

touches on its unfaithfulness, and surveys the future history of the nation that was falling so far short of His desire.

Verse 3 tells how God has protected Israel and preserved it from harm. In verse 4 He speaks of His readiness to defend it forcibly by destroying external adversaries, pictured as briars and thorns, that would seek to destroy it. In verse 5 he pleads with His people to come to Him for their refuge that He would gladly give them if they would be true to Him. In verse 6 He promises that in days to come Israel will yet bud and bloom and fill all the world with fruit.

Succeeding verses describe the efforts that will be made to destroy Israel by warfare and exile, but declare that such efforts will not succeed. Even Hitler's terrible persecution failed to destroy Israel; today it is stronger than when this powerful destroyer began his attacks. Although at present the olive tree is to a large extent made up of branches that were grafted in, God is still interested in His ancient people and has promised eventually to graft them in again (Rom. 11:24-26).

Verse 9 predicts the end of Israelite idolatry. Idolatry was conspicuous among the sins that led to the exile. Such pre-exilic prophets as Hosea, Isaiah, and Ezekiel (who prophesied in Babylonia during the years just before the conquest of the southern kingdom) devoted much time to assailing idolatry. Yet since the return from Babylon, Israel has been almost entirely free from this particular sin.

Verse 10 describes the long period of desolation that would come to the land of Israel for the sin of its people. Verse 11 shows the cause of this desolation and its result in centuries of misery. Yet verses 12 and 13 promise an eventual regathering of the scattered nation, a regathering which, it is promised, will eventually lead to their worshipping the Lord on the holy mountain in Jerusalem.

Thus the Isaiah Apocalypse has surveyed many aspects of God's plan for the ages. It has constantly stressed that the power is all of God and that it can be received only through faith and trust in Him alone. God declared that He would never abandon the people to whom He made such great promises, but clearly indicated the outgoing of His grace to all peoples and all nations and showed that in the end His