not explain this vision in Isaiah as now being presented, he explained it in another way by saying the actual fall of Babylon will be proof that the door is closed, that the Church class have made their calling and election sure. Over and over he emphasized that thought, using different principles as illustrations. Revelation 19:11,13,14 supports the thought about the fall of Babylon. The one on the white horse with *blood* on his garments is Jesus *coming back* from the destruction of Babylon. Those following him-a whole cavalcade on white horses -picture the Church, having made their calling and election sure and thus wearing actual robes of righteousness. In the present life, Christ's robe of righteousness is loaned to the Christian to cover sins, but those who are faithful unto death will receive an actual purity of spirit nature in their resurrection change.

Isa. 21:10 - "O my threshing, and the corn of my floor: that which I have heard of the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you."

"O my threshing [Hebrew *medushsh*, that is, that which is trodden down or threshed], and the corn of my [threshing] floor." Interestingly, the word "corn" is the Hebrew word *ben*, which means "son." In this case, however, "corn" refers to the produce or grain. (Incidentally, although the Lord's people, the sons of God, are represented by the "corn," as explained in *The Keys of Revelation*, page 645, the standpoint presently being discussed emphasizes the *bruising* of the grain.)

Verse 10 is saying, "O my threshing, and the grain of my threshing floor; that which I have heard of Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, I have told you." The Prophet Isaiah was speaking in verse 10, but he was speaking as the spokesperson *of God* because we are not Isaiah's threshing. Similarly, we are not the threshing of the Pastor or of any other individual, but we are *Jehovah's* threshing, the corn of *His* threshing floor. God is the

One who is disciplining us. As faithful Christians, we are going through a threshing experience. Thank God, we have many days of sunshine and much refreshment, but we also receive disappointments, persecutions, misunderstandings, and all kinds of experiences. Stated another way, we have both the north wind of chilling experiences and, at other times, the south wind of warmth and comfort and a feeling of nearness to the Lord and appreciation and joy (Song 4:16). Christians have mixed experiences in the present life.

And so the prophet, in saying "O my threshing," was speaking as though he were Jehovah because he was the medium or conduit for informing the one on the watchtower, who is of benefit to the Lord's people as an instructor. As sheep, the Lord's people need leadership; they need a Shepherd to guide them. And they need *earthly* instructors too. The Church is like a family, and there is recognition of how the Lord uses the various members.

Verse 10 indicates that part of this great trouble the watchman saw is the demise of the true Church. The last members, whoever they are, will be invisibly raptured, translated, like Elijah, who was taken up into heaven. Just as Elijah pictures the feet members, a *class* and not an individual, so the feet members will go as a group, lest a last individual detract from Jesus, the Head.

The last members will experience persecution in the near future, and somehow this persecution is identified with the Muslim peoples of the East. There will be some connection between the two. Instead of capital and labor, as stated in the *Fourth Volume*, the Muslim faith will be the enemy. Accordingly, the Catholic and Protestant churches and the governments-the Western powers will unite and coalesce to fight against the common enemy because their very existence will be called into question. The Muslim religion has been teaching day after day that their intention is to govern the world, and they will not compromise. Their goal is much like that of the Catholic Church during the Gospel Age, which wanted the power to make the entire world Catholic.

"That which I have heard of the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you." The Pastor was very faithful with the light he was given. He was not an apostle -- his writings are not to be studied like the Bible-but he was a prominent individual whom God raised up to give *dispensational* truth.

With regard to the theme of verses 1-10, all of the activity arises from the desert, but what is the "desert"? The desert represents a class of people who are on the fringe of orthodoxy or civilization. The Western world has greatly benefited from the Bible through education, the comforts of life, goods, and so forth. In contrast, the other parts of the world are the have-nots, who exist in a desert-like condition. They are in want and poverty; many are starving to death. Perhaps a billion people are on the fringe of society, and they are getting soured. Therefore, the ones who will be instrumental in invading the Christian world, that is, Europe, will be of the Muslim religion.

The Pastor taught that Russia would do the invading and used Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39, among other Scriptures, to show that Russia would enter Europe. The USSR, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, consisted of a number of republics. About a decade ago, however, the status of the Soviet Union changed, and those republics are now more or less independent of Moscow as an authoritative or executive branch of the government. But it is the *same* power. The Scriptures say that the "chief prince" (Hebrew *rosh*) will come down from the north, as well as the forces that are allied with *rosh*, who will be mostly Muslim (Ezek. 38:2). And when the enemy forces go into Europe, they will likewise be mostly Muslim.

Incidentally, Muhammad had prophecies, and according to the Islam religion, the Muslims will conquer the world. Today many Muslims who give lectures in mosques inform the people along this line. Their reasoning is as follows: "We invaded Europe two times, and the second time we were almost successful. When we enter the third time [which is now being contemplated], we will be successful." Thus the Muslims have their own line of thinking. Not only are they being instructed along this line, but also they will be successful temporarily that is, until God steps in for His people Israel and delivers them and the world of mankind. Then Jesus, as the Messiah, will establish the Kingdom of peace and rest, which has been the "desire of all nations" (Hag. 2:7).

Isa. 21:11 - "The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?"

Isa. 21:12 - "The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come."

In verses 11 and 12, the watchman is seen as the Pastor. "Watchman, what of the night? ... The morning cometh, and also ... [this] night." The next words are very important: "If ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come." The watchman was saying in effect, "If you want to know a little more, you must ask, pray, and hunger for that information. Then return, come back, and I will answer your question." In other words, *effort is* required to understand prophecy. Unfortunately, prophecy is not that well understood or even that much desired by many of the Lord's truly consecrated children, for they do not have the necessary interest and hunger -- yet the Apostle Paul said, "Despise not [do not disregard] prophesyings" (1 Thess. 5:20). Many are interested in the "morning," the Kingdom. They can talk for hours on the wonders of the Kingdom, but they do not inquire about the "night," the trouble. However, there is a value to keeping an eye on the signs of the time and end-time prophecies, for to be forewarned is to be forearmed. With some, the *Second Volume* is in disrepute because the prophecies did not happen as stated. In addition, other chronologies are coming forth, but they can easily be proven wrong.

The prophecy of Isaiah 21 starts with a desert scene and then enumerates various peoples. The "burden of Dumah" is mentioned in verse 11, and the question would be, Who is Dumah? Scripturally, the term is related to Esau and Edom, hence a people on the

east side of the river Jordan. In prophecy, "Edom" has other symbolic representation that pertains to the name and has nothing to do with the literal land. For example, Esau's selling his birthright is a picture of both natural and spiritual Israel's selling their birthrights. Had the Jewish nation been obedient, they would have received wonderful spiritual rewards, and in the Christian age, the nominal Church sacrificed principles of truth and judgment for the sake of numbers, influence, and power.

"The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" As another picture of Edom, "Seir" is related to Esau.

Isaiah 21 is broken up into three parts: (1) the prophecy of Elam and Media, (2) the burden of Dumah, and (3) the burden of Arabia. All three parts have something to do with the Muslim nations on the east side of the Jordan River that inhabit a tremendous wasteland. For example, a map of Saudi Arabia shows mostly barren desert land with very few roads and cities, yet people and their flocks live on this barren land.

Isa. 21:13 - "The burden upon Arabia. In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge, O ye travelling companies of Dedanim."

Now the "burden upon Arabia" is introduced. How interesting that Saudi Arabia **exists** today! In the Bible, "Arabia" is a large segment of land with rather indistinct boundaries. The entire water, or shoreline, of Saudi Arabia is currently occupied by other peoples: Kuwait, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar. Thus Saudi Arabia's outlet to the **sea** is through **these** other small countries. The point is that the "Arabia" of verse 13 is referring to the large peninsula of Saudi Arabia plus **these** other countries.

Consider again the instruction of **verse 5** to "prepare the table, spread the rugs, eat, drink." The thought is that while Christians are obediently eating and drinking, as the Lord's Word teaches, someone is on guard to alert them as to when the enemy is coming.

Verse 5 also gives the instruction to "anoint the shield" with olive oil, that is, with the Holy Spirit. Following the custom in warfare in the past, the Christian is to wipe his shield with the oil, or grease, of the Holy Spirit so that when he goes into battle to fight the good fight of faith, not only will any spear from the Adversary be readily deflected, but it will not penetrate. In other words, a forcefully thrown javelin can go through thick armor, but grease is a wonderful aid in deflecting the weapon. And so God's Holy Spirit helps the Christian to understand certain situations.

The inhabitants of Arabia are "travelling companies of Dedanim [the plural form of Dedan]"; that is, they travel in caravans, bringing incense, spices, and other fruits of the desert to the city to trade. Another reason for their traveling in caravans is for protection against robbers and inherent dangers - treachery - for the custom is to steal not only from foreigners but also from their own people. Paul told Christians back there to carry a sword, not because they were to use it but because they were to appear prepared. They were to be wise as serpents yet harmless as doves. The Christian perspective was that of a

giant who was forbidding to look at because of his size but was gentle as a lamb.

Isaiah spoke of a "forest in Arabia." The trees in the desert are actually scraggly bushes. Even the acacia tree is extremely crooked, but it is precious for the water that is underneath its deep roots. For that reason, those traveling in caravans headed for the areas where they saw acacia **trees**.

Isa. 21:14 - "The inhabitants of the land of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty, they prevented with their bread him that fled."

Isa. 21:15 - "For they fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war."

One characteristic of the Arab people is that when a foreigner sees them eating bread and goes over and sits down with them, the whole atmosphere changes. The Arab culture is to be hospitable to an enemy who risks his life by voluntarily coming into their midst and sitting down. Accordingly, the inhabitants of the land of Tema are cultured to be hospitable to those who seek refuge and help.

Isa. 21:16 - "For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Within a year, according to the years of an hireling, and all the glory of Kedar shall fail:"

Isa. 21:17 - "And the residue of the number of archers, the mighty men of the children of Kedar, shall be diminished: for the LORD God of Israel hath spoken it."

"Kedar" refers to people who dwelled in tents and were very skillful archers in warfare. These people were also tall and strong in stature. Tema, Dedan, Arabia, and Kedar all refer to Saudi Arabia proper, as opposed to the other provinces that line the coast.

The Pastor felt that the real Time of Trouble, the anarchy, would be of one year's duration. The trouble the world is experiencing today is nothing compared to the trouble that is coming. The trial of the last times will affect everyone, consecrated and unconsecrated. All of earth's inhabitants will have problems including food, stolen goods, and being killed. The Scriptures furnish many details about the real end time, which is yet future, but the details are disclosed in other pictures that are usually not explained. For instance, details are given about how Papacy will be destroyed. The Bible is filled with information. The *Volumes* should be used as a guide, but man should live *by every word* in the Bible (Matt. 4:4). If the Christian wants to please God, then according to ability and opportunity, he should familiarize himself with Scripture.

A Little While

"A little while"; now He has come;
The hour draws on apace
The blessed hour, the glorious morn,
When we shall see His face.
How light our trials then will seem!
How short our pilgrim way!
The life of earth a fitful dream,
Dispelled by dawning day!

"A little while"; with patience, Lord,
I fain would ask, "How long?"
For how can I, with such a hope
Of glory and of home,
With such a joy awaiting me,
Not wish the hour were come?
How can I keep the longing back,
And how suppress the groan?

Yet peace, my heart! and hush, my tongue!
Be calm my troubled breast!
Each passing hour prepares thee more
For everlasting rest.
Thou knowest well, the time thy God
Appoints for thee is best.
The morning star already shines;
The glow is in the east.

Then, O Lord Jesus, quickly show
Thy glory and Thy light,
And take God's longing children home,
And end earth's weary night.