

of the earth -- the world would inevitably reach the condition into which it fell just before the Flood. Isaiah 59:1-15a described a situation so bad that it seems that the passage must refer specifically to the very end of the age. "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man" (Luke 17:26).

When things become so bad that no human escape seems possible, God intervenes in sovereignty. Verse 16 greatly stresses the fact that only He can bring relief. When man reaches his extremity, refuge is found in the grace and mercy of God.

These verses emphasize the destruction of God's adversaries, pointing to that great overthrow of His enemies, just prior to the establishment of the millennial kingdom, which is described in Revelation 19:11-21, Isaiah 11:4b, and elsewhere.

Verse 17 gives an interesting description of the preparation of the sovereign God for His mighty act. A striking interpretation of its terms is given by Professor Franz Delitzsch on page 378 of Vol. 2 of his Commentary on Isaiah (Edinburgh, 1910):

Judiciously and beautifully is the inexorable justice of God compared to the impenetrable brazen coat-of-mail; His gladdening salvation to the protecting helmet glittering afar; His vengeance, having many modes of inflicting effective chastisement, to the bright-coloured garments over the coat-of-mail; and His wrathful jealousy to the fiery red military cloak. No weapon is mentioned -- neither sword nor bow -- for His arm, and this alone, procures Him help."

In verses 18 and 19a we see the outpouring of God's wrath with the resulting spread of His fear to the west and to the east.

In this section of Isaiah the verse divisions were not well made. Although the verse divisions were put in the Old Testament many centuries earlier than the chapter divisions, they are not a part of the original text and are not inspired. They frequently correspond to sentence divisions, but often a sentence is divided into two or more verses and occasionally two sentences, or even the last half of one sentence and the