

# Isaiah's 'end times' visions

## Isaiah's pre-kingdom visions of desolation in the land area promised to Israel

We have tended to concentrate more on Ezekiel and Zechariah in the past, missing some very revealing latter day visions of Isaiah

### Key verse

● “And it shall come to pass in that day that the LORD will thresh (beat off AV), from the channel of the River to the Brook (stream AV) of Egypt; and you will be gathered one by one, O you children of Israel.” Isa.27:12 NKJV

### Introduction

The prophecies quoted on this sheet are in the context of the time of the end and the punishments God has in store for Middle East nations stretching from the northern Euphrates area down to the far south west beyond Israel into Sinai. Like many last days prophecies there is often **dual application**, with the blending of latter day events with events contemporary to Israel in Isaiah's time which can involve Assyria and Sennacherib.

### A tale of two rivers

The first “River” mentioned in Isa.27:12 is the Euphrates. Rivers in Scripture are used to synonymously describe the country they flow through, in this case being Syria. This is because the phrase “channel<sup>(1)</sup> of the River” refers to the **faster flowing upper reaches** of the Euphrates in Syria, flowing from the highlands of Turkey. These days this flow rate has been reduced by the building of dams in Turkey and Syria.

The “brook or river of Egypt” is also known as ‘Wadi el-Arish’<sup>(2)</sup> and is **not** the Nile. It is a small, usually dry ‘wadi’ in the Sinai, south of Israel, some distance south of Gaza, and was also the border for the kingdom under Solomon (1 Kings 8:65).

### The Promised Land borders

- “the brook of Egypt...to the entrance of Hamath” Num.34:5,8
- “the entrance of Hamath to the brook of Egypt” 1 Kings 8:65
- “Hamath...along the brook to the great sea” Ezek.47:16,19

The area described by Isaiah from the Euphrates in the north of Syria to the brook of Egypt is the exact area of land promised to Israel in the kingdom age. These **exact** boundaries were given to **Moses, Solomon** and reinforced by **Ezekiel**.

The sovereignty of the first Kingdom of God under Solomon stretched from the Euphrates in the north of Hamath to the brook of Egypt in the south. So the promise to Abraham<sup>(3)</sup> can be understood in a ‘Hamath to Sinai’ context, which is in harmony with the boundaries given to Moses and the Prophets. So, any nations today who fall within this **promised land area** eg **Jordan, Syria and Lebanon**, will cease to be independent nations in the Kingdom Age. This is why Isaiah presents us with only **three major surviving Middle East nations** in the kingdom age (Israel, Egypt and Assyria, Isa.19:23-25).

### The Promised Land ‘threshed’

This prophecy shows that at the same time Israel is regathered from the nations, the area **set aside for Israel** in the future age will first be ‘threshed’<sup>(4)</sup>. In the next column, Isaiah's prophecy from chapter 33 describes in graphic detail the results of this ‘threshing’, involving Israel and her northern neighbors.

1. ‘Channel’ = ‘shibboleth’ in Hebrew, which in this case means, ‘a branching fast flowing stream’. Strong's 7641 OT
2. ‘Wadi’ is Arabic for a river bed which is usually dry except after rain. The Hebrew word here is ‘nachal’ which refers to a ‘winter torrent’ or a narrow valley in which a brook runs. Strong's 5158 OT
3. The Hebrew word ‘nahar’ translated ‘river’ in Gen.15:18 can be understood as ‘the Nile’, ‘a stream’ or even, ‘the sea’. Strong's 5104 OT
4. The Hebrew here is ‘chabat’ which is used in Judges 6:11 to describe Gideon threshing wheat. John the baptist also uses ‘harvest language’ to describe judgement (Matt.3:12). Note the harvest language eg “chaff”, “stubble”, “fire” and “burnings” quoted from Isaiah ch33 in the next column.  
See also Mal.4:1; Obad.v18. ‘chabat’, Strong's 2251 OT

### Northern desolation (ch33:9,14)

● “Surely their valiant ones shall cry outside, the ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly. The highways lie waste, the traveling man ceases. He has broken the covenant, he has despised the cities, he regards no man. The earth mourns and languishes, Lebanon is shamed and shriveled; Sharon is like a wilderness, and Bashan and Carmel shake off their fruits.” Isa.33:7-9 NKJV

● “The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness has seized the hypocrites; ‘Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?’” Isa.33:14

Isaiah ch33 concentrates on conditions in Israel and her northern neighbors at the time of the end with a dual application to Sennacherib's historic invasion. By this time all attempts at peace have failed and normal day to day activities are no longer possible. Ambassadors and peace keepers will indeed, “weep bitterly”.

Five areas are described in terms of **desolation** due to ongoing war:

**Lebanon** is “shamed and shriveled” after harbouring Israel's enemies for so long (“shamed and hewn down” AV). An interesting choice of words when you consider the national pride Lebanon has had in the past for its cedar trees. The July/Aug.06 war in Lebanon is just a shadow of things to come.

**Sharon** is “like a wilderness” or “like the Arabah” (NIV) The plain of Sharon is one of Israel's main agricultural areas. A disaster here could mean severe food shortages just prior to Armageddon. **Two thirds** of Israel's population live on the coastal plains.

**Carmel** overlooks Israel's main port of **Haifa** which is a major industrial area, oil refining centre and home to Israel's navy. The ‘shaking’ of fruit or leaves (RSV) indicates bad weather. Storms can be symbolic of warfare (Ezek.38:9; Isa.25:4).

**Bashan** in southern Syria (near Golan) to the east of Galilee is also suffering like Carmel. This could indicate that Syria and other enemies mentioned by Ezekiel, including Iran, are invading Israel in this area.

**Zion** “Fearfulness” in Zion (v14) has happened many times in the past including BC700, BC590 and AD70. This verse helps complete the picture of devastation for Israel and her neighbours just before God acts.

**Israel, Lebanon and southern Syria are all in great despair**

At some stage at the time of the end there will be a vain claim that peace has finally been achieved (1 Thess.5:3) but this is not peace based on **truth and God's righteousness** (Isa.26:2,9).

### God acts (ch33:10-14)

● “Now I will rise’, says the LORD; ‘Now I will be exalted, now I will lift Myself up. You shall conceive **chaff**, you shall bring forth **stubble**; Your breath, as **fire**, shall devour you. And the people shall be like the **burnings of lime**; like thorns cut up they shall be burned in the fire.” Isa.33:10-12 NKJV

● “But they shall fly upon the shoulder of the Philistines toward the west; together they shall plunder the people of the east; they shall lay their hand on Edom and Moab; and the people of Ammon shall obey them.” Isa.11:14 and Isa.25:10

God can no longer withhold his punishments on the ungodly. This may correspond with the time Jesus' feet again stand on the Mount of Olives, triggering and the greatest earthquake the world has ever seen (Zech.14:4). You will notice that Isaiah ch33 fails to mention the people of **Jordan and Gaza**. The verse above though from ch.11 completes the picture of the eventual humbling of all of Israel's immediate neighbors so that Israel can finally occupy **all of the land promised to them**.