

coming one described in Isaiah 4:2, who is both the Son of God ("branch of the Lord"), and the perfect man ("fruit of the earth"). In chapter 4 the next verses described how He would protect His people from storm and rain. In the period described the dangers represented by storm and rain would still be present but His people would find protection and joy in Him.

Our present passage similarly declares that a time of depopulation is coming. Verses 13-14 vividly portray the desolation of the exile. The references to the coming up of thorns and briars and to the land being "a joy of wild asses" and "a pasture of flocks" remind us of the description of coming depopulation and exile in Isaiah 7:21-25. In verse 14 the Hebrew phrase translated "forever" does not necessarily mean "for eternity," but may mean "for an indefinitely long period in the future." Yet it hardly seems possible that a period so described can be comprehended simply in the length of the exile. The desolation seems to go on beyond the partial rebuilding which occurred at the return of Zerubbabel and was continued at the return of Ezra and Nehemiah a century later. It is pictured as continuing through all the "times of the Gentiles" when Israel's homeland is in a state of comparative desolation.

Pentecost Predicted

Verse 15 can easily be misunderstood if we take the conjunction "until," with which it begins, in our usual English sense of giving a terminus at which the thing described ends. The Hebrew word used here does not necessarily have this sense. Many passages might be quoted as proof, but one will be sufficient. In Genesis 19:37-38 this word is translated "unto" in the phrase "unto this day." It is stated that Moab is the father of the Moabites "unto this day," and that Ben-ammi is the father of the children of Ammon "unto this day." That certainly did not mean that they ceased to be the fathers of these people at the time when the book of Genesis was written. The relationship continued until that time and continued a great deal longer. We are thus warranted in understanding this preposition at the beginning of verse 15 as meaning that this condition will continue up to the time