

THE GREAT TRIBULATION PROPHESED

BIBLE TEXT : Isaiah 24:1-23; 26:19-21; 34:1-8

LESSON 351 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word" (Psalm 119:114).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Isaiah 24:1-23

¹ Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.

² And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him.

³ The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the LORD hath spoken this word.

⁴ The earth mourneth *and* fadeth away, the world languisheth *and* fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish.

⁵ The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.

⁶ Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.

⁷ The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth, all the merryhearted do sigh.

⁸ The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth.

⁹ They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it.

¹⁰ The city of confusion is broken down: every house is shut up, that no man may come in.

¹¹ *There is* a crying for wine in the streets; all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone.

¹² In the city is left desolation, and the gate is smitten with destruction.

¹³ When thus it shall be in the midst

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Words of God

Isaiah was a prophet. He spoke the words of the Lord to the Children of Israel, and his words are recorded in the Bible for the good of all mankind. God inspired Isaiah to foretell events, which would take place, and some of Isaiah's prophecies have already come to pass. Isaiah foretold the birth of the Saviour. He said: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given" (Isaiah 9:6). This was fulfilled when Jesus was born. Isaiah also said: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). These words referred to the crucifixion of Jesus, which took place many years later.

To Be Fulfilled

Some of Isaiah's prophecies have not yet been fulfilled. The Great Tribulation was foretold by Isaiah and by other prophets. It has not yet taken place but could come upon the earth and upon the people of the earth very soon.

A tribulation is a condition or a time of suffering and distress. The Great Tribulation will be so severe that no person could survive if those days were not shortened (**Matthew 24:22** ²² *And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.*). Isaiah said that there will be "few men left." That tribulation will be greater than any other time of suffering, "such as was not since the beginning of the world . . . nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:21). The Great Tribulation will affect all people who are on the earth. No partiality will be shown. All will suffer — the workers and their bosses, the people and their false ministers, those who sell and those who buy, the rich and the poor.

The Earth Shaken

How will the Great Tribulation affect the earth and its inhabitants? The land itself will be laid waste and "utterly spoiled." The earth will be in a condition of ruin, neglect, and destruction. There will be great earthquakes. Isaiah said: "The foundations of the earth do shake. . . . the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage."

"The LORD . . . turneth it upside down." Every mountain and island will be "moved out of their places" (Revelation 6:14) and will disappear (**Revelation 16:20** ²⁰ *And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.*). The stars will fall; the moon will become "as blood"; the sun will become "black as sackcloth of hair" (Revelation 6:12, 13). Isaiah said: "The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away."

Forsaken

The people and the land will be comfortless and forsaken. They will become weak and powerless. The proud will be humbled. "Every house is shut up, that no man may come in." No joy or happiness can be found. There will be no pleasure in music, nothing to cheer the heart. "All joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone." There will be no escape for the people on earth. Those who flee from one terror will be victims of another. "He who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he

of the land among the people, *there shall be* as the shaking of an olive tree, *and* as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done.

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

¹⁵ Wherefore glorify ye the LORD in the fires, *even* the name of the LORD God of Israel in the isles of the sea.

¹⁶ From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, *even* glory to the righteous. But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.

¹⁷ Fear, and the pit, and the snare, *are* upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth.

¹⁸ And it shall come to pass, *that* he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake.

¹⁹ The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly.

²⁰ The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.

²¹ And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones *that are* on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.

²² And they shall be gathered together, *as* prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited.

²³ Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.

Isaiah 26:19-21

¹⁹ Thy dead *men* shall live, *together* with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust:

that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare" (Isaiah 24:18).

The Great Tribulation will be a time of disasters -- not one, but many. John the Beloved was given a glimpse of this Great Tribulation about which Isaiah wrote. John saw the disasters, one after another, as horsemen riding on the earth. War, famine, death, pestilence, and catastrophe will move upon the earth, as recorded in Revelation 6. In this manner the wicked shall be punished. "They shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison" (Isaiah 24:22).

Punishment

Why is all this tribulation coming upon the earth? Isaiah gave the cause. He said: "The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate." The Children of Israel were told that they would receive a blessing if they obeyed God. If they disobeyed God and His words, there would be a curse on them. Moses said, "Set your hearts unto all the words . . . because it is your life" (Deuteronomy 32:46, 47).

Through the words of the prophets, we today are told what will come to pass if we disobey God, if we change His laws, if we break His covenant. Today many people defy God and His laws; they worship money; they live boldly in wickedness. But in the day of God's wrath, they will cast their idols of silver and gold to the moles and to the bats (**Isaiah 2:20** ²⁰ In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made *each one* for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats;); they will try to hide in dens and in rocks; they will call on the rocks and the mountains to fall on them to hide them from the judgment of God (**Revelation 6:15-16** ¹⁵ And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; ¹⁶ And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb;).

There will be no escape when the anger of the Lord is turned loose upon the nations (**Isaiah 34:2** ² For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and *his* fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter.). Many will die, "for it is the day of the LORD's vengeance" (Isaiah 34:8). The Lord will punish the people of the earth because of their iniquity and wickedness (**Isaiah 26:21** ²¹ For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain;).

A Hiding Place

Is there no hiding place from the terrible things, which Isaiah said would come upon the earth? Isaiah wrote the words of the Lord: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast" (Isaiah 26:20). Yes, there is a hiding place for God's people. Before the Great Tribulation, Christ is coming back to take His people out of this world to be with Him. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thessalonians 4:16, 17).

for thy dew *is as* the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

²⁰ Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

²¹ For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.

Isaiah 34:1-8

¹ Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it.

² For the indignation of the LORD *is* upon all nations, and *his* fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter.

³ Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcases, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood.

⁴ And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling *fig* from the fig tree.

⁵ For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment.

⁶ The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, *and* with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.

⁷ And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls; and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness.

⁸ For *it is* the day of the LORD'S vengeance, *and* the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion.

Prepared

This hiding place with Christ is for His people only. Our concern should be that we belong to Jesus and that we are prepared to meet Him. The Bible teaches that we must walk in all the light that God gives us in order to be full overcomers, prepared to meet Jesus. We who have had the light have learned from the Bible that we must have our sins forgiven, live a sanctified life, and be filled with the Holy Ghost, in order to be ready for Jesus' coming.

One can have his sins forgiven by praying and asking God for forgiveness. (**Proverbs 28:13** ¹³ He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh *them* shall have mercy. **1 John 1:9** ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

) After a person is saved, he should be sanctified. By praying and consecrating his life to God, one will receive sanctification, an experience which will take out the root of sin and enable him to live a holy life. "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification" (I Thessalonians 4:3). For a person to live holy is not only the will of God but it is a requirement, because the Bible says, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14).

There is another experience that we should have in order to walk in the light that has been given to us, and to be ready for Jesus' coming. That is the baptism of the Holy Ghost which Jesus promised to His disciples (Acts 1:5, and which is promised to "as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39). The baptism of the Holy Ghost gives one power for service and power to witness for the Lord. Do you have these experiences? Are you ready for Jesus' coming? If the trumpet of God sounded this very hour, would you meet Him in the air?

Isaiah told not only of the Great Tribulation but also told of a hiding place for the followers of the Lord. The Psalmist, too, mentioned a refuge. He said, "The God of Jacob is our refuge" (Psalm 46:11). David said: "One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me" (Psalm 27:4, 5).

We need not be overcome by fear. We can be overcomers by faith. Let us not be terrified by the words of Isaiah, but rather let us be prepared, working, watching, and waiting for the coming of the Lord, and thus escape the Great Tribulation which is coming upon the earth.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the work of a prophet?
2. What prophecies of Isaiah have already come to pass?
3. What is tribulation?
4. Why is the Great Tribulation coming?
5. Where will it take place?
6. How will the people be affected by it?
7. What will happen to the sun, moon, and stars?
8. How will the righteous escape the Tribulation?
9. What must one do to prepare for the Lord's coming?
10. How do we know that there will be a Tribulation?