

for the godly.

The first of these three passages is Isaiah 1:1-2:5. Chapter 1 contains many beautiful passages including a few verses of blessing; the greater part of it sets forth judgment and doom upon those who have broken God's covenant and disobeyed His word. In phrases of terrible denunciation Isaiah sets forth God's disappointment over the apostasy of the nation which has been the object of His many favors, and declares his determination to punish it. The only exceptions to this general note of rebuke in the chapter are verse 18 and verses 25 to 27. Verse 18 is the wonderful evangelical promise, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." This promise seems to enter the context so abruptly that some interpreters prefer to consider it as a rhetorical question, emphasizing the sin and hypocrisy of the people. Verses 25 to 27 promise cleansing and renewal for the city after it will be freed from sin. The final verses of the chapter again stress rebuke and punishment.

After this chapter comes the first great passage declaring God's plan to bring unimaginable blessing after the carrying out of the predicted judgment. This prediction of blessing includes only three verses, since verse 1 is introductory and verse 5 is a concluding exhortation. It is almost identical with Micah 4:1-3, which is followed by further elaboration of the description of the promised peace (Mic. 4:4a,b), by a reference to the divine authority behind the promise (v. 4c), and by a frequently misunderstood exhortation (v. 5), the meaning of which is made clear by the parallel in Isaiah 2:5. The thought of Micah 4:5 is that when other nations loyally follow their gods, which are non-existent creatures of imagination utterly unable either to make