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At some point rather early in the spring of 1947, a Bedouin boy called Muhammed the Wolf was minding some goats near a cliff on the western shore of the Dead Sea. Climbing up after one that had strayed, he noticed a cave that he had not seen before, and he idly threw a stone into it. There was an unfamiliar sound of breakage. The boy was frightened and ran away. But he later came back with another boy, and together they explored the cave.

Inside were several tall clay jars, among fragments of other jars. When they took off the bowl-like lids, a very bad smell arose, which came from dark oblong lumps that were found inside all the jars. When they got these lumps out of the cave, they saw they were wrapped up in lengths of linen and coated with a black layer of what seemed to be pitch or wax. They unrolled them and found long manuscripts, inscribed in parallel columns on thin sheets that had been sewn together. Though these manuscripts had faded and crumbled in places, they were in general remarkably clear. The characters, they saw, were not Arabic. They wondered at the scrolls and kept them, carrying them along when they moved.

Edmund Wilson
'The Scrolls from the Dead Sea'
W. H. Allen, 1955
The importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls

According to the figures published by the Bible Society, the Bible is still a ‘best seller’ but, sadly, in many homes it remains on the bookshelf. It is dusted occasionally but hardly ever read. Yet, the Bible is the most precious book in the world.

In this very materialistic age it appears that the majority of people regard the Bible as rather out-dated and that so far as their lives are concerned today, the Bible has no particular relevance. No greater mistake could be made. It is the most up-to-date book in the world. It not only tells us about the present, but it goes further and outlines with great clarity the course of world events in the future. This is not surprising when we realise that the author of the Bible is the great Creator of the universe.

The apostle Paul wrote that, ‘All scripture is given by inspiration of God’¹ and that the Holy Scriptures are able to make someone ‘wise unto salvation’.²

Worries about accuracy

Even if people agree that the original manuscripts of the Bible were written by men who were influenced by the power of God, how can we be sure that the Bible that we have today is identical in meaning with the original texts? Is there not a real danger that after centuries and centuries of making copies from copies and of translating the scriptures into different languages, that mistakes will have occurred and then the mistakes will have been copied too?

¹II Timothy 3. 16  ²II Timothy 3. 15
The amazing discovery in 1947 of the Dead Sea Scrolls gives unshakable evidence of the integrity and accuracy of the scriptures we now hold in our hands. The scrolls included books and portions of books of the Old Testament scriptures written 2,000 years ago. Yet when translated and compared with our Bible, they correspond exactly. Through the long intervening centuries the Bible message has retained vital accuracy.

Copper roll

THE ROLL OF ISAIAH

One of the most important finds in a cave at Qumran, near the Dead Sea, was the roll of Isaiah—so after the fascinating story of the Dead Sea Scrolls we print an article which deals briefly with the contents and teaching of this book and which provides background for the Bible reader.

The prophet Isaiah is sometimes called the ‘Prophet of the Kingdom’ because there are so many references in his writing to the time when God has intervened in world affairs and established His kingdom. This is the time for which Jesus taught his followers to pray,

‘Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.’

The last short article in this booklet brings together some of the passages from Isaiah which describe what the world will be like when Jesus has returned and replaced the rule of men with the kingdom of God. The evidence from the ‘Scrolls from the Dead Sea’ can give us confidence in the reliability of God’s Word and a confidence, too, that what God has spoken He will bring to pass.

Jars from the Qumran caves

3Matthew 6. 10
The story of the scrolls from the Dead Sea

In November 1947 the United Nations Organisation, sitting in the USA, was engaged in deliberations which were to lead up to the ending of the British Mandate for Palestine and recommending the establishment of a Jewish State. Jewish Intelligence reported that Arab attacks on Jewish cities and settlements were certain to follow.

It was in such a tense atmosphere that E. L. Sukenik, Professor of Archaeology at the Hebrew University, received on Sunday, 23 November, 1947, a message from a friend, an Armenian dealer in antiquities, asking the professor to get in touch with him immediately. A meeting was fixed for the next morning. The British Forces had divided Jerusalem into military zones, each marked off with barbed wire barriers. Sukenik met the Armenian dealer at the gateway to Military Zone B. As neither of them had passes to go from one zone to another, their conversation had to be across the barbed wire.

The dealer held up a scrap of leather; Sukenik strained his eyes to peer through the loops of barbed wire to make out the letters on the scrap. Gradually he recognised the shapes of the letters. They resembled those he had found on small coffins and ossuaries discovered by him in ancient tombs around Jerusalem and dating back to the period before Rome's destruction of Jerusalem.

AN EARLIER ROLL

At first Sukenik felt the writing must be a forgery but as he continued to peer the feeling grew stronger and stronger that this was no forgery but the real thing. The professor's initial doubts were understandable. Until the discovery of these scrolls it had been accepted by scholars that the survival of writing on leather or parchment for 2,000 years was an utter impossibility. In fact, because of this feeling,
it appears a valuable scroll was lost in the 1880's. Moses Wilhelm Shapira offered for sale to the British Museum an ancient manuscript of Deuteronomy which he had found during his exploration of the area east of the Dead Sea, but it was denounced as a forgery by the experts at the time. There is a strong feeling now that it was a genuine document, rejected simply because the experts felt that no scroll dating back to the time of Christ could have survived.

We can well imagine Sukenik's suppressed excitement as the conviction grew that the fragment he was gazing at was probably 2,000 years old. The dealer then told him that a mutual friend, an Arab antiquities dealer in Bethlehem, had told him that some Bedouin had called on him bringing several parchment scrolls which they said they had found in a cave near the Dead Sea shore, not far from Jericho. Sukenik made the perilous journey to Bethlehem. It was through Arab-held territory and the seven Arab nations were about to attack Israel. After the usual long drawn-out preliminaries the Arab dealer produced three scrolls. Professor Sukenik records, 'My hands shook as I started to unwrap them. I read a few sentences. It was written in beautiful Biblical Hebrew...I looked and looked, and I suddenly had the feeling that I was privileged by destiny to gaze upon a Hebrew scroll which had not been read for more than two thousand years.'

The dealer agreed to let Professor Sukenik have the scrolls for two days for further examination, and to raise the cash for their purchase. It was with a sigh of deep relief he reached Jerusalem again safely with his precious parcel. He wrote, 'I made straight for my study and unrolled the leathers. As I read the texts, I became more and more convinced that my first hunch had been correct and that I was witnessing a discovery of tremendous importance. I was enthralled by the beauty of the Hebrew. But the identity of the texts still eluded me. I looked up the Apocryphal books in my library to see if I could find parallels, but there were none. Here, then, were original texts.' So next day Sukenik sent a message to the Bethlehem dealer Feidi Salahi to say he was buying the scrolls.

ANOTHER MEETING

A little later, Sukenik learned that already four scrolls from the same cave had been sold through a Syrian antiquities dealer to the Syrian Metropolitan of the Monastery of St Mark in the Old City of Jerusalem. Toward the end of January,
1948, Professor Sukenik received a letter from an acquaintance, a member of the Syrian Orthodox Christian Community. He said he wished to show the professor some ancient Hebrew scrolls. They arranged to meet in the YMCA building in Jerusalem. This building was in Zone B and was at the time much used as a meeting place for Arabs. Sukenik packed several books under his arm as if he were about to change them at the YMCA library. The Arabs looked startled to see a Jew enter the building and thought he must be a crazy bookworm to take such a risk in hostile territory. The librarian was also a Syrian Orthodox Christian. In a private room the safe was opened and several ancient scrolls were produced and put on the table. One of them was the now famous complete scroll of Isaiah. The professor’s joy was great. He was allowed to take them home for further examination and bring them back in a few days. His excitement is vividly conveyed in his own words. ‘I returned to the manuscripts continually, day and night, sometimes even getting out of bed in
the small hours of the morning to read them and to make copies of some of the
texts. The Isaiah Scroll interested me particularly and I copied several of its
chapters.

But the immediate problem was how to raise the cash. Owing to the political
troubles the Jewish Agency headquarters had been moved to Tel Aviv from
Jerusalem and travel between the two places was highly dangerous. Before he could
catch the promise from the Jewish authorities that the cash would be forthcoming he
had to keep his promise to return the precious parchments to the Syrian at the
YMCA. Sukenik even tried to raise a loan on his house, but as the political and
military situation was so grim, he was refused.

However, it was arranged that the Syrian would meet Sukenik the following
week at the Yugoslav Consulate. In the meantime the Jewish Agency leaders were
so impressed they told Sukenik they were ready to provide any sums needed to
secure the scrolls. But, alas it was too late. The Syrian did not keep the appointment
but wrote weeks later to say the sale was off.

What had transpired was that the four scrolls, which were the ones in the
possession of the Syrian Metropolitan, were taken by members of the Syrian
Church to the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem, for an opinion.
The Americans advised that the scrolls be taken to America; there they could be
photographed, published and translated and the publicity would enhance the
value of the scrolls and the Metropolitan would get a much better price for them.

Commenting on this, Professor Sukenik, who had been 'left out in the cold',
rote: 'Thus the Jewish people have lost a precious heritage.'

So the professor believed—a belief in which he died in 1953. But the story has a
remarkable sequel.

Professor Sukenik's son is Dr Yigael Yadin, the soldier-scholar. Dr Yadin was
Chief of Operations in the defence of Israel when the Israel war of independence
took place in 1948. He is also, like his father, an archaeologist of world repute, and
in 1964/65 was the organiser of the great archaeological expedition at Masada. In
1954 Dr Yadin was invited to visit the United States on a lecture tour. His thoughts
continually returned to the four Dead Sea scrolls he knew were in the country, but
he had heard that several millions of dollars were being asked for them. Then on
1 June he received 'out of the blue' a telephone call from a young Jewish journalist.
Did Dr Yadin know that there was a small advertisement in the Wall Street Journal
for that day, advertising the scrolls for sale?
Dr Yadin told the caller to come round at once, and there, among scores of business advertisements was the following:

THE FOUR DEAD SEA SCROLLS
Biblical Manuscripts dating back to at least 200 BC are for sale. This would be an ideal gift to an educational or religious Institution by an individual or group.—Box F 206.

It seemed incredible, yet it fitted in with Professor Albright's account to Dr Yadin that the Syrian Metropolitan had been unable to sell the scrolls and was getting short of cash.

We must omit many interesting details, but through a Gentile nominee, and the guarantee of a wealthy American Jew, Mr Samuel Gottesman, to contribute the major part of the purchase price until the Israel Government could send the necessary funds, the four precious scrolls were purchased for Israel. The price was $250,000, a reasonable figure when we compare it with the £100,000 which the British Government paid to the Russian Government in 1933 for the Greek *Codex Sinaiticus*.¹

The scrolls were sent separately to Israel and great was the joy on their arrival. Dr Yadin, just arrived in London from the USA, received a cable from Jerusalem on 13 February, 1955. It read: 'At this memorable moment the Prime Minister is telling the country and the world about the homecoming of the scrolls. Excitement and joy are great.'

THE SEVEN SCROLLS TOGETHER
Thus the three scrolls purchased by Sukenik and the four purchased in America are now safely housed in Jerusalem in 'The Shrine of the Book'.

The first three are:
1. 'The War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness.'
2. 'The Thanksgiving Scroll.'
3. A scroll of the prophet Isaiah, now known as 'Isaiah MS 2.'

The four which Professor Sukenik missed but which were later bought in the United States are:
4. The now famous Isaiah Scroll, now known as 'Isaiah MS 1.'
5. The Habakkuk Scroll with commentary.

¹See LIGHT on the Bible, obtainable from Light Bible Publications
The fame of these scrolls spread rapidly, and search began in the area for other places of concealment. In this the Bedouin were more successful than the scientific workers. With their desert experience, eagle-like eyes and unlimited time, the Bedouin were able to spot likely crevices and clefts which the scholars missed.

AND MORE FINDS

In 1952 a scientific expedition was searching the caves when news came that the Bedouin had found another cave close to Cave 1. In this Cave 2 leather fragments of scrolls of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Psalms, Ruth and Jeremiah were found. In Cave 3 were discovered the two copper scrolls. Owing to corrosion it was impossible to unroll them. But at Manchester a highly sensitive saw was designed and the scrolls were cut into strips, opened out and put together. They contained details of some 60 places where the treasure, probably of the Qumran sect, was buried.

Next, the Bedouin discovered a hewn chamber on the plateau between the cliffs and the Dead Sea. It was designated Qumran 4. It yielded more fragments of scrolls than anywhere else. Portions of 60 scrolls of books of the Old Testament were found. These included fragments from Samuel with text different from the Hebrew Masoretic text but somewhat similar to the Greek Septuagint.

In 1952 the archaeologists probed an easily accessible cave, now known as Cave 11. The probe was not thorough enough. Four years later the Bedouin found that what appeared to be the solid back of the cave was merely a rock fall, and behind this fall was a small recess in which had been neatly piled a hoard of manuscripts. One was an unrolled scroll of the book of Psalms and another was a badly damaged scroll of an Aramaic translation of the book of Job.
The Bedouin have no title to the scrolls they find, so they are tempted to hide them away and the cash passes more or less secretly. One Arab buried two in his garden. But the soil was very different from the dry conditions of the cave where they had lain for 2,000 years. When the Arab took them out of the ground they were just a gluey mess, ruined irretrievably. Some of these finds have been exhibited in the British Museum, others have been purchased by museums, universities and private persons and are scattered about the world.

CONFIRMATION OF BIBLICAL INTEGRITY

Our interest is in the way in which these scrolls confirm the integrity of the Holy Scriptures. As soon as the news of their discovery began to spread, news-hungry journalists came out with sensational columns. Were the new discoveries going to cause radical modifications to the texts of our Bible? Would beliefs and doctrines have to be adjusted in view of the contents of the Biblical scrolls which had now come to light?

In the event, the sensationalists were completely disappointed. Until the discovery of these scrolls, the earliest known Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament were the Ben Asher Codex of the Prophets, of AD 895, and the Aleppo Codex of the complete Old Testament dated AD 929. That is to say, there was no known Hebrew manuscript of the complete Old Testament earlier than the tenth century AD.

It is now generally agreed that the Khirbet Qumran community hid these scrolls away for safety at the time of the Roman invasion which resulted in the destruction of the temple in AD 70. But the writer of this article heard a lecture by Professor Sukenik in which he stated that the Isaiah Scroll was already of venerable age when it was put away in the cave. The marks of the hands and fingers on the scroll as it was opened and rolled up again speak of many years of regular use. Sukenik put its date at the second century before Christ.

Thus at one great leap, these Biblical scrolls carry us back to a time at least a thousand years earlier than the oldest previously known Hebrew manuscripts. And they provide an answer to the ready-tongued but shallow critics who say, ‘How can you rely on the Bible today? It has been copied and translated and inevitably, over the centuries, it must have changed radically from the original manuscripts.’

Our Old Testament translation in the Authorised and Revised versions is based on the Masoretic text. The Masoretes were a body of Jews whose work extended from the sixth to the eighth centuries AD. They compared all the various manuscripts available to them, and agreed a standard text, which was as near as possible to the original text of the inspired writers.
THE TEXT—RELIABLE

The following words are very interesting: Dr Yadin writes concerning the Biblical Dead Sea Scrolls, 'What is astonishing is that despite their antiquity and the fact that the scrolls belong to this pre-standardisation period they are, on the whole, almost identical with the Masoretic text known to us. This establishes a basic principle for all future research on texts of the Bible. Not even the hundreds of slight variations established in the texts, affecting mainly spelling, and occasionally word substitution, can alter that fact.'

Supporting evidence is afforded by Professor Miller Burrows, of Yale University. Writing of the Isaiah Scroll he says 'The conspicuous difference in spelling and grammatical forms between the St Mark M.S. (Isaiah Scroll) and the Masoretic text makes their substantial agreement in the words of the text all the more remarkable.'

'Considering what a long time intervened between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the oldest of the medieval mss. one might have expected a much larger number of variant readings and a much wider degree of divergence. It is a matter for wonder
that through something like a thousand years the text underwent so little alteration. As I said in my first article on the scroll "Herein lies its chief importance, supporting the fidelity of the Masoretic tradition."

INSPIRATION

We observe that Dr Yadin says that this fact is astonishing. Professor Burrows says 'It is a matter for wonder'. But for the earnest believer in the divine inspiration of the scriptures it causes no astonishment. There is one factor which all the writers on the scrolls completely ignore. That is, the hand of Divine Providence in preserving the integrity of the sacred writings. Is it believable that the Almighty would inspire holy men to pen the books of the Holy Scriptures, and then suffer copyists and translators so to distort the text that earnest seekers after Truth would seek in vain?

The writings of Moses and the prophets reveal the sins and waywardness of the Children of Israel, exactly as the Spirit of the Almighty moved them to write. Yet, in spite of this, so great was the reverence of the Jews for the sacred writings that when making manuscript copies they counted the words and letters to make sure nothing had been added or omitted. It is said that whenever the scribe had to write the word Yahweh he washed his hands before so doing.

The words of Paul come forcibly to mind:

'What advantage then hath the Jew? ... Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.'

But, while the original writers were divinely inspired the copyists and translators were not, therefore allowance must be made for a slight element of human error. We have before us at the moment of writing a large photograph of the Isaiah Scroll (MS 1) opened out at chapter 40. (See photograph on page 25). When the copyist came to write verse 8 'The grass withereth, the flower fadeth,' he evidently thought he had already written this, as verse 7 starts in the same way 'The grass withereth,' etc. So he omitted the verse. The error was subsequently discovered and the verse is inserted sideways in the left hand margin. In the margin between chapters 38/9 and 40, that is, on the right side of the chapter 40 column, another missing verse has been inserted sideways. It is the last verse of chapter 38: 'Hezekiah also had said, What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the Lord?'

Thus any slips on the part of the copyist were detected and corrected, and the whole scroll, as Dr Yigael Yadin says, is on the whole almost identical with the Masoretic text known to us. The slight variations are mainly matters of spelling. This is not surprising; in our own lifetime we have seen the spelling of words in the

\[\text{\textsuperscript*2Romans 3. 1, 2}\]
English language undergoing a change, as for instance the use of 's' instead of 'z' in many words, the American spelling of 'center' for 'centre', and 'thru' for 'through'.

The fact is, such slight variations as occur in the copying and translation of Biblical manuscripts are, by the hand of Providence, restricted within exceedingly narrow limits and affect no historical fact and certainly no doctrine or belief.

THE KHIRBET QUMRAN SECT

Who were these Jews, whose settlement was situated on the narrow plateau between the Dead Sea and the gaunt cliffs of the wilderness? It is generally felt that they were an Essene sect because of the striking similarity between what is known of the Dead Sea sect from the scroll which was their Manual of Discipline and what is known about the Essenes from the writings of Josephus, Pliny and Philo of Alexandria.3

The members of the Khirbet Qumran community nowhere describe themselves in any of the scrolls discovered as Essenes, and the evidence that they were is circumstantial. Pliny seems to refer to this Qumran settlement when he writes:

'On the west side of the Dead Sea but out of range of the noxious exhalations of the coast, is the solitary tribe of the Essenes, which is remarkable beyond all the other tribes in the whole world, as it has no women, has no money, and has only palm-trees for company.'

He says the number of the members is sustained by the accession of persons prepared to adopt the life of the sect, thus replacing the losses due to death.

They appeared to have been moved to adopt a monastic life owing to their grave misgivings of the way things were tending in Jewry. They retired to the settlement at Qumran and lived according to the very strict discipline laid down in the 'Manual of Discipline'. It was their view that they were living in the last days and that it was their duty to prepare themselves by self-discipline, righteousness and attention to the requirements of Moses' law, so that they would be on the side of the Children of Light in the final war in which the Deity would destroy the wicked and bless the righteous.

3Josephus' 'War of the Jews', Book 2, ch. 8, paras 2, 10, 12, 13
The ruins at Khirbet Qumran are those of the community centre of the sect. The members themselves dwelt in tents and booths. Excavations during the past 30 years have shown that the original structure was a communal building of comparatively large proportions, with four main features, namely a fortress with a corner tower, a group of halls that served as prayer rooms, dining-rooms or writing rooms, the water pools for domestic and ritual requirements, and a group containing kitchens and workshops. It is estimated that the number of members was at least 200.

The building was abandoned for a time due to the severe earthquake in the spring of 31 BC. Josephus says that 10,000 died through the fall of buildings in Judea. Evidences of the earthquake are clearly seen in the Qumran ruins, in the tower and the pools. Later the Qumran sect repaired the ruins and reinhabited the place. Among the most important recent finds was a table made of plastered clay about 16 or 17 feet long and two shorter tables. Also found in the same place were two inkbots, one in clay and one in bronze. It is therefore presumed that the large room was a scriptorium or writing room where some of the scrolls now found were actually written.

The Manual of Discipline Scroll

The rules of the Qumran sect are contained in great detail in this scroll. Anyone wishing to join the body had to enter a solemn covenant to turn to the Law of Moses, with all his heart and soul, and to separate himself from all the men of error who walk in the way of wickedness. ‘No man of the community shall answer when asked by them (the men of error) regarding any law or ordinance. And he shall not eat or drink anything from their wealth, and shall not take from their hand anything at all except for a price, as it is written “Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils.”'
'Everyone who has offered himself from Israel to be added to the council of the community shall be examined by the man appointed at the head of the masters as to his understanding and his works.' If satisfactory he was to be brought within the covenant of the sect 'to turn to the truth and to run away from all error'.

The novice had to complete a year before being permitted to touch the sacred food of the masters. Then he was examined as to his spirit and deeds. If approved he was admitted to the assembly of the community, but had to complete a second year of probation before touching the sacred drink of the masters. If the vote determined he should be fully admitted, then his property was shared by the community and he was registered in the order of his position among his brethren.

All members had to obey their neighbours, the lesser obeying the greater. No one at the sessions of the masters was allowed to speak out of turn, or interrupt a neighbour's words. If a man wished to speak he had to stand on his feet and say 'I have a word to speak to the masters'. If they assented then he could speak.

The Manual contains a list of punishments for offences, as the following examples show:

'A man who lies about his wealth—
Excluded from the sacred food of the masters for one year,
and shall be deprived of a fourth part of his food ration.'

'One who lies about what he knows—
Shall be punished six months.'

'One who speaks with his mouth the word of a fool—
Shall be punished three months.'

'One who laughs foolishly, making his voice heard—Shall be punished thirty days.'

'A man who gossips about his neighbour—Shall be separated for a year from the sacred food of the masters, and he shall be punished.'

For the meals the members wore white garments which they removed before resuming their daily tasks.

All wealth was shared by the community. The members were industrious and compliant to the rigid discipline of the sect.

**THE BELIEFS OF THE QUMRAN SECT**

From the Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness and from the Scroll of the Manual of Discipline it is clear that these people of the scrolls were convinced that they were living in the very last days. They expected the day of God's judgments against the world of the ungodly would come at any moment. They understood from the writings of the prophets that the purged and purified among the Jews would be the instruments God would use in the
impending final war which would destroy the wicked and bring in times of blessedness and righteousness.

Having this conviction they felt that the rigid lives they led, and their endeavours to observe the laws of Moses, would be counted for righteousness and that they would be among the Sons of Light in the time of trouble. Further, they felt it was incumbent on them to be prepared for the war, and in the War Scroll, they set out in great detail the general plan for the conflict. The details of tactics are decided, together with the weapons and the army organisation. Also there is an enumeration of the Biblical rules for the conduct of war and their application to the last decisive war which would exterminate the wicked from the earth and exalt the Sons of Light.

A careful study of Bible prophecy would enable us to make a correct assessment of these anticipations. These Dead Sea Essenes could see plainly enough from the writings of the prophets that the final conflict between God and the nations is foretold with great clarity. Where they went wrong was in expecting
the event to happen in their day, and in their assumption that it was for them to outline the strategy and tactics to be carried out and to prepare the fighting equipment.

LIGHTS IN THE WORLD

How close were these Essenes in their beliefs to what the Bible really teaches? According to the scrolls, it appears that they held a number of wrong views. The very fact that they avoided all possible contact with the outside world and led a monastic life indicates an erroneous outlook. The true servants of God cannot discharge their duty of shining as lights in a dark world if they shut themselves away as did the Qumran sect. While they were there in rigid seclusion John the Baptist was preaching repentance, and multitudes were coming to be baptized.

The Qumrans were expecting two Messiahs, one priestly and the other kingly. Had they come out and listened to John the Baptist they would have learnt that the Messiah had already come and was the Lamb of God, to take away the sin of the world. Had they listened to Jesus as he preached in the towns and villages of the Holy Land, they would have learnt that he was the true Messiah promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets and was of the House of David and appointed by God to be both priest and king.

THE TRUE MESSIAH

John came ‘to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.’ ‘That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.’ But the Qumran monastics had shut themselves away; and while they were bent on establishing their own righteousness they excluded themselves from the opportunity to submit themselves to God’s righteousness.

Members of the sect believed that all creatures were divided into the Lot of Light and the Lot of Darkness: that God Himself created Belial the Angel of Darkness to lead all the forces of Darkness, and created Michael, the Angel of Light to lead the forces of Light.

We can see here the similarity between this view and that of the Agnostics, and the later church doctrine of Satan or the Devil as a fallen angel, the antagonist of God and the leader of the forces of evil. It is not clear whether the Qumran sect believed in the immortality of the soul. It is quite possible they did not, for they speak of the ultimate destruction of the wicked, and one of their psalms in the ‘Thanksgiving Scroll’ starts:

‘I thank thee, O Lord, because thou hast put my soul in the bundle of life; thou hast fenced me off from all the snares of the pit.’ (Compare I Samuel 25.29)

Philippians 2.15  John 1.7, 9
Another commences:

‘For what is man? He is earth, a cut-off bit of clay, and to dust is his return.’

Their Psalm 6 opens:

‘I thank thee, O Lord, because thou hast redeemed my soul from the pit; from the sheol of Abaddon.’

The grounds on which they based their conviction that there would be the ‘battle of the great day of God Almighty’ and their conviction that it would be in their own time are interesting.

We learn from outside writers that at the time of the births of John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Christ there was a general expectancy that one would arise out of Judea who would rule the world, a belief which, no doubt, sprang from a partial understanding of Daniel 9. 24-26. The Qumran sect knew from the prophets that it would be at a time of great trouble, and we can well appreciate that when they saw the Roman armies advancing to the siege of Jerusalem and spreading over the land, they felt that surely this was the long foretold ‘time of trouble’ when God would intervene on behalf of His great Name, His Land and His people.

One should not judge them hardly in these premature anticipations. The disciples themselves, knowing that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, were shocked beyond measure when he was taken and crucified. They had been promised they would sit on twelve thrones, reigning over the restored tribes of Israel, and they expected that he was about to redeem Israel and reign as king then and there.

SAVIOUR AND KING

Jesus explained their misunderstanding to the two disciples on the road to the village of Emmaus. They did not recognise Jesus and did not know that he had risen from the dead. They were sad because, they said:

‘We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done.’

Jesus then went on to tell them that they had only understood some of the Old Testament prophecies. The prophets had foretold that the Messiah was not only to be the eventual king over the whole world when the kingdom of God was established, but that he had also to suffer first as the sacrifice for sin.

‘And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.’

HIS SECOND COMING

The people at Jericho (not far from the Khirbet Qumran settlement) crowding round Christ, thought that the kingdom of God would immediately appear. The disciples and the people, just before the triumphant entry into Jerusalem and like the Qumran sect, felt they were living in the last times. They believed that God would intervene as in the past, wrest all power from the Gentiles and ‘restore again the kingdom to Israel’.8

The Qumran sect, to support their convictions, quoted passages from the writings of the prophets, which, however, refer to the time yet future when Jesus Christ will return from heaven in great power to overthrow the kingdoms of men and set up in their place the Kingdom of God. In their scroll of ‘The War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness’ the belief is expressed that the day of victory was near because it would come ‘at a time of mighty trouble for the people to be redeemed by God. In all their troubles there was none like it’.

These words were based on Daniel 12. 1:
‘And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.’9

And also on the words of Jeremiah:
‘Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.’10

Jesus did not say that the people of his day were wrong in expecting the Messiah to establish the kingdom of God but he did explain that there was to be a delay first. Jesus said:
‘A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return.’11

The parable goes on to describe the way in which his servants were to work while waiting for the king to return. There is no doubt that the story taught that Jesus himself would go away and that there was to be a delay before his return to establish the kingdom. Luke introduces the story by saying that Jesus told his

8Acts 1. 6  
9Daniel 12. 1  
10Jeremiah 30. 7  
followers a parable, ‘Because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once’.\textsuperscript{12}

The Qumran sect was not wrong in thinking that the establishment of the kingdom would be at a time of very great trouble. But, again speaking of the gap in time between his first and second appearances, Jesus described a long period of desolation for the land of Israel. Jerusalem, he said, would be trodden down by Gentiles. Then, at the time appointed by God, that 'treading down' would end. At the same time there would be a period of great trouble for the world. In figurative language Jesus says:

‘And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men’s hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.’\textsuperscript{13}

The comfort for the followers of Jesus is that he immediately said:

‘And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.’\textsuperscript{14}

There are many Old Testament prophecies which also speak of the coming of the Messiah and the fulfilment of God’s purpose after a long period of desolation for Israel.

THE BEGINNING OF THE DESOLATION

In the same passage just quoted, Jesus told his disciples that the long ‘downtreading’ of Jerusalem would begin when the Roman armies came against the city:

‘When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near.’\textsuperscript{15}

Following the warning given by Jesus\textsuperscript{16} some were able to flee from Judea. The scrolls were hurriedly hidden away in the caves as the Roman soldiers destroyed the Qumran settlement. Some fled down to the great rock fortress of Masada and joined with the Zealots in a last stand against the Romans. The Romans built a great earthen and stone ramp up the 1,200 ft. high rock and assembled a huge battering ram. When the Jewish defenders found resistance was hopeless, rather than the men and women being taken as slaves or worse, the whole number, close on 100,000 men, women and children perished in a mass suicide. A great expedition excavating the ruins during 1964-5 under the able direction of Dr Yigael Yadin found some grim relics in the form of skeletons and skulls, some with hair still attached.

MORE EVIDENCE FOR THE DATE

For Bible students, the greatest prize found, in addition to more than 1,000 coins, was more scrolls. These scrolls consisted of fragments of Psalms, Leviticus,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Luke 19. 11} (N.I.V.)
  \item \textit{Luke 21. 26}
  \item \textit{Luke 21. 27}
  \item \textit{Luke 21. 20} (N.I.V.)
  \item \textit{Luke 21. 21}
\end{itemize}
Genesis, and some apocryphal books. The importance of the find is this. There are some 'experts' who have argued that the Dead Sea Scrolls are of a later date. But here is the conclusive evidence to the contrary. Masada fell to the Romans in AD 73, a date not to be disputed. So here, in the ruins now excavated, have been found Biblical documents earlier than AD 73. Among the scroll fragments is one identical to a scroll found in the Qumran cave.

The finding of this scroll is important, because for the first time a Dead Sea Scroll has been found outside Qumran and in a place which was a Zealot stronghold. It seems to indicate that one of the Qumran Essenes took the scroll with him when he joined in the defence of Masada. This is supported by the list of area commanders mentioned by Josephus, one of whom is given as a certain John the Essene.

OUR CONFIDENCE

The main conclusion to be drawn from the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls is that they confirm that the Scriptures we hold in our hands today are a faithful translation of the original manuscripts penned by men divinely inspired to record God's message to mankind. Our readers may be quite confident that whatever ancient Biblical documents are found, and whatever evidences are turned up by the spade of the excavator, they will but confirm the integrity of the Bible, the Word of God, upon which we may safely build all our hopes of salvation at the coming of Christ from heaven, and from which we may draw day by day for comfort and instruction.

Very soon the Light of the world will be here, and our unshaken confidence in the Bible will be gloriously vindicated.

So we conclude with the noble words to be found in the Isaiah Scroll: 'All flesh is grass... The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.'

\[17\text{Isaiah 40. 6, 8}\]
The book of the prophet Isaiah

THE COURT IS in session, a woman is in the dock. The presiding judge, solemn and impartial, calls for the prosecution witnesses. As evidence against the defendant mounts up, her guilt becomes only too plain. Then a strange thing happens—the judge intervenes, and pleads earnestly with the accused. He urges her to mend her ways so that sentence might be suspended, and perhaps remitted altogether.

GOD’S LAW COURT

The proceedings here described are not being carried out in any human law court. The judge is God Himself, ‘the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy.’¹ Before Him is Jerusalem, accused of persistently breaking His laws, aided and abetted by all the kingdom of Judah.² The witnesses are heaven and earth, appointed centuries earlier at the very birth of the nation, to play this necessary part in God’s dealings with His people.³ The evidence against the city cannot be denied; in fact the whole nation is proved to be immoral, although it has maintained a veneer of religious respectability which could deceive the casual observer.⁴ In God’s eyes, however, it is like a leper, covered with running sores from head to foot.⁵ In spite of this, ‘the Judge of all the earth’ pleads with His people to reform, lest a more severe punishment has to be administered.⁶

TIME AND PLACE OF THE PROPHECY

So, dramatically, Isaiah’s magnificent prophecy begins. The human author is one of the first of the great ‘literary prophets’, i.e. one who not only spoke to his fellow Israelites what God inspired him to say,⁷ but who also wrote the sayings ¹57. 15 (R.S.V.): all references are to Isaiah unless otherwise stated. ²1. 4. 21
³1. 2; Deuteronomy 31. 28, 29 ⁴1. 11-15
⁵1. 5, 6: note the allusion to king Uzziah—a leper (II Kings 15. 5)
⁶1. 18-20 ⁷II Peter 1. 21
down to form this collection of visions, predictions and warnings which make up the book of Isaiah. There were in fact many great prophets before him, such as Elijah and Elisha, but their words were recorded by other writers, the unnamed historians of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.\(^8\) Isaiah is the first in our Bible of the longer prophetic books, the others being Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. The order is chronological, as it also is, more or less, with the twelve ‘minor’ (i.e. shorter) prophets, viz. Hosea to Malachi, which end the Old Testament. Of these twelve, Amos prophesied just before Isaiah, and Jonah earlier still.\(^9\) Hosea and Micah lived at the same time as Isaiah, as the diagram on page 27 shows. While Amos and Hosea preached mainly to the northern ten-tribe kingdom of Israel, Isaiah and Micah were mostly concerned with the kingdom of Judah in the south of Palestine. The beginning and end of each prophet’s work cannot be fixed precisely, with the single exception of Isaiah’s own call to be God’s spokesman at the start of his ministry, which we are told, was ‘in the year that king Uzziah died’.\(^{10}\) He prophesied for at least 39 years, and possibly considerably longer.

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**MAJOR SECTIONS OF THE PROPHECY**

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\(^8\)The books of Moses (Genesis—Deuteronomy) and Joshua—Kings are generally classed as ‘historical books’ and are accordingly excluded from the narrower definition of ‘literary prophets’ used here simply for convenience.

\(^9\) II Kings 14. 25

\(^{10}\) 1 Kings 16. 29
AUTHOR AND THEME OF PROPHECY

About Isaiah himself we know relatively little, beyond the simple facts that he was married and had two sons. His name means ‘Salvation of Yahweh’ (Jehovah) and the grand theme of the book is that Yahweh, *the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker*\(^{11}\) will first have to punish His people but will afterwards save them—and His city Jerusalem—with an everlasting salvation.\(^{12}\) All the nations of the earth will ultimately reap great benefit from the outcome of God’s great saving work, a work primarily entrusted to one He calls *My Servant*. Isaiah has much to tell us about the personal work of this promised saviour of God’s people and city. In the outline which now follows, we can only mention a few of the many important matters about which the prophet informs us. The arrangement of the book is more or less chronological, as can be seen from our table of contents, and corresponds to the order of the reigning kings of Judah mentioned in the opening verse of the prophecy.

A NEW AND PEACEFUL ERA

After the initial trial scene, with its many telling contrasts between Jerusalem’s earlier honourable position and later depraved state,\(^{13}\) there appears the first of a number of ‘word pictures’ of the city’s future glory. It is shown to be the capital city of the coming kingdom of God on earth, no longer restricted to the boundaries of Israel but exercising authority over all lands.\(^{14}\) *Many peoples* will make their way

\(^{11}\) 45. 11  \(^{12}\) 45. 17; 51. 6  \(^{13}\) 1. 21-23  \(^{14}\) 1. 1-4
there, not just to learn God’s laws but also with the genuine desire to keep them—an ideal so remote at the present time as to appear quite unattainable. This ‘unnatural behaviour’ is emphasised by comparing the nations to ‘waters flowing TOWARDS a mountain peak’.\(^{15}\) This speaks eloquently of the divine power which will be employed against proud nations in order to achieve so desirable an aim.\(^{16}\) But how wonderful and satisfying the result!—an end at long last to the incessant warfare between even ‘civilised’ peoples, which has sapped their strength and robbed them of the benefits of true peace and stability.\(^{17}\) Later chapters describe in great detail the divinely-appointed ruler who will have the power to turn this ideal into reality. He will rule on David’s throne in Jerusalem,\(^{18}\) making just laws AND enforcing them (unenforceable laws are useless, however good in principle), for he will be equipped with all the wisdom and power necessary for success.\(^{19}\) It should be noted that we have here a close ‘cause and effect’ connection; God will not allow true peace on earth until men first of all give Him the glory, honour and obedience to which, as our Creator, He is rightly entitled.\(^{20}\)

**THE PROMISE OF ‘IMMANUEL’**

The first section ends with the description of Isaiah’s ready response to God’s call for a ‘volunteer’ to witness against His obstinate and unheeding people, a people who would close their eyes and ears to the plainest evidences of God’s hand at work amongst them.\(^{21}\) This prediction, confirmed in almost every subsequent generation, was especially fulfilled when Jesus appeared on earth. Born of a virgin by the power of the Holy Spirit, and therefore Son of God in a unique sense, he was truly ‘Immanuel’ (i.e. God-with-us), according to the exact prediction of Isaiah.\(^{22}\) Although Jesus worked so many signs and miracles amongst the Jews, their eyes were blinded and their ears closed to the identity of their benefactor, and he was rejected and crucified by the very people he had come to save.\(^{23}\) As punishment for this wicked deed God used the Romans to lay waste the Jewish state in AD 70 and scatter the survivors throughout the world. When these events took place the prophetic element in the names of Isaiah’s sons was fulfilled, for ‘Maher-shalal-hashbaz’\(^{24}\) (which means ‘Speed spoil, hasten prey’) foresees the coming invasions of Israel by Assyrians, Babylonians and Romans, while ‘Shear-jashub’\(^{25}\) (which means ‘A remnant shall return’) points to the fact that from each Jewish exile or scattering, only a small proportion of the nation would ever return to their own land. The latter part of this section likens the then imminent Assyrian invasion to a river overflowing its banks and flooding the surrounding lands.\(^{26}\) There is to be a similar invasion of Israel from the north in our own era, when God will again rescue Jerusalem in the nick of time, just as He rescued king Hezekiah and Jerusalem in Isaiah’s day.\(^{27}\)

\(^{15}\) 2. 10-19  \(^{16}\) 2. 4; 32. 17, 18  \(^{17}\) 6. 7  \(^{18}\) 11. 1-5  \(^{19}\) Luke 2. 14  \(^{20}\) Chapter 6  
\(^{21}\) 14 (compare Matthew 1. 23); 8. 8, 10  \(^{22}\) John 12. 37, 40  \(^{23}\) 3, 4  
\(^{24}\) Cp. 10. 20-22; 37. 31, 32  \(^{25}\) 5-8  \(^{26}\) 37. 33-37
PROPHETS AND KINGS OF JUDAH IN THE DAYS OF ISAIAH

Reproduced from the 'Chart of Old Testament Kings and Prophets', by John C. Whitcomb, Jr., 4th Edn., 1966, with acknowledgements. Whitcomb has incorporated Thiel's arrangement of overlapping reigns for many of the Kings of Judah—explicitly stated in the case of Uzziah and Jotham (II Chronicles 26. 21)
DIVINE JUDGEMENTS ON ISRAEL AND HER NEIGHBOURS

The third section of the book consists of a series of 'dooms', or divine judgements, upon the ancient nations of the Middle East, including Babylon,28 Moab,29 Egypt,30 and Tyre.31 As with every part of Scripture, full attention should be paid here to the context, lest the poetic language against the king of Babylon32 be misinterpreted as lending support to the 'fallen angel' myth commonly held in the churches.

The fourth section has much to say against the bad behaviour of Israel in general, and the inhabitants of Zion in particular,33 but further promises of divine intervention and ultimate salvation34 relieve an otherwise gloomy record of backsliding and treachery. and it is on this much happier note the section ends:

'... The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.'35

Then follows section five, a word for word extract from the Second Book of Kings which records the Assyrian invasion of the northern kingdom of Israel in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign;36 the invading army was miraculously destroyed as it was besieging Jerusalem. Also included is the story of Hezekiah's illness and recovery, but only in Isaiah do we find included the king's 'psalm of joy', written after his new lease of life.37 Instead of being cut off from the land of the living in the 'noontide' of his days,38 Hezekiah's life was extended for fifteen more years, and on his recovery he was able to go up to 'the house of the Lord' (i.e. the temple) on the third day, as he had evidently been promised.39 The experience here of Hezekiah, whom God calls 'the prince of My people',40 foreshadows the great work of the 'Suffering Servant' which is such a prominent feature of the final section of this book.41

ZION SAVED AND GLORIFIED

It is one of the main faults of modern critics of the Bible to assume that God cannot foresee (and therefore foretell) future events, although the Scriptures include many predictions which were fulfilled centuries after they were first made. This is especially true of the final section of Isaiah (from chapter 40 onwards), which predicts the fall of Babylon through the conquest of Cyrus king of Persia in 539 BC, (and Cyrus is actually mentioned by name in the prophecy).42 The critics are sure that 'it must have been written after the event' by a 'second-Isaiah' of the

28Chapter 13-14 and 21  29Chapters 15-16  30Chapters 19-20  31Chapter 23
3214. 12—but note verses 4, 16 and 18-22  33Chapters 28-31  34Chapters 25-26  3535. 10, 33
36Compare chapters 36-39 with II Kings 18. 13-20. 19  3738. 10-20  3838. 10 (R.V. and R.S.V.)
39II Kings 20. 8  40II Kings 20. 5 (R.V. and R.S.V.)
41There are several allusions to Hezekiah's reign in this section; cp. II Kings 18. 4 and 62. 4 with II Kings 21. 1
4244. 28; 45. 1. For a parallel prophecy, see II Chronicles 36. 22, 23
sixth century BC and that a ‘third-Isaiah’ was responsible for some of the later chapters! In fact, there is no documentary evidence whatever for even a second author. For the Christian the words of the apostle John rule out the idea completely. When we come to appreciate that God predicted in the ‘servant poems’ many details of the trial, condemnation and sacrifice of His Son EIGHT CENTURIES in advance, is it really too much to believe that He could foresee the events of a mere couple of centuries ahead? The irony of the situation is that it is precisely this section of the book which challenges man’s ability to foretell the future; it rightly claims that only God can foresee coming events, and that this foreknowledge is clear evidence of His active part in the affairs of the nations, directing them to the fulfilment of His own declared purpose.

In the most notable of the Suffering Servant passages the ‘lamb of God’ is led uncomplainingly to be sacrificed as a sin-offering for all God’s people. He was despised and rejected by men, and cut off out of the land of the living. His enemies ‘appointed his grave with the wicked’, i.e. they intended his body to be thrown into the valley of Hinnom outside Jerusalem where all the refuse of the city—and the corpses of criminals—were deposited, but (as the Gospels plainly state) Jesus was instead placed in the tomb of a rich man, Joseph of Arimathea. But this notable prophecy, like the others on this theme, also holds out for the Servant the promise of resurrection and reward, and this too will be completely fulfilled in due course, for God is always faithful to His promises. Note in passing that the ‘servant’ in these immensely important predictions cannot be the nation of Israel (as the Jews themselves argue) because the identities of the two are kept quite distinct.

This section concludes with Jerusalem (and all Israel) restored to God’s favour. Zion herself is to become the most sought out of all cities, the focus of prayer, sacrifice, worship and pilgrimage. It is a most heartening description of the better days to come, and contrasts markedly with the turmoil and dissension at present raging over the city and over Israel’s territorial rights. But these assurances for the future will not fail; the exact fulfilment of the ‘Suffering Servant’ prophecies guarantees the return of the same ‘Servant’ to complete the work envisaged and bring all the earth into harmony with its Creator. The present deteriorating position of Israel in the Middle-East struggle is, for the believer in God’s Word, the clearest sign of Messiah’s return and the fulfilment of all these golden promises for Zion’s future and the world’s salvation.

43Many scholars have pointed out that the language and subject matter of these later chapters reflect very closely their earlier counterparts; for a detailed study see R. K. Harrison’s ‘Introduction to the Old Testament’ London: Tyndale Press 1970, pp. 764-800.
44John 12. 38-41 where quotations from Isaiah 6 and 53 are attributed to the same person.
45There are four main passages, viz. 42. 1-9; 49. 1-13; 50. 4-9 and 52. 13-53. 12; cp. 61. 1-3 41, 21-29; 44. 7; 45. 11; 46. 9-11 4753. 7-10 4853. 3, 8 4953. 9; this translation is supported by Rotherham’s ‘Emphasized Bible’. 50Matthew 27. 57-60 5153. 10-12 5253. 8 53Chapters 60. 62, 65-66 54Cp. Jeremiah 30. 4-9, 8. 12-24 5560. 1-3
The prophet of the kingdom

THE PROPHET ISAIAH spoke clearly of the time when God would replace human rule with divine government:

'Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness... And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever.'

Isaiah tells us that the new king will be in the line of David and he uses words that remind us of the message spoken to Mary by the angel Gabriel:

'For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.'

If Christians needed confirmation that the great king who is shortly to rule the world is the Lord Jesus Christ, that confirmation can be found in the words of the apostle Paul in his great speech to the people of Athens:

'He (God) has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all men by raising him from the dead.'

1Isaiah 32. 1, 17  2Isaiah 11. 1  3Isaiah 9. 6, 7  4Acts 17. 31 (R.S.V.)
WHAT THE KINGDOM WILL BE LIKE

Isaiah tells us that when God’s kingdom is established, present world social problems will be solved. Here is a brief list of some of the passages that are worth looking up. They are all passages which speak of the results of divine rule.

World disarmament—no more war  
Isaiah 2. 2-4

This will be the direct result of effective government and law reform  
Isaiah 11. 2-4

The peace will extend to the animal world  
Isaiah 11. 7, 8

Great desert areas will be irrigated after geographical changes result in springs of water breaking out  
Isaiah 35. 6, 7

There will be adequate housing and proper living conditions  
Isaiah 49. 10

World health problems will be controlled  
Isaiah 65. 21

These passages from the book of the prophet Isaiah are but a sample of dozens that could be quoted from the Old Testament books and from the words of Jesus and his apostles in the New Testament. The setting up of God’s kingdom is the great theme of the whole of the Bible.

‘The God of heaven will set up a kingdom, that will never be destroyed.’

‘The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.’

This great message of hope for the world is coupled with the offer of personal salvation through the saving work of Jesus when he came for the first time, nearly 2,000 years ago.

The publishers of LIGHT on a New World (of which this booklet is a special issue) have absolute confidence that what God has promised He will also perform. The Dead Sea Scrolls underline our faith in the accuracy of the Bible. It is our hope that the magazine will help in providing a greater understanding of Bible teaching so that, when Jesus comes again, there will be all over the world, people who have accepted the invitation of the ‘Suffering Servant’ to, ‘Come unto me’ and who have followed the acceptance of that invitation by copying his example of obedience.

‘He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.’

Editors
THE COMING AGE

The desert and the parched land will be glad;
the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.
Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom;
it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.
The glory of Lebanon will be given to it,
the splendour of Carmel and Sharon;
they will see the glory of the Lord,
the splendour of our God.

Waters will gush forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert.
The burning sand will become a pool,
the thirsty ground bubbling springs.
In the haunts where jackals once lay,
grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.
And a highway will be there;
it will be called the Way of Holiness.
The unclean will not journey on it;
it will be for those who walk in that Way;
wicked fools will not go about on it.
No lion will be there,
nor will any ferocious beast get up on it;
they will not be found there.
But only the redeemed will walk there,
and the ransomed of the Lord will return.
They will enter Zion with singing;
everlasting joy will crown their heads.
Gladness and joy will overtake them,
and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Isaiah 35,
New International Version
The Christadelphians believe the Bible (Old and New Testaments) to be the wholly inspired and infallible Word of God. Its principal theme is the salvation of mankind through the Saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ and the setting up of the Kingdom of God under his rulership when he returns to the earth.

*

*LIGHT on a New World* is published to provide a better understanding of this true Christian hope and the Editor will be pleased to arrange for the magazine to be posted to any address on request without charge.

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The Christadelphians are very willing to answer questions about Bible teaching either privately or in the pages of *LIGHT*, and correspondence will be welcomed.