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Isaiah 6.

(2015)

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Isaiah 6.

Topics.

- A flying seraphim with six wings, two covering his face and two his feet.
- Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.
- The foundations shook at the voice of the seraphim.
- While unclean dwelling amongst unclean people I saw the LORD.
- The seraphim with a hot coal flew to me and said, "Your sin is atoned for."
- This people hear, but do not understand and see, but do not perceive.
- Make the heart of this people dull lest they understand, turn and be healed.
- Israel will be burned like a terebinth, whose stump remains when felled.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION: Isaiah is the exciting story of the Old Testament and the New Testament compacted into one book. It covers the wonder and splendour of Bible prophecy and echoes of the Lord Jesus Christ resound throughout Isaiah's visions and his messages. It teaches history as it affects God's people and constantly points to a future age when righteousness, justice, joy and peace will be established on earth. Isaiah prophesied about 740–700 B.C. He lived during the decline of Israel in the shadow of the powerful Assyrian Empire. He spoke the word of God to a people who were "deaf and blind" (Isaiah 6:10) who refused to listen to his warnings of looming disaster.

Isaiah warned the people of Judah's that their sin would bring God's judgment (i.e., seventy-years captivity) and declared that God is sovereign and would use Cyrus the Persian to return the people from exile. He spoke also of a servant and man of sorrows who would be wounded for our transgressions faithfully accomplishing God's purposes of salvation (Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12). The final chapters give a beautiful description of a new creation in which Christ will rule as King, judging the wicked and establishing God's Kingdom on earth.

Following are four points that will help the reader understand the book of Isaiah as they travel through it: -

1. The history of Israel and Judah. At this time in the story Assyria has taken the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria into captivity and marched up to Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) to destroy it, but failed. Later in the story Babylon attacks Jerusalem and conquers the city and takes the people of Judah into captivity. After this victory Babylon conquers Assyria which resulted in Israel and Judah being brought under the submission of Babylonian rule and the tribes being brought together during the seventy year Babylonian captivity.
2. Many of Isaiah's visions are written as though they have already taken place, but a majority of these visions are predicting future events that are about to happen during Isaiah's generation while others will come to pass in a future age. Though these visions are of future events Isaiah speaks them in the present tense, because he spoke them as they came to his mind and as he saw the events unfolding before him. They are often spoken in this manner because of the certainty of it and because God had ordained them and revealed them to his prophets who spoke them to His people so they must come to pass, because God cannot lie.(Titus 1:2).

3. Though Isaiah is primarily speaking to Judah (the two tribes at Jerusalem) much of what he says applies to Israel (the ten tribes in Samaria) because both Judah and Israel are in the same corrupt spiritual condition.
4. All the promises to Israel are now in Christ. God's promises to Israel now include the Jews and the Gentiles. This is because under the New Covenant God is building an entirely new nation made up of Jews and Gentiles of which Christ is the head. In this new nation that God is creating in the Lord Jesus Christ Jews have no advantage over Gentiles since all are one in Christ Jesus.

The apostle Paul wrote: Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (i.e., one nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles). In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Eph. 2:1-22). The practical application of what this means, is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel through Isaiah also apply to Gentiles who by faith belong to Christ.

Isaiah 6

A Flying Seraphim with Six Wings, Two Covering His Face and Two His Feet.

Isaiah 6:1-2 ----- ¹In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ²Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

It is certain that those Isaiah was speaking to understood what he had in mind when he spoke about the seraphim, but for us today it is not as clear, this is evidence by the vast array of various interpretations of who they are. Since there is a certain amount of difficulty in obtaining a sharp and exact understanding of them the following concerning the seraphim is certainly not a dogmatic interpretation, but hopefully it will offer something new, or at least provide a perspective that will help whoever is reading it discover new insights for themselves should they desire to do so.

The following verses show that there are a least two seraphim (maybe more), sometimes the focus is upon one of them while at other times it is upon two of them.

- In verse two the English Standard Bible says, "Above him stood the seraphim each had six wings," the King James Bible says, "Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings."
- In verse three the English Standard Bible says, "One called to another," the King James Bible says, "One cried unto another."
- In verse four the English Standard Bible says, "At the voice of him who called," the King James Bible says, "And the voice of him who cried."
- In verse six the English Standard Bible says, "One of the seraphim flew to me," the King James Bible says, "Then flew one of the seraphim unto me."

Uzziah: comes from the Hebrew word (*Uzziyah*) it literally means strength of Jah. It carries the idea of strength in various applications such as force, might, strong, power, boldness, security, majesty and praise. We are told in verse one that Isaiah is having this vision in the year that King Uzziah died and the very first words of chapter one begin by saying: -

- The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. (Isaiah 1:1).

From chapter one up until now the primary focus of Isaiah's prophecy has been upon Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. This means that the focus of the vision of the seraphim will be connected to the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem at the time of Isaiah and Hezekiah the king of Judah.

Uzziah was a good king, he was an efficient administrator, an able military leader and under his leadership Judah prospered and grew in every way (2 Chron. 26:1-15) as the following verses show. Uzziah king of Judah: -

- Was sixteen years old when he was made king. (2 Chron. 26:1).
- Reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem. (2 Chron. 26:3).
- Did what was right in the eyes of the LORD. (2 Chron. 26:4).
- Sought the LORD and God made him prosper. (2 Chron. 26:5).
- Had an army of soldiers with mighty power fit for war. (2 Chron. 26:11, 13).

Though king Uzziah was a good king over Judah for most of the fifty-two years of his reign he eventually became proud and unfaithful to the LORD in that he entered the temple of God and burnt incense on the altar of incense which only the priests were anointed to do. (2 Chron. 26:16). This sin resulted in him being a leper to the day of his death (2 Chron. 26:18-19) (2 Chron. 26:21).

This means that at the time of this vision of the seraphim Judah's king was puffed up in pride and the people of Judah and Jerusalem had turned to pagan gods and were grossly wicked which means that the seraphim who are pictured as standing above the Holiness of God sitting on His throne were looking from heaven toward earth upon God's chosen people who were worshipping idols, full of all sorts of sin and living a lifestyle of wickedness.

With these facts in mind I would suggest that the seraphim are holy angels of God's judgment going out from God's Holy Throne over the people of Jerusalem and Judah who are acting so wickedly that the seraphim covers their eyes in shame and disgust and cover their feet so that they do not walk amongst them. There is no doubt this is how God Himself would be feeling.

Should this be the case the train of the LORD'S robe would symbolise Judah and Jerusalem standing before the Holiness of God about to be judged and the seraphim a symbol of God's angels of judgment and wrath about to be poured out upon them, much like the seven angels of God who are standing before His throne with the vials of His wrath ready to be poured out upon earth in the latter days that the following verses speak off: -

- I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. (Rev. 15:1).
- I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. (Rev. 16:1)
- Then one of the seven angels who had the seven vials came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters,² with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality, and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk." (Rev. 17:1-2).

It is quite likely that these seven angels are the seraphim of the Old Testament especially since it appears that God uses these seraphim to bring about God's judgment and wrath upon the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Seraphim: comes from the Hebrew word (*saraph*) it literally means burning it can apply to a spark or to something being utterly set on fire. Figuratively it carries the idea of a fiery creature or poisonous serpent. Isaiah (6:2, 6) is the only mention of this creature in the Bible. The following verses show that the serpents amongst the wilderness generation were referred to as fiery serpents: -

- The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food." ⁶Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. ⁷And the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." (Num. 21:5-8).

It should be highlighted here that God is in total control of these fiery serpents they are not evil spirits acting from any will of their own it was God who sent them amongst His people. God used these fiery serpents to punish the rebellious people of Israel then after they acknowledged their sin Moses made a fiery serpent and placed it on a pole, and whoever touched it was healed. (Num. 21:5-8).

It is possible God created these fiery serpents from nothing for this particular purpose in the same manner He created the frogs and lice during the ten plagues of Egypt for a specific purpose.

With this in mind it is very likely the seraphim are angels or symbols of God's Spirit that is about to bring upon the rebellious people of Jerusalem and Judah God's judgment and wrath (by influencing mighty nations to invade their land). We are told that God used Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon as his servant (Jer. 25:9) to bring His judgment upon the land of Judah and the city of Jerusalem. The fierce armies of Nebuchadnezzar laid the land of Judah waste, burned the city of Jerusalem with fire and took the people captive for seventy years.

Holy, Holy, Holy is the LORD of Hosts; the Whole Earth is Full of His Glory.

Isaiah 6:3 ----- ³And one (seraphim) called to another (seraphim) and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"

It matters not whether the seraphim are symbols of God's Spirit or angels in His control since they all have the same character, the same purpose and all exalt God to be the Holy God of all the earth. In these verses they are pictured as saying to each other that the whole earth is full of God's glory. God's glory in this context would embrace the following three things: -

1. The wonder, splendour and beauty of all creation.
2. God's control over all nations (i.e., He used Assyria to bring His judgment upon Israel (the ten tribes) and Babylon to bring His judgment upon Judah (the two tribes) and gave Egypt to Babylon for wages for the labour Nebuchadnezzar's armies did for Him against Tyre (Ezek. 29:17-21).
3. The end of Israel's seventy years in captivity when the people returned to their beloved city Jerusalem and rebuilt the temple of God and a golden age of prosperity and peace followed for Israel.

Since God is a God of love and mercy and of justice and judgment His glory embraces both His blessings and His punishments therefore from heavens viewpoint it matters not what is happening on earth God is ultimately in control of the final outcome and in this sense the whole earth is full of His glory (i.e., full of His blessings and full of His judgments).

The Foundations Shook at the Voice of the Seraphim.

Isaiah 6:3 ----- ⁴And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him (the seraphim) who called, and the house was filled with smoke (the English Standard Bible).

The King James Bible says: -

- And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him (the seraphim) that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

Foundations: often speak of people in great places of authority and who have a great influence over multitudes of peoples. The New Testament says that the apostles and prophets are the foundation of the church and Christ is the Chief Cornerstone (Eph. 2:20). From heavens viewpoint during the Old Testament Israel in regards to the populations of the world were considered the foundations of the earth, because they were God's chosen people.

Smoke: comes from the Hebrew word (*'ashan*) it literally means smoke, but figuratively carries the idea of anger or to be angry. Throughout the Bible the LORD often appears in thick smoke to veil Himself from the people. At the time of this vision Israel and Judah are rotten to the core and in rebellion to the LORD. Isaiah's vision appears to be of the LORD sitting on His throne in His Temple with Judah and Israel before Him.

The house filled with smoke: since smoke speaks of darkness and God's anger the expression, "the house was filled with smoke," would refer to God bringing his judgment upon the priests of the temple. This judgment was fulfilled by the soldiers of Babylon entering the temple of God, slaughtering the priests and taking the sacred vessels of the Holy Place, the furniture of the temple and items of gold and silver back to Babylon.

In Psalms it is written: -

- The crash of your (the God who works wonders) (v14) thunder was in the whirlwind; your lightnings lighted up the world; the earth trembled and shook. (Psalm 77:18).

This verse tells us that the earth trembled and shook when God spoke and here in this chapter we are told when the seraphim spoke the foundations and the posts of the door of the house moved and shook. This would carry the idea of the foundations of God's house the high priest, the Levitical priests and the prophets being struck with fear and overtaken. This is exactly what happened when Babylon invaded Jerusalem.

Two seraphim's are standing above the LORD covering their faces and their feet, perhaps because of the corruptness and rottenness of Judah and Israel. One of the seraphim's cries, "the whole earth is full of the glory of God," but when the seraphim look at the LORD'S chosen people (Judah and Israel) who should be holy, they are rotten to the core. (This perhaps is one of the reasons these holy creatures cover their eyes, they cannot bear to look upon such wickedness).

When the seraphim sees their corruptness the LORD'S Temple is filled with the LORD'S anger so much so even those in great authority (the high priest and Levitical priests etc.,) in God's House on earth are shaken. A few years after this vision God used Assyria to destroy Israel (the ten tribes in the land of Samaria) and lay their land waste and used Babylon to lay the land of Judah (the two tribes) waste and burn the city of Jerusalem and rob their temple of all its treasured items.

While Unclean Dwelling Amongst Unclean People I Saw the LORD.

Isaiah 6:5 ----- ⁵And I (Isaiah) said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"

Unclean lips: carries the idea of the people being rebellious, conceited, smug, egotistical, self-important, complacent, self-satisfied and self-centred and boasting and glorying in their own works. After Isaiah had so clearly seen the Holiness of God in this vision and the LORD'S anger toward Judah and Israel he feels totally unclean himself. Isaiah was not only a man of great faith and faithfulness toward the LORD, but also one of His greatest prophets, yet he still considered himself to be unworthy to stand before the holiness of God.

The Seraphim with a Hot Coal Flew to Me and said, "Your Sin is Atoned For."

Isaiah 6:6-7 ----- ⁶Then one of the seraphim flew to me (Isaiah), having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for."

These verses clearly show that whatever these creatures called seraphim are they are most holy since they had the power to cleanse Isaiah with a burning coal from his guilt and sin. The seraphim are very similar in action to the serpent on the pole in Moses time (Num. 28:9-9) and of the Lord Jesus Christ, because the serpent on the pole had the power to stop the plague that was destroying the people of Israel and Christ has the power to stop the law of sin that leads to condemnation, guilt and eternal death and the seraphim had the power to cleanse Isaiah of his guilt and sin.

It should be noticed that the seraphim only cleansed Isaiah (this of course was because he was a humble and faithful man before God and knew he was unclean before His Holiness) they did not cleanse Judah and Israel. This of course was because in utter contrast to Isaiah they were full of pride and rebellion. (God will clean anyone who approaches Him with a right heart attitude).

The seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal: (v6) the word coal comes from the Hebrew word (*gechel*) it literally means a red hot stone, a live coal and its glowing, sparking embers (used for baking). From coals black dust and soot it carries the idea of being dim, dull and dark.

Looking at the context the word coal is used in the following four verses will give us a good idea of what coal symbolises in Scripture.

1. Now the whole clan has risen against your servant, and they say, 'Give up the man who struck his brother, that we may put him to death for the life of his brother whom he killed.' And so they would destroy the heir also. Thus they would quench my coal that is left and leave to my husband neither name nor remnant on the face of the earth. (2 Sam. 14:7).

This is in the context of a woman having two sons, one has been killed and one remains and telling the king if he allows men to put her remaining son to death they will quench (i.e., extinguish) her coal, meaning extinguish her spirit of the little joy she has remaining and her husband would not be left with a name on earth. Quench and extinguishing coal supposes the coal is burning and alive with fire which means that coal in this context can be seen as a symbol of vitality, energy, vigour and joy of the human spirit.

2. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar (Isaiah 6:6).

Live coal refers to a red hot burning coal, here the coal is being used to cleanse Isaiah from guilt and sin which means that in this context coal can be seen as a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

3. Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it. (Isaiah 47:14).

In this context the coal is spoken of a being able to keep those suffering the cold of the day and the night warm which means in this context coal can be seen as a symbol of the favour and comfort of God.

4. Their (the prophets, priests, princes and the inhabitants of Jerusalem) visage is blacker than a coal; they are not known in the streets: their skin cleaves to their bones; it is withered, it is become like a stick. (Lam. 4:8).

Here the coal is not burning it has no spark, no heat and no fire. The inhabitants of Jerusalem are likened to the blackness of dead coal which means in this context the coal can be seen as a symbol of suffering, poverty, famine and of being spiritually dead.

Summary of coal: live red hot burning coal can symbolises the following things vitality, energy, vigour and joy of the human spirit, the cleansing from guilt and sin, a symbol of the Holy Spirit and of the favour and comfort of God. In contrast to this dead black coal with no sparks, no fire and no heat symbolises the exact opposite, suffering, poverty, famine and of people being spiritually dead.

Summary of the seraphim: the seraphim can be seen as symbols of God's Spirit or as holy angels under God's control ready to pour out God's wrath much like the seven angels with the seven vials of God's wrath spoken of in the book of Revelation.

This People Hear, but Do Not Understand and See, but Do Not Perceive.

Isaiah 6:8-9 ----- ⁸And I (Isaiah) heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me." ⁹And he said, "Go, and say to this people: " 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.'

In verse four we are told that the house of God was filled with smoke which is a symbol of God's anger toward the priests of Israel, because they were rotten to the core. Now in these verses the LORD is pictured as seeking someone to go to them. Isaiah hears the call and responds saying he will go. The LORD sends him telling him to say to the people that they keep on hearing and seeing the word of the prophets, but do not understand or perceive. Seeing, but not perceiving the word of the prophets refers to the fact that at this time Assyria had invaded the land of Israel (the ten tribes in Samaria) which was the judgment of God upon Israel, the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem should have perceived this and believed the prophetic warning of Isaiah.

The New Testament parallel: the religious leaders of Jesus day (the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes) are a good example of God's people not hearing the word of God and of not perceiving it. Jesus said to his disciples: -

- To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. (Luke 8:10) (Matt. 13:13).

The words, "to you," apply to the twelve apostles, but it should be noted that verse one to three says Mary Magdalene Joanna, Susanna and many others travelled with them. Jesus was probably directing his message to the apostles, but others may have been present with them. It is often not clear whether Jesus is just talking to the twelve apostles or whether he is including others with him. This may be why the Scripture does not always say, "the twelve apostles," but rather uses the word disciples. In the following verse Jesus says God has hidden the Gospel from the wise: -

- At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children (Matt. 11:25).

There are two aspects to wise: wise in a good sense and wise in a bad sense, wise in a good sense embraces things such as being thoughtful, intelligent, sensible, rational, discerning, discriminating, sharp, practical and discreet, it implies a cautious character and practical skill and intelligence or mental acquirement. In contrast to this wise in a bad sense embraces such things as being conceited, smug, egotistical, self-important, complacent, self-satisfied, self-centred boasting and glorying in one's own works. Jesus is saying that God has hidden the Gospel to those who are full of self-importance and wise in their own eyes.

Make the Heart of this People Dull Lest they Understand, Turn and Be Healed.

Isaiah 6:10 ----- ¹⁰Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest (i.e., until) they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.

Lest: comes from the Hebrew word (*pen*) it literally means removal, to turn; by implication to face, (i.e. appear and look at a thing). It carries the idea of casting out, to go away, to re-turn, to turn aside, turn away or turn back.

Here Isaiah is saying the same thing as Jesus said to his disciples. He is basically saying, "LORD do not allow Judah and Israel to be saved while they are an egotistical self-conceited people full of self-importance and disregard the wisdom of God that leads to eternal life."

The expression, "blind their eyes," refers to the prideful who are driven by self-importance and egotistical pride. This type of pride will never humble itself before God. It is to these people that God has hidden the way of salvation that leads to eternal life, but in a human sense it is the persons own self-importance and pride that blinds them to the messages of God. Egotistical pride blinds a person to the ways of God because it will not bow down to anyone.

In contrast to this type of unhealthy pride healthy pride embraces the following: -

- That happy satisfied feeling experienced when having or achieved something special that other people admire.
- Taking great pride in one's work is healthy and productive pride.
- That personal sense of satisfaction and pleasure that comes from something accomplished or a quality possessed.
- Having a proper sense of one's own value and the correct level of respect for the importance and value of one's personal character, life, efforts and achievements as opposed to having no confidence and no sense of worth.
- That personal feeling of satisfaction because of an achievement or possession that one is especially pleased to have accomplished and is fully satisfied with (i.e. their grandchildren were their pride and joy or the gold medal I won at the Olympics is my pride and joy etc.).

Isaiah was so disgusted with the behaviour of the rebellious, wicked and spiritually blind people of Judah and Jerusalem that he was praying God would not save them until they see with their eyes; heart with their ears; understand with their hearts; turn from their rebellion and wickedness and spiritually healed.

Israel will Be Burned like a Terebinth, whose Stump Remains when Felled.

Isaiah 6:11-13 ----- ¹¹Then I said, "How long, O Lord?" And he said: "Until cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without people, and the land is a desolate waste, ¹²and the LORD removes people far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land. ¹³And though a tenth remain in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak, whose stump remains when it is felled." The holy seed is its stump.

Israel is likened to an oak tree that has been burned and only the stump remains, this stump is called the holy seed, it is a symbol of those who remain faithful to the LORD. The faithful are those who triumphantly returned with great rejoicing to Jerusalem and rebuilt the temple of God after their seventy years in captivity to Babylon.

How long, O Lord? Here Isaiah is asking God, "How long will it be before the wicked people of Judah and Israel perceive and heed the word of the LORD and turn from their rebellion and are spiritually healed. God in reply to his questions says, "Not until their cities and houses lie waste without inhabitant; their land is a desolate waste and the LORD removes the people far away from their own land." The following history of Assyria and Babylon shine a brilliant spotlight upon the awe-inspiring wonder and amazing detail of this prophecy.

Assyria and Babylon: God used Assyria and Babylon to burn and destroy the great tree (Judah and Israel). Israel was taken into captivity to Assyria and Judah to Babylon, later Babylon conquered Assyria so Judah and Israel were brought together during their seventy years in captivity. Many times God through the prophets warned Judah and Israel they would be taken into Babylonian captivity, because of their rebellion against the LORD, but God would look after them while held captive and at the end of their captivity would deliver them.

Judah and Israel went into captivity to Babylon as two rebellious nations who had turned from God to idols and were even sacrificing their own children to pagan gods. While in captivity God moulded them like a master potter moulds a beautiful clay jar.

They went into Babylon as two unfaithful nations that had turned away from the LORD to idols and other gods and seventy years later God used Cyrus (King of Persia) as His anointed shepherd (Isaiah 45:1) to give Israel permission to return to their beloved city Jerusalem. Under Ezra and Nehemiah God brought Israel back to Jerusalem as one nation faithful to only one God, the LORD their God, the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob (Israel never turned to pagan gods again).

End.