

wickedness which has increased so greatly in recent years. At the end of the age people will say, "All things continue as they were from the beginning" (2 Pet. 3:4). Yet the Lord declares that even as they are saying, "peace and safety," sudden destruction will come upon them (1 Thess. 5:3). Although this passage pictures the greatest overthrow of wickedness in all the history of the world -- the one that is to occur at the end of the present age -- the principle is one which has occurred repeatedly in human history.

With verse 7 another main section of the book commences. This would be a far better place for a chapter division than at verse 1 of this chapter.

Isaiah 63:7-66:24

It is unfortunate that no chapter division has been made between Isaiah 63:6 and 63:7. Putting what precedes and what follows together in one chapter means that the last paragraph of the division of the book that runs from 56:9 to 63:6 and the first paragraph of the section that runs from 63:7 to the end of the book are combined into one chapter. As a result this chapter fails to have any unity, while the prayer that runs from 63:7 to the end of chapter 64 is illogically broken in two by an absurd chapter division.

This section is made up of four parts: Israel's Prayer for a Return of God's Favor (63:7-64:12); The Divine Rebuke (65:1-15); The Glorious Future (65:16-25); The Ultimate Fulfillment (66:1-24).

Israel's Prayer for a Return of God's Favor

Isaiah 63:7 to 64:12 forms a unit. Nowhere in it is God the actual speaker, as in the sections preceding and following, though in verse 12 something God had said at a much earlier time is quoted. The speaker is recalling God's goodness to Israel in the past and praying that He will help His people in the midst of a desperate situation. The greater part of this discourse consists of a plea to God to deliver His people from exile and destruction.

Of course one immediately asks, who is the speaker? Is the prophet speaking on behalf of the righteous remnant of