

to declare that punishment will be given after a long period of awaiting judgment. The rendering of verse 22 in the KJV is much better than that in the RSV, in that it leaves the matter open. It does not tell us whether the visitation is for punishment or for release.

The latter idea, while thus more logical in the context, seems indeed a strange one. Why would God intervene against the forces of evil, shut them up in prison for many days, and then release them for a time? Professor Franz Delitzsch deals with the problem as follows: "So far as the thing itself is concerned, we have a parallel in Rev.xx.1-3 and 7-9: they are visited by being set free again, and commencing their old practice once more; but only (as ver. 23 affirms) to lose again directly, before the glorious and triumphant might of Jehovah, the power they have temporarily reacquired." (Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah, Vol.I, page 435)

The chapter ends with a marvelous picture. Verse 23 describes the great glory of the LORD of hosts when He reigns in Mt. Zion and in Jerusalem, a glory so great that before it the glory of the moon and the sun pale into insignificance.

Isaiah contains many wonderful truths at which Christians seldom glance. We gain much value from studying the precious Messianic passages, but we miss a great deal when we neglect other passages and miss other vital messages that God has given His people through the great prophets.