

# ISAIAH

## ISAIAH 1:21-28, ZION'S CORRUPTION AND REDEMPTION

In this section of Isaiah 1, the corruption of the city and its subsequent redemption is the subject. This was about a description of the city's sin and rebellion in Isaiah's day, and it referred to a long-term fulfillment of God's promise to judge the wicked and restore the faithful remnant.

The historical background of the city referred to here, which is Zion, and which we now know as Jerusalem, is worth studying. This city was originally named Jebus and its inhabitants were known as Jebusites.

Judges 19:10–11 <sup>10</sup>But the man was not willing to spend the night, so he arose and departed and came to a *place* opposite Jebus [יְבוּס] (that is, Jerusalem [יְרוּשָׁלַיִם or יְרוּשָׁלַיִם]). And there were with him a pair of saddled donkeys; his concubine also was with him. <sup>11</sup>When they were near Jebus, the day was almost gone; and the servant said to his master, "Please come, and let us turn aside into this city of the Jebusites [יְבוּסִי] and spend the night in it."

Once David conquered the city, it became known as the city of David.

1 Chronicles 11:4–7 <sup>4</sup>Then David and all Israel went to Jerusalem (that is, Jebus); and the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, were there. <sup>5</sup>The inhabitants of Jebus said to David, "You shall not enter here." Nevertheless David captured the stronghold of Zion [צִיּוֹן] (that is, the city of David). <sup>6</sup>Now David had said, "Whoever strikes down a Jebusite first shall be chief and commander." Joab the son of Zeruiah went up first, so he became chief. <sup>7</sup>Then David dwelt in the stronghold; therefore it was called the city of David.

2 Samuel 5:7 <sup>7</sup>Nevertheless, David captured the stronghold of Zion, that is the city of David.

Once the Temple Mount was purchased by David and the Temple built by Solomon, that area, which was outside the original city, also became known as Zion.

Psalms 2:6 <sup>6</sup>"But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain."

Eventually, Zion came to refer to not only the city, but to Judah and the people of Israel in total.

Isaiah 40:9 <sup>9</sup>Get yourself up on a high mountain, O Zion, bearer of good news, Lift up your voice mightily, O Jerusalem, bearer of good news; Lift *it* up, do not fear. Say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!"

Zechariah 9:13 <sup>13</sup>For I will bend Judah as My bow, I will fill the bow with Ephraim. And I will stir up your sons, O Zion, against your sons, O Greece; And I will make you like a warrior's sword.

The prophet Isaiah compared Zion to the city as it once was, a faithful city, to what it had become, a city of injustice and murder.

Isaiah 1:21 <sup>21</sup>How [אֵיכָה] the faithful [אֱמוּנָה] city has become a harlot [זוֹנָה], She who was full of justice [מִשְׁפָּט]! Righteousness [צְדָקָה] once lodged [לָיוֹן or לֵיוֹן] in her, But now murderers [רָצִיחַ].

Unfortunately, their periods of unfaithfulness eventually overshadowed the periods of faithfulness culminating in the rebellion and apostasy that invoked divine judgment once God's patience ran out.

How, אֵיכָה, is a word used in this context to express mourning. It is also the first word used by Jeremiah in the book of Lamentations. "Isaiah's mournful 'eihah' starts his lament over Jerusalem. The memory of her glorious past and her wretched present condition evokes unspeakable sadness in his heart" [Victor Buksbazen, *The Prophet Isaiah: A Commentary*, 108]. This word indicates that the words spoken here are a lament over the state of the nation. The Hebrew form of what follows resembles words spoken at a funeral. "From this word, which gives the keynote, the rest all follows, soft, full, monotonous, long drawn out and slow, just in the style of an elegy" [C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Isaiah*, vol. 7, 7:66].

"Jerusalem becomes here, more so than before, a representative of the nation as a whole. As Jerusalem is, so are the people; as the people are, so is Jerusalem. And whatever might be the case, whatever Jerusalem might be if she would repent, this city, the center of Israel's religious ideals, had become the center of oppression and greed. The cause for the prophet's lament is obvious. If Hebron or Lachish or Gezer were to be a center of rebellion and wickedness that would be bad. But for Jerusalem to become such a place indicated that the rot was not merely superficial and regrettable; it was central and catastrophic" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah Chapters 1-39*, 105]. One of the things we will note in this section of the book, is, while the immediate context involves Judah and Jerusalem, the nation as a whole in terms of a long-term historical program is in evidence.

Faithful, אֱמוּנָה, means to be firm, to build up, to support, to nurture, or to establish. It is used as a metaphor to indicate a level of faithfulness and trustworthiness that renders one dependable and reliable. In this conjugation, it means to be faithful, sure, and dependable. Stability is an element of the word as used in this context. At times, the city and, by extension, the nation, exhibited these characteristics, however, frequently they did not. Some commentators believe this is a reference to the reign of Hezekiah in the prophet's day, but it is likely a reference all the way back to the founding of the nation and particularly to the reigns of David and Solomon, in his early years on the throne, and to other faithful kings in Judah, few as they may have been, throughout the nation's history. Others also want to restrict the concept of murder to Manasseh's reign who followed the reign of his father, Hezekiah, but there seems to be no good reason to

restrict it to only one king's reign. There were many unfaithful kings in both the Northern and the Southern kingdoms who were unfaithful and committed criminal violations of the Mosaic Law.

Harlot, זִנָּה, means to fornicate, to prostitute. It refers to a person who has sex with a partner to whom she is not married for bribes, favors, or other kinds of payment. Figuratively, in this context, it identifies the contrast between the faithful city and the unfaithful state to which it had fallen. The word is generally used of women, but men may also be prostitutes, and some of the pagan religious rituals involved sacred male prostitutes. We must remember that the relationship between Yahweh and Israel was referred to as husband and wife. The book of Hosea is an extended metaphor about the marriage relationship. Any reference to Israel playing the harlot is a reference to the unfaithfulness the Israelites exhibited within the parameters of the relationship they were supposed to have with Yahweh.

Prostitution or harlotry, was a common biblical metaphor used to describe the faithless state of the Israelites and it started very early in their history. It was frequently used to describe the Israelite's dalliances with idolatry. In the context here, it is related more to rebellion and criminal activity, idolatry can never be eliminated as an element of the rebuke being levied against them.

God commanded the Israelites to refrain from entering into covenants with the Canaanites for this very reason.

Exodus 34:12–16 <sup>12</sup>“Watch yourself that you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, or it will become a snare in your midst. <sup>13</sup>“But *rather*, you are to tear down their altars and smash their *sacred* pillars and cut down their Asherim <sup>14</sup>—for you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God— <sup>15</sup>otherwise you might make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they would play the harlot with their gods and sacrifice to their gods, and someone might invite you to eat of his sacrifice, <sup>16</sup>and you might take some of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters might play the harlot with their gods and cause your sons *also* to play the harlot with their gods.

We now know the Israelites were unfaithful and embraced the pagan religions of the Canaanites and that unfaithfulness was called playing the harlot. That was a problem throughout the nation's history. That was a very big reason why the nation eventually had to experience the divine discipline they were promised for disobedience and rebellion.

This verse used another contrast, righteousness and justice vs. murder, to highlight the extent to which the nation had fallen and departed from faithful service for which they were created.

Righteousness, צְדָקָה, means to have a right relation to an ethical or a legal standard. It refers to the administration of the Law in accordance with the will of God. At times, the city and the nation had the kind of relationship with Yahweh they were created to have, but those periods did not last long. The nation's relationship with Yahweh was generally characterized by idolatry, apostasy, and rebellion. It wasn't until after the

Babylonian captivity that idolatry was erased from the nation. Today, the Israelites are generally characterized by atheism or by an indifference to God that has been replaced with a cultural identification with Judaism. Being a Jew has been divorced from a relationship with Yahweh. Others embrace rabbinic Judaism which is a perversion of all that Yahweh intended for them when the Mosaic Law was established. They are still in a spiritual pickle, but the overt worship of pagan gods is not a big problem for them today.

Lodge, [לון or לין], means to lodge, to tarry, to stay often overnight. The point is that righteousness had, at one time, been a permanent resident of the city. The city where righteousness was once a permanent resident had become the lodging place for murderers.

Justice, מִשְׁפָּט, means a judgment, a legal decision, a legal case, a claim. In this context, it is coupled with righteousness therefore referring to the simple justice God requires when dealing with other people. People should have been properly treated according to the standards of the Mosaic Law and the basic decency that people should accord one another in civil society.

Murder, רָצַח, means to murder, to slay, or to kill. In this context, it means exactly that. It refers to taking another human being's life. Buksbazen stated that the form of this word, מְרַצְחִים, referred to professional murderers [Victor Buksbazen, *The Prophet Isaiah: A Commentary*, 108]. Young concurred. "The word 'murderers' indicates those who are habitual or professional murderers, the lowest and worst class of men engaged in violent crimes. Furthermore, as Pool has pointed out, murder is mentioned in order to assure us that other crimes of a lesser nature were not only not punished, but were apparently even encouraged" [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, 1:81].

They may be overstating the case when they characterize the murderers as professional hit men although that was certainly part of the problem. Everyone's hands were covered with blood (v. 15). Crime in general was rampant in Israelite society at the time.

The Israelites were doing exactly the opposite of what righteousness and justice means; they were treating people with disdain and taking advantage of the poor and the defenseless. They were even killing people in order to pervert justice and enrich themselves. Not only the leaders of the nation, but the religious authorities and the people themselves were not above killing others if it furthered their own personal interests.

The next verse describes the extent to which the filth of sin had impacted the people. It was compared to impurities and dilution.

Isaiah 1:22 <sup>22</sup>Your silver has become dross [סוג or סיג], Your drink diluted [מְהִל] with water.

Dross, סוג or סיג, refers to the impurities that are smelted out of a more precious metal or it may refer to the base metal in its impure state prior to smelting. Either way, it is referring

to the impurity that exists in ore prior to smelting. In context, it refers to the impurities that have become part of the nation's societal, governmental, and religious state. They have abandoned righteousness and justice and replaced them with murder. The seriousness of what Yahweh characterized as dross in the nation cannot be overemphasized. The impurity eventually must be purged from Israel if they are to realize the covenant promises, and that will happen when they are passed under the rod of judgment during the Tribulation (Ezek. 20:33-38). Through the prophet Ezekiel, Yahweh revealed the extent of His wrath over the presence of unfaithfulness in the nation.

Ezekiel 22:17–22 <sup>17</sup>And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, <sup>18</sup>“Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross to Me; all of them are bronze and tin and iron and lead in the furnace; they are the dross of silver. <sup>19</sup>“Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Because all of you have become dross, therefore, behold, I am going to gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. <sup>20</sup>‘As they gather silver and bronze and iron and lead and tin into the furnace to blow fire on it in order to melt *it*, so I will gather you in My anger and in My wrath and I will lay you *there* and melt you. <sup>21</sup>‘I will gather you and blow on you with the fire of My wrath, and you will be melted in the midst of it. <sup>22</sup>‘As silver is melted in the furnace, so you will be melted in the midst of it; and you will know that I, the LORD, have poured out My wrath on you.’”

Jeremiah also used the metaphor of smelting and purifying metals to reveal the resistance of the people to Yahweh's words through the prophets, and to indicate that they were so rebellious, that not even the extreme heat of smelting ore could separate them from their rebellion at least in Jeremiah's time. They will finally get the message when they experience the high heat of the wrath of God during the Tribulation.

Jeremiah 6:27–30 <sup>27</sup>“I have made you an assayer *and* a tester among My people, That you may know and assay their way.” <sup>28</sup>All of them are stubbornly rebellious, Going about as a talebearer. *They are* bronze and iron; They, all of them, are corrupt. <sup>29</sup>The bellows blow fiercely, The lead is consumed by the fire; In vain the refining goes on, But the wicked are not separated. <sup>30</sup>They call them rejected silver, Because the LORD has rejected them.

Dilute, מְדַלֵּל, in this verse, refers to adulterating something with water so that it loses its character and its quality. In English, this context carries the meaning of making something weaker in force, content, or value by modifying it or adding other elements to it. Symbolically, diluting the city and the nation with water represented destroying the high calling of righteousness and justice and all the good things God desired for the nation to do and replacing them with unfaithfulness and the filth of sin.

The next verse relates to the complete spiritual rebellion against Yahweh and to the moral degradation that had come to characterize the daily life of the people. It also relates to the callousness of the rulers who were taking advantage of widows and orphans. The rulers were in cahoots with the crooks! Self-enrichment was their goal at the expense of Yahweh, the nation, and the people.

Isaiah 1:23 <sup>23</sup>Your rulers are rebels And companions [הַבָּרִי] of thieves; Everyone loves a bribe [שֹׁחַד] And chases after rewards. They do not defend the orphan, Nor does the widow's plea come before them.

Companions, הַבָּרִי, means friendship, association with, being friends with, a companion. The rulers were taking advantage of the people and associating with the criminal element in a mutually beneficial relationship—an evil relationship to be sure, but one that was temporally, materially enriching. People in positions of authority who do that are people we would consider to be morally lacking and quite despicable. That sort of thing eats at the conscience of most Americans who are a fair-minded people and a compassionate people to the disadvantaged. We have to be realistic, however, and admit that has never been true in America either, but it does represent the ideals upon which we were founded. How much more then should God's choice people who were created to glorify Him and who were appointed to His service have godly rulers?

Bribe, שֹׁחַד, means a bribe or a reward or a gift. In this context, bribery is the issue. It refers to a consideration given to someone in authority in order to influence their decision in favor of the one providing the consideration. This is the epitome of unfairness and dishonesty; it is pure evil. The Lord strongly condemned this type of behavior and we can only imagine how heartbroken He must have been when the rulers of His people violated them in this way.

Exodus 23:8 <sup>8</sup>"You shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and subverts the cause of the just.

Isaiah 5:23 <sup>23</sup>Who justify the wicked for a bribe, And take away the rights of the ones who are in the right!

Deuteronomy 16:19 <sup>19</sup>"You shall not distort justice; you shall not be partial, and you shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the righteous.

One of the things the rulers had seemingly forgotten was the fact that justice was to be done in Israel as to the Lord. Those who were in positions of authority were abusing the Lord when they were abusing His people. It is the same concept expressed by Christ Jesus when He asked Saul why the Pharisee was persecuting Him.

2 Chronicles 19:5–7 <sup>5</sup>He appointed judges in the land in all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city. <sup>6</sup>He said to the judges, "Consider what you are doing, for you do not judge for man but for the LORD who is with you when you render judgment. <sup>7</sup>"Now then let the fear of the LORD be upon you; be very careful what you do, for the LORD our God will have no part in unrighteousness or partiality or the taking of a bribe."

Acts 9:3–5 <sup>3</sup>As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; <sup>4</sup>and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" <sup>5</sup>And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting,

Having laid out the case against the Israelites, the prophet then revealed Yahweh's promise to execute His wrath on those in Israel who opposed Him and rebelled against Him.

Isaiah 1:24 <sup>24</sup>Therefore the Lord GOD of hosts [אֲדוֹן יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת], The Mighty One of Israel [אֲבִיר יִשְׂרָאֵל], declares, "Ah [הוֹי], I will be relieved [נָחַם] of My adversaries [צָר] And avenge [נָקַם] Myself on My foes [אֹיֵב]."

The Lord God of hosts, אֲדוֹן יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, refers to Yahweh's power over the world, but even more specifically to the God of Israel. "The title [Yahweh-Sabaoth] designates God as King and Ruler of Israel, its armies, its temple, and of the entire universe" [s.v. "Names of God," *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, rev. ed., 1144].

In case there is any doubt, Yahweh is identified as The Mighty One of Israel [אֲבִיר יִשְׂרָאֵל]. He is not said to be the Mighty One of the United States or of the United Nations; He is The Mighty One of Israel. He is God over the world, but He is specifically The Mighty One of Israel. This title is used six times in Scripture, but the other five times, He is identified as The Mighty One of Jacob [אֲבִיר יַעֲקֹב].

Relieved, נָחַם, means to be sorry, to pity, to comfort, to avenge. In this context, to avenge is the appropriate use of the word. God is not sorry that He is going to execute judgment on the Israelites. He may be sorry that they have rebelled against Him and therefore invoked the covenant curses, but He is not sorry that He is going to discipline them by carrying out His promises. He specifically told them through the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel that He would carry out His disciplinary promises without being sorry.

Avenge, נָקַם, means to avenge, to take revenge, to be avenged.

The Israelites are called God's adversaries and foes, but in terms of the end times meaning contained in this verse, it refers to all His adversaries and foes, Jew and Gentile.

Adversary, צָר, means an enemy, a foe, an adversary, an oppressor, and foe, אֹיֵב, means an enemy.

The Lord begins this sentence with a lament. Ah, הוֹי, means Ho! Woe! Alas! It is used when lamenting a death. This reflects the depth of feeling the Lord has for His people and the sorrow He feels over imposing the discipline on them He promised centuries before knowing they would disobey His commands and rebel against His authority. The word represents "the painfulness of pity being mingled with the determined outbreak of wrath" [C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Isaiah*, 7 vols., 7:68].

The point is the Israelites had become faithless and rebellious rendering them God's enemies. As God's enemies, they had incurred His wrath and He was going to execute judgment on them according to the dictates of Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28.

Once again, the metaphor of smelting ore was used to signify the judgment the rebellious nation would suffer and the purification that would result. The complete destruction of Jerusalem and Judah is not the issue; purification is the issue. All that will remain after the judgment is complete is the purified Remnant.

Isaiah 1:25–27 <sup>25</sup>“I will also turn My hand against you, And will smelt away your dross as with lye And will remove all your alloy. <sup>26</sup>“Then I will restore your judges as at the first, And your counselors as at the beginning; After that you will be called the city of righteousness, A faithful city.” <sup>27</sup>Zion will be redeemed with justice And her repentant ones with righteousness.

This judgement and the resulting purification must be referring to the far in the future Messianic Kingdom. Many theologians believe it is referring to the judgement Jerusalem was about to suffer at the hands of Babylon. That cannot be correct; however, because that judgment did not result in a righteous nation. Centuries later, Christ called Israel an adulterous generation (Mt. 12:39, 16:4) which does not indicate restoration and righteousness. “The presumption is that this transformation of Jerusalem would take place at the return from captivity. However, even a cursory examination of the postexilic prophets demonstrates that the people of Jerusalem continued to struggle with righteous living. Therefore, it is more likely that the promise to make Jerusalem a city of righteousness will be fulfilled in the distant future, in the messianic kingdom” [Michael Rydelnik and James Spencer, “Isaiah” in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, 1012]. At some point in the future during the age we call the Messianic or Millennial Kingdom, Jerusalem and Israel, the Northern and Southern kingdoms reunited, will be a faithful, righteous city and nation under the rule of the Messianic King just as they were originally created to be. The Kingdom will come about when Yahweh has crushed the world’s opposition to His right to see the world operating according to the way He created it to operate. Israel will not crush the opposition, neither the United States nor any other country will do it, and the world system will not do it; Yahweh will do it. In fact, by that time, the United States will be completely subsumed into the world system and join in the fight against God and against Israel.

At this point, I am going to issue a warning about commentaries written by Reformed replacement theologians. Verses 25 and 28 are good examples because Young, as an example, placed the church in both of them. “[T]he hand is to be turned in order that it may perform a work of purifying judgment and so restore the church.... If there is to be purity and prosperity for the true church, the wicked and apostates must be broken” [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, 1:86-87, 90]. It should go without saying that the church did not exist prior to Pentecost, but replacement theologians simply cannot see that fact, because most of them adhere to the theological, but unbiblical, covenant of grace, which they made up. This false covenant claims that every person who has believed since Adam is in the believing community, i.e., the church. Beware the commentaries! particularly when authored by other than dispensational theologians.

Amillennial replacement theologians simply cannot understand Israel in God's program for history. I have been and will continue to present the case that the judgment and the restoration of Israel must refer to the Messianic Kingdom. Otherwise, these Scriptures



make no sense. Here is how Young misunderstands this issue in relation to dispensational theology. "The Scofield Bible applies the present verse to the millennium which it identifies as the 'kingdom,' and then maintains that during this kingdom the ancient method of administering the government over Israel will be restored. On this view the return to the city's pristine faithfulness will be accomplished not immediately after the judgment of purgation, but only after the intervening of the exile, the first advent, and the entire age of the church. Then, when Christ has come for His saints, and the seventieth seven of Daniel has run its course, Christ will return with His saints to set up a kingdom of a thousand years' duration. It is during this time, according to Scofield, that God is to restore the nation's judges. Such an interpretation, however, divests the passage of its force and renders it almost pointless. Of what comfort could such a promise have been to the sinful Judah of Isaiah's day?" [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, 87-88].

It is sad, yet almost funny, that this amillennial replacement theologian wants to lecture premillennial dispensationalists about what the Old Testament must have meant to the Israelites at the time. First, sinful Judah did not much care what the prophet was predicting; they didn't believe him anyway, and they were in rebellion against everything they already knew. Second, when the Babylonian captivity ended, the Israelites may well have thought it was applicable to them at that time. That leads to the third point, which is, the people frequently did not understand the prophets at the time they were speaking the words of Yahweh to them anyway, but that does not change the futuristic meaning. It is impossible to think that this Hebrew scholar can suggest that Jerusalem and Judah were restored to the "pristine faithfulness" they enjoyed earlier in their history. These theologians specialize in abusing the Old Testament's meaning then and now. I will give him credit that he somewhat accurately, but very briefly, recounted the premillennial dispensationalist interpretation of these Scriptures presented by Scofield in his Bible study notes.

The redemption of the repentant ones refers to the Remnant of Jews that always exist at any moment in time. All of our English Bibles translate the Hebrew word *צדקה* as "righteousness," but the TANAKH translates it "retribution."

Isaiah 1:27 <sup>27</sup>Zion shall be saved in judgment; Her repentant ones, in the retribution [*צדקה*] [TANAKH].

Given the context of judgment, discipline, and restoration, retribution appears to be a very suitable interpretation. God's work through retribution, the Tribulation, will conclude with the righteous Remnant inheriting the Kingdom. Retribution means "punishment that is considered to be morally right and fully deserved" [s.v. "retribution," *The Oxford American College Dictionary*, 1158]. The concept of righteousness as it pertains to mankind encompasses the concept of punishment or discipline which is the issue the prophet has been presenting to the Israelites. A righteous God must judge unrighteous behavior. "The visitation of punishment on moral infractions is an example of righteousness, as were God's judgments on Pharaoh for refusing to release the Israelites. To judge sin is, one may say, a divine necessity for a righteous God" [Harris, Archer, and Waltke, s.v. "*צדקה*," *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 754]. Given the covenantal promises of divine discipline God promised the Israelites for rebellion and

the context of Isaiah 1 revealing discipline and restoration specifically for Israel, the retribution resulting in the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom renders the translation “retribution” exegetically appropriate. Buksbazen held to the “righteousness” translation, nevertheless he confirmed this understanding. He believed this refers to “the repentant remnant, which will survive the divine judgment and indignation. The very act of divine judgment which will come upon Israel as punishment for her unfaithfulness will, in the end, also be the means of her redemption” [Victor Buksbazen, *The Prophet Isaiah: A Commentary*, 110]. Given the parallel construction of the verse, judgment and retribution complement one another. The fact is, Zion, or Jerusalem and Israel, will be saved in judgment and retribution, i.e., the Tribulation, and the believing Remnant will enter the Kingdom. I think the TANAKH interpretation is better.

This also makes sense when we consider the fact that commentators are all over the place trying to understand what righteousness means in this context. Some see it as a grace gift God will give to those who are purified and remain. Or, it is a grace gift given to those who will be, in the future, purified and remain. Still others think it is “both-and.” The righteous people will be saved and then God's righteousness will be revealed. None of these interpretations are consistent with the totality of Isaiah's revelation and they do not fit this pericope.

Theologians who are not premillennialists, cannot understand the end times nature of this pericope; they have to apply it to the Babylonian destruction of Judah and Jerusalem. The problem with this understanding is that the rebellion—either the Jews' or the world's—have not been finally resolved. This context is referring to the final resolution.

The fate of those who oppose God was revealed to be their destruction. This a very definitive verse that must be referring to the end of the Tribulation. Transgressors and sinners overlap in meaning, but they are distinct and neither have been decisively and finally crushed and relegated to the garbage dump of history—but they will be.

Isaiah 1:28 <sup>28</sup>But transgressors [פְּשָׁעִים] and sinners [חַטָּאִים (from חָטָא)] will be crushed [שָׁבַר] together, And those who forsake [עָזְבוּ] the LORD will come to an end [כָּלְהוּ].

Transgressor, פְּשָׁעִים, refers to one who rebels, transgresses, revolts, and sins. In this verse, the emphasis is on one who is in rebellion against God.

Sinners, חַטָּאִים (from חָטָא), refers to one who sins, that is, one who misses the mark, who does what is wrong, who sins, or who leads into sin.

Considered together, these descriptions refer to people who are in rebellion against God and/or who transgress against the moral imperatives God set before the world from the beginning of creation, and not just in the Mosaic Law. The immediate context here is referring to the Jews, but at the same time divine discipline will be imposed on them, judgment will also be executed against Gentiles and the world system. The end result will be the righteous Kingdom God envisioned from the start containing believing Jews and Gentiles.

All those who are in rebellion against God, in whatever manner and there are many ways to be in rebellion, will be eliminated from the face of the earth.

Crushed, *שָׁדַד*, means destruction, ruin, affliction, fracture. In this context, it is referring to the total destruction of those who are engaging in rebellion and sin.

Forsake, *עָזַב*, means to leave, to abandon, to forsake, to loose. In the short-term context, it refers to the Israelites, but in the long-term context of the restoration of the Remnant and God's judgment on the world, it refers to everyone who has rebelled against God and who will never come to faith before it will be too late. They will be destroyed.

End, *כָּלָה*, means to complete, to accomplish, to end, to finish, to fail, to exhaust. Its primary meaning is to consummate or to bring to completion. The end did not come when the Jews returned to Jerusalem from Babylon and the Messianic Kingdom did not begin at that time. Nor did it begin with the First Advent of Christ. The end will come when the Lord returns at end of the Tribulation, vanquishes His enemies, and inaugurates the Kingdom.

This pericope reveals short-term consequences for Israel, and it also addresses long-term consequences for Israel and the world system. Considered in its totality, the picture presented here concerns those who are in rebellion against God who will ultimately be totally destroyed and removed from the ranks of mankind after which the faithful Remnant of Zion will be restored to enjoy their inheritance in the Messianic Kingdom. The believing Gentiles will enter the Kingdom alongside them. Wrath and punishment will eventually end in salvation for the Remnant of the Jews and the believing Gentiles. The end or consummation has yet to occur which is another indication the Tribulation and the beginning of the Messianic Kingdom is the subject.