

LESSON FOURTEEN

[This lesson covers chapters 52:13 to 55:13.]

THE SUFFERING SERVANT BRINGS A GREATER DELIVERANCE

Transition Thought: From the prophecy of the restoration of the chosen people we now go on to the story of the suffering Servant-Saviour who gives himself for the salvation of the world.

CHAPTER 52:13-15 and CHAPTER 53

These fifteen verses tell us of the Greater Deliverance, the salvation of the world. They describe how God saves humanity from sin and death. He does this through the suffering of the Servant-Saviour. This message of hope is at the centre of the Prophet's vision, and his words of self-giving love are among the most beautiful ever written.

In the New Testament of the Bible this prophecy is fulfilled by the coming of Jesus and his suffering on our behalf.

Ch. 52, 13-15 THE SUFFERING SERVANT WILL BE EXALTED

The Prophet wants to leave no doubt about the Lord's final victory. Therefore before describing the suffering of the Servant the Prophet foretells his triumph over the forces of evil.

v. 13

Question: Once he has completed his saving work three things will happen to the Servant-Saviour. What are they? _____,
_____, and _____.

v. 14

Question: Why will the people who observe the Servant be astonished at first? _____.

v. 15

Question: In the end, why will the people be totally startled? _____.

Ch. 53, 1-12 BEHOLD THE SERVANT WHO CARRIES OUR SORROWS

vv. 1-2: "The arm of the Lord" means God's action. When people looked at the Servant they could not at first discern God's effort to save us. He came as a humble person who had to suffer miserably.

Question: Do great people sometimes come from humble homes? _____.

In the New Testament account the Saviour Jesus lived in a small town called Nazareth, and he grew up in a carpenter's family.

Please read Appendix, Note A.

Question: Do great people sometimes experience suffering? _____.

v. 3

Question: This verse lists at least five different forms of suffering that the Servant experienced. What are they? _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____.

Note: The life experience of Jesus fulfilled this prophesy in all its details. There are two questions we have to think about: why he had to suffer like that and for whom he suffered?

Suffering for the good is the misfortune of many great leaders. Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated. Abul Kalam Azad spent ten years in British jails. Nelson Mandela in South Africa was held in prison for seventeen years.

v. 4: This verse answers the questions of why the Servant-Saviour suffered and for whom.

Question: Whose infirmities did He bear? _____.

Question: Whose diseases did He carry? _____.

"Infirmities" and "diseases" refer to spiritual weakness and sickness. When people looked at the Servant some of them thought that God was punishing him for his own sins. In actual fact, he was taking our punishment on himself. The name Jesus means: "He shall save his people from their sins."

Please read Appendix, Note B.

v. 5

Question: For whose transgressions was he wounded? _____.

Question: For whose iniquities was he crushed? _____.

Because he was innocent and suffered in our stead we are healed by his sacrifice. Imagine a starving mother and child. She gives the last food she has to her baby, then dies. The baby lives and is saved. The mother was innocent but by her suffering and death the baby lives. That is the meaning of what the Suffering Servant, by God's will, did for the world.

v. 6

Question: Who has gone astray? _____.

Your answer shows why salvation must come from God the Holy One. It cannot come from ourselves or from any other human being because we are all afflicted by the same problem. The mystery of Divine Love is that God Himself stepped in. He became Immanuel, God with us, and He bore the punishment for our sins.

Question: On whom did the Lord lay our iniquity? _____.

Out of love the Servant-Saviour accepted this task, even though it meant giving up his own life. When Jesus was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane before his arrest and crucifixion he asked God, "Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me. Yet not what I want, but what you want" (Mark 14, 36).

v. 7

Question: Did the Servant say anything when he was afflicted? _____.

According to the New Testament of the Bible when the Saviour was arrested, he was sent to King Herod for a hearing. There he remained silent. When he was brought before the Roman Governor, he said very little. When some soldiers mocked and tortured him, he did not open his mouth. When he was put on the cross, he spoke only seven times. Because everyone knew he was innocent his silence was powerful.

v. 8

Question: What words does the Prophet use to describe what was happening to the Servant?
_____.

In the New Testament, when the Roman Governor Pilate was facing the people who were demanding the death of Jesus, he asked: "Why, what evil has he done?" The Prophet is horrified at the perversion of justice. He asks: "Who could imagine such a thing?"

Question: For whom was the Servant stricken? _____.

Question: Do you know another example of a person who gave his life to save others?
_____.

On July 5, 2013, there was an earthquake in China. Houses were collapsing. A grandmother named Pan Guofen knelt down over her tiny grandchild. She was making a bridge with her back. The ceiling crashed down and killed her. When the rescuers removed her body, they found the little girl beneath her, still alive.

Please read Appendix, Note C.

v. 9

Question: Did the Servant-Saviour use violence to carry out his work of salvation? _____.

The suffering Servant did not defend himself, nor retaliate. In the New Testament, when he was arrested, one of Jesus' followers cut the ear off a soldier named Malchus. Jesus immediately healed him. He said, "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword" (Matthew 26:52). Because he even said, "Love your enemies" (Luke 6:27), the world admires him. Martin Luther King studied his attitude and wrote the book: Strength to Love. That is what the Servant-Saviour teaches.

Question: The world is filled with violence. Does non-violent love have greater power?
_____.

Question: Where is the suffering Servant to be buried? _____.

In the New Testament account Jesus was not buried with the wicked. A rich and pious man named Joseph of Arimathea, a follower of Jesus, came forward and offered his own new tomb for the burial. The authorities agreed with his request. Today in the city of Jerusalem there is a garden with a beautiful white tomb. Many people believe that is where the Servant-Saviour was laid to rest.

v. 10: The original Hebrew text of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah also allows this verse to be translated in the following way:

The Lord says, it was my will that he should suffer; his death was a sacrifice to bring forgiveness. And so he will see his descendants; he will live a long life. And through him my purpose will succeed" (Good News Bible).

This translation is clear. The Lord's will is the will of love, and the Servant-Saviour's obedience is the obedience of love. The Lord Almighty and His Servant-Saviour are united in common purpose.

v. 11

Question: After his anguish what will the Servant see? _____.

Question: What is the fruit of the Servant's effort and what gives him his greatest satisfaction? _____.

Question: What knowledge does the Servant receive? _____.

Question: Do you think that doing good gives a person satisfaction? _____.

- v. 12: This verse summarizes the redemption brought by the Servant-Saviour. God's plan of salvation is fulfilled. It ends in victory. In the New Testament of the Bible we see the Prophet's words fulfilled: "He poured himself out in death." But we also learn that he conquered death. Through his victory we may reach Paradise.

When Jesus was crucified, one of the two criminals who were also crucified at the same time repented of his sins. He said to Jesus: "Remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise!" (Luke 23:42-43).

Please read Appendix, Note D.

CHAPTER 54

A NEW COVENANT OF PEACE AND LOVE

- vv. 1-8: Have you ever known a woman without children who has been deserted by her husband? Or have you ever known a widow without children who cannot find a new husband? Such women are very sad. The Prophet says that the remaining faithful Hebrews felt like that. But now they will rejoice again. Once again God declares that He will maintain His covenant with His people.

Question: Do you remember the meaning of the word covenant? What is it?

_____.

Question: Now God gives His renewed promise. What is it? _____.

Have you ever read the story of Noah and the flood, which is in Old Testament? God caused a great flood to come over humanity because of corruption and wickedness, but he saved Noah and his family. He then gave a rainbow as a sign that He would never bring such a flood again.

v. 10

Question: What does the Prophet say about God's kindness? _____.

Question: What does the Prophet say about God's peace? _____.

We may consider this a key verse. That is because it clearly describes the new situation for human beings. We no longer have to hope for salvation. It is available.

vv. 11-17: Question: How would you briefly describe the heritage of God's servants that is promised here? _____.

CHAPTER 55

GOD'S GRACIOUS INVITATION TO AN ABUNDANT LIFE

v. 1: It comes to you. It comes to me. It comes to everyone who hungers and thirsts. It is an invitation to attend the Servant-Saviour's feast. It is the banquet of abundant life.

Question: How much does it cost to attend this banquet? _____.

vv. 2-3

Question: If you accept the invitation, there are three spiritual gifts that you will receive. What are they? _____, _____, and _____.

Note: David was a Hebrew king whom the people greatly loved. He had many accomplishments. One of them was that he sang beautiful songs about God's greatness and goodness (the Psalms). God blessed him richly. He promises to give those who come to Him similar blessings to enrich their lives. The Prophet advises that it is foolish to go elsewhere for good spiritual food.

vv. 4-5

Question: God will also give His people a special assignment, as He did to David. What is it? _____.

Question: What will be the result if God's people carry out their assignment? _____.

v. 6

Question: In the light of God's gracious invitation, what should a sincere person do?
_____.

v. 7: However, our conscience raises the question -- are we worthy to appear before the Holy One? Isaiah himself confessed that he is unworthy (Ch. 6, v. 5). And the Prophet said that we have all gone astray (Ch. 53, v. 6).

Question: What then should sinners first do when they accept the invitation? _____.

Question: What gift will God give them? _____.

vv. 8-9: God's ways are far superior than ours. From your study of this Lesson give an example that shows this? _____.

Note: Some people say that the forgiveness of sins is the greatest gift a human being can receive. The Almighty God offers this gift freely because He is great in love.

vv. 10-11

Question: What are the characteristics of God's Word and promise? _____.

vv. 12-13

Question: What are two important gifts that come along with God's forgiveness and salvation? _____ and _____.

These precious gifts are free. All that you have to do is to sit down at God's banquet. That means believe. The Prophet's message is plain and direct: Are you thirsty? If so, come. The Lord of the feast will give you an abundant life, full of surprising joys.

APPENDIX

Isaiah in the New Testament

Note A

Isaiah 53, 1: The New Testament reference is John 12, 36-41. The Gospel says: "After Jesus said this, he departed and hid from them. Although he had performed so many signs in their presence, they did not believe in him. This was to fulfil the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah: Lord, who has believed our message? ... Isaiah said this because he saw his glory and spoke about him."

Note B

Isaiah 53, 4: The New Testament reference is Matthew 8, 16-17. The Gospel says: "That evening they brought to Jesus many who were possessed with demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick. This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, 'He took our infirmities and bore our diseases.'"

Note C

Isaiah 53, 5-6: The New Testament reference is 1 Peter 2, 21-24. St. Peter says: "For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. 'He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.' When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed."

Note D

Isaiah 53, 12: The New Testament reference is Luke 22, 37. Jesus said: "For I tell you that this scripture must be fulfilled in me -- 'And he was reckoned with the transgressors;' and indeed what is written about me is being fulfilled."

LESSON FIFTEEN

[This lesson covers chapters 56 to 59]

GODLY BEHAVIOUR AND OUR STRUGGLE AGAINST EVIL

Transition Thought: A person who has been saved by God's grace should be thankful and should lead a good and upright life. The Prophet reminds us of some of the things involved in righteous living.

Ch. 56, 1-8 A PATTERN FOR GODLY BEHAVIOUR

v. 1

Question: What should a godly person do? _____.

v. 2

Question: What will be the reward of the one ,who does these things? _____.

Through the Prophet Moses God gave the children of Israel Ten Commandments. They may be summarized as the law of love -- love God and love your neighbor as yourself. The third commandment is to observe a day of rest every week, the Sabbath day, to remember God's mercies and His commands to us to be merciful.

vv. 3-5: A "foreigner" is a non-Hebrew. A "eunuch" is a person, often a foreigner, who has been castrated. A godly attitude implies inclusive love for all people.

Question: For whom is God's salvation intended, according to these verses? _____.

v. 6

Question: This verse lists two important elements in a godly life. What are they?
_____ and _____.

v. 7

Question: These words are famous. What do they tell us about the attitude of God the Redeemer? _____.

Please read the Appendix, Note A.

v. 8: God does not observe distinctions such as caste or class or wealth. He loves us all equally.

Ch. 56, 9 to 57, 13 THE STRUGGLE AGAINST EVIL

Leading a godly life is a struggle because we are weak and sinful. Moreover we are surrounded by temptations. To illustrate this point the Prophet once again reminds people of the dangers of corruption and idolatry.

vv. 56, 9-12: The Prophet says that we must be careful to avoid corruption. It is powerful and can affect even religious leaders, "Israel's sentinels." They too must engage in moral struggle.

Question: In your-opinion what is the main form of temptation that faces religious leaders?
_____.

Ch. 57, 1-13: The Book of the Prophet Isaiah also advises resistance to idolatry. The Prophet has often said how offensive this is to the Almighty. But in the Prophet's time there was also much immoral behaviour connected with the worship in Canaanite temples. The Prophet reminds the people (v. 12) that you cannot bargain with God. The good works that you do cannot make up for the evils associated with false worship.

v. 13

Question: Who will inherit the promise of salvation? _____.

Ch. 57, 14-20 GOD HEALS SINNERS WHO ARE HUMBLE AND REPENT

Every human being sometimes falls in the struggle against evil. When we err, there is one thing that God desires -- that we humbly repent. We need to learn that lesson from the story of the Hebrew people. Sometimes they wilfully persisted in their sinful behaviour. Then God punished them to bring them to their senses. When they stopped hardening themselves against God's will, He gave them healing and restoration.

vv. 14-15

Question: God is not only the High and Holy One, but He is also very close to us. To whom is God especially near? _____.

Question: Whom will He revive and grant new life? _____.

v. 18

Question: Despite the fact that we are not worthy of His pardon what will our gracious Lord do? _____.

v. 19

Question: What two gifts will he give those who are contrite? _____
and _____.

Note: As we have noted earlier the Hebrew word for peace is shalom. That word signifies all good things, our total well-being. That is why Hebrews say shalom aleikem to each other as a greeting. It means "I wish you well." The Arabic language has a similar phrase: salaam aleikum, with the same meaning. In English there is a phrase: "Peace be with you."

Question: What is the same phrase in Malayalam? _____.

Ch. 58, 1-14 BEWARE OF HYPOCRISY!

The Prophet has reminded us that godly behaviour means struggling against evil. He gave two examples of evil -- corruption and idolatry. Now he takes up a third problem -- moral hypocrisy. To help make clear what that means he discusses the practices of fasting and worship. Both of these can easily become insincere.

v. 1

Question: According to this verse what is hypocrisy a form of? _____.

Pretending to be religious and pious may not seem to be such a serious sin. God takes it very seriously, however. The Prophet is to shout it out.

v. 2

Question: Some Hebrews pretended to be pious by keeping up outward rituals. What did they say to God (verse 3)? _____.

vv. 3-5

Question: What were three things that the people were doing? _____,
_____ and _____.

God tells them that their fasting is deceitful even though they observed it correctly, because at the same time they were carrying on bad behaviour.

v. 6

Question: What is true fasting? _____ and _____ (Two things)

v. 7

Question: What is true fasting? _____, _____,
_____ and _____ (Four things).

v. 8: When you practice this kind of behavioral fasting, people will appreciate you. In addition, it will build a close relation with God.

v. 9

Question: What will God do for sincere people who call for His help? _____.

v. 10: True godly behaviour brings a brightness to life amidst moral decay.

vv. 11-12

Question: What are three blessings that God will give to those who obey His moral commands? _____, _____, and _____.

vv. 13-14: All forms of worship are subject to the sin of hypocrisy. "Look, I am here! See me, how good I am!" But the Lord calls for humility in worship as well as in fasting; and He wants us to worship Him with our deeds as well as our words.

v. 13

Question: What is the key way to honour the weekly day of rest? _____.

Ch. 59, 1-19 BEWARE OF INJUSTICE AND OPPRESSION!

The Prophet adds his two final reminders. In addition to corruption, idolatry and hypocrisy, avoid injustice and oppression. Godly behaviour means keeping away from these evils and doing the opposite.

Question: What is the opposite of each of the following aspects of behaviour:

- (a) corruption - _____
- (b) idolatry - _____
- (c) hypocrisy - _____
- (d) injustice - _____
- (e) oppression - _____

vv. 1-2

Question: The Prophet states the central problem of sin that produces these transgressions. What is it? _____.

Separation from the living God means the absence of life and love. That is why the suffering love of the Servant is so important for us. By bearing our iniquities he has thrown a bridge across the separation. "The Lord's hand is not too short to save."

vv. 4-11 and 14-15

Question: The Prophet describes some types of injustice that marked his society.

What are three injustices that you perceive in our modern society?

_____, _____, and _____.

vv. 12-13

Question: Who are the sins of society really against? _____.

v. 16: The Lord is not only disappointed when basic ethics are ignored. He is also grieved when good people do not intervene. They do not try to struggle against society's evils. People often say, "The problems are too big. There is nothing I can do about them."

Question: Do you think we should try anyway? _____.

v. 17: The foes of goodness are powerful. A person needs mental and moral armor to withstand them. In this verse two pieces of spiritual armor are mentioned -- the breastplate of righteousness and the helmet of salvation. The New Testament further describes "the whole armor of God."

Please read Appendix, Note C.

vv. 20-21

Question: God not only redeems us but also gives us another special gift to help us attain godly behaviour. What is that gift? (See the 7th, 8th and 9th words in v. 21.)

_____.

Thereby God establishes a new covenant with the-Servant-Saviour's followers, the Spirit-empowered covenant of faith and love.

APPENDIX**Isaiah in the New Testament**Note A

Isaiah 56, 7: The New Testament reference is Mark 11, 17. The Gospel writer says: "Jesus was teaching and saying, Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations? But you have made it a den of robbers. He spoke these words when he cleansed the Temple in Jerusalem."

Note B

Isaiah 58, 7: The New Testament reference is Matthew 27, 37-40. On the Day of Judgment the righteous will ask Jesus, "Lord when was it we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it we saw you in prison and visited you? And the king will answer them, Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers you did it to me."

Note C

Isaiah 59, 17-19: The New Testament reference is Ephesians 6, 13-17. The scripture says: "Therefore take the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand the evil day ... having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breast-plate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace, above all taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

LESSON SIXTEEN

GOD REBUKES AND OVERCOMES EVIL

Note to BCC Student: From here to the end of your course the readings and questions will not simply go chapter by chapter as they have done to this point. Rather, there will be different sections arranged according to the topic. Please read the verses in the order listed in the headings.

[The order of the readings for this Lesson is 63, 1-6; 66, 1-4, 14-17, and v. 24; 65, 1-6; 63, 7-14; and 63, 15 to 64, 12.]

Ch. 63, 1-6 THE HOLY GOD LEADS THE STRUGGLE AGAINST EVIL

v. 1: Edom lies southwest of Judea, and Bozrah is its capital. In this picture it symbolizes all God's enemies. The watcher sees someone coming from Edom. Who is it? It is the divine Victor. The enemies lie defeated.

Question: When the watcher asks "who is it?" what is the Victor's answer? _____.

v. 2: The watcher asks the Victor a second question: "Why are your robes red like workers pressing grapes?" The Saviour answers in verse 3-6. He says, "I had to act. I had to save humanity. The time for my redeeming work had come. I was alone, without helpers. The struggle was heavy, and my garments became spotted with blood."

Question: Do you think anyone else but God could destroy Satan and the forces of evil?
_____.

Question: Chapter 53 verse five tells how and why the Servant-Saviour had to suffer. Locate the verse and write it out: _____.

What a person reads in these verses should make him or her afraid of the Holy One's anger against sin and thankful for His merciful action.

Ch. 66, 1-4; 14-17; and 24 TREMBLE BEFORE GOD!

v. 1: God declares His majesty.

Question: What is his throne? _____.

Question: What is His footstool? _____.

Question: Does He need a house or resting-place? _____.

v. 2

Question: Name the three qualities that the Holy One desires to see in His people
 _____, _____, and _____.

v. 4: The people chose to do things that were displeasing to God. They seemed to do so knowingly. Certainly they avoided thinking about it or checking on their decisions.

Question: Do you think that bad choices bring bad results? _____.

Question: What is a good way to avoid making bad choices? _____.

Now read verses 17 and 24:

Bad choices in lesser things can lead to serious misdeeds. That in part is what we see happening among God's people. Their minor errors became great sins. The people began to do revolting and evil practices, many of them in the name of religion. They aroused God's wrath. He cannot remain silent. This time he will not send a flood as He did in Noah's day.

vv. 14-16

Question: How will God execute His anger this time? _____.

We should tremble before God! All our sins are against the Majestic One --
 എ േണൊ ടൊ ഒൗ തീ എ ലൊ . How can we live a life of rebellion
 against our Maker and Friend?

Ch. 65, 1-16 THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD'S JUDGMENT

This section reminds us that all human beings are by nature morally weak. The Book of the Prophet Isaiah underlines that plain truth. All struggle against evil, and they often fail. While the history of the Hebrews clearly illustrates that truth, they were divided into two groups. One group became totally rebellious and paid no attention to God's commands. God's judgment upon them is righteous. The other group repented of their folly and tried to live as God's servants. Towards them the God of faithfulness shows mercy.

v. 1

Question: This verse reveals an important truth about God's character. What is that truth?
 _____.

Please read Appendix, Note A.

v. 2

Question: What does God do towards us, all the day long? _____.

vv. 3-7: Unfortunately many people pay no attention to God or to God's Word. Others become self-righteous. Such people are without excuse because God has given sufficient warning.

Question: Where are the divine warnings written? _____.

vv. 8-16

Question: How many times is the phrase "my servants" used in these verses? _____.

Note: In the Hebrew language of the Prophet the word for servant also means friend. It is a truly beautiful name that we should all desire.

v. 10: Sharon was a somewhat swampy area northeast of Judea. Achor was a dry area near the Dead Sea. God will make even these places fruitful for His loyal servants.

v. 11: Gad and Meni were the names of two deities. Gad means Fortune and Meni means Destiny. The Prophet says: "Don't depend on luck or stars. Depend on God. Worship and serve Him alone! If you do not trust God or listen to Him, God will give a penalty."

vv. 13-14

Question: What are five punishments that people who ignore God and do evil will have to face? _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____.

v. 16

Question: What is the beautiful name of God in this verse? _____.

Note: സത്യം also signifies വിശ്വം അത്യം .

Question: What is the promise that the loving God gives about our troubles?
_____.

Ch. 63, 7 to Ch. 64, 12 SO REMEMBER PAST MERCIES AND RETURN TO YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER!

Jesus told the famous story of the Prodigal son. It is a story of memory and mercy. The son has gone to a far country. There he has wasted his inheritance and fallen into a pitiable state. Then he remembers his father's love, open arms, and readiness to forgive. He decides to go home. In

this section the Prophet urges God's chosen people to do that -- to remember past mercies and to return home to the Father's arms.

Ch. 63, 7-14 REMEMBERING PAST MERCIES

Who is the "I" in verse seven? Who is the person remembering past mercies? Certainly the Prophet is speaking, but he is representing the ordinary faithful Hebrew. The faithful Hebrew is worried. He knows that the sins of his people have resulted in huge problems. He believes that God must somehow intervene and save them as He did in the past. The faithful Hebrew may not yet have heard about the Servant-Saviour. So he asks God to come down and help them miraculously as He did in the old days. At the same time he prays to God for forgiveness.

Question: What is there in God that made Him show His favour to His people in the past?

_____.

v. 8: The faithful Hebrew believes that as a father saves his children so God will take care of us.

Question: What does God consider His people to be? _____.

Question: What beautiful name is given to God in this verse? _____.

v. 9: This verse opens a window to God's character. He is not an administrator in a far-off place who only sends delegates to others. He does not just dispatch angels or prophets to help us. He sends Himself! His presence among us in the Servant-Saviour is the ultimate demonstration of His love and the critical factor in our salvation. The New Testament of the Bible tells the whole story in detail.

v. 10

Question: Although God upheld His people like His own children for many years, what did the children do? _____.

v. 11

Question: After experiencing the sadness of their separation from God and its consequences, what did the children of Israel start doing? _____.

vv. 12-14

Question: Which of the Lord's many acts of deliverance did they remember above all?

_____.

Ch. 63, 15 to 64, 12 IN HIS HEART THE FAITHFUL HEBREW RETURNS TO THE FATHER

- v. 15: The faithful Hebrew remembers God's saving acts. He recalls how God led them like a shepherd, cared for them, and gave them rest. Now he asks God to look down at their helpless condition and once again rescue them.
- v. 16: The faithful Hebrew knows that he is descended from Abraham but realizes that ethnicity does not bring salvation. He also knows that he belongs to the people of Israel, but he is aware that membership in a religious community does not bring redemption. He longs for someone with love and power who can really rescue him from his dilemmas. He may remember the Psalm of David (42, 21: "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.")

Question: By what two beautiful names does he call God? _____ and _____.

- v. 17: The faithful Hebrew is so distracted and upset that he even says quite foolish things in his prayer. In the previous verse he complained that God is withholding his compassion. In this verse he complains that God is causing them to go astray. It is common for people to blame others for their mistakes. Yet the faithful Hebrew knows better than this. In later verses he accepts full responsibility for his sinful condition.

Question: Have you ever blamed another person for your mistakes? _____.

Question: Do you think God should be blamed for human evil? _____.

vv. 18-19

Question: What is the sanctuary that the faithful Hebrew mentions? _____.

64, 1-3

Question: As the faithful Hebrew remembers the past mercies, what does he want God to do now? _____.

Note to student: Having studied the Book of the Prophet Isaiah you will remember some of his great prophesies. One was that God really will come down as a little child (7, 11). He will be called Immanuel, "God with us." If the faithful Hebrew had realized that, he might have joyfully sung: "O come, O come, Immanuel!"

Please read Appendix, Note B.

v. 4

Question: What does the saving Lord do for those who wait for Him? _____.

vv. 5-7: These verses reveal that the faithful Hebrew has become spiritually self-aware. He grasps the full depth of our sinful condition. Even our righteous deeds are often done out of the wrong motivation. They cannot provide moral credits to overcome our debits.

v. 6

Question: What confession does he make? _____.

v. 7

Question: God created us good and noble. When He looks at us now, what does He do?

_____.

vv. 8-9: The faithful Hebrew believes that the Creator Lord will come and in some way reshape us and renew us. That He does through the Servant-Saviour who covers our sins. God can smile at us again.

Question: What does he call the Almighty in verse eight? _____.

Question: What does he ask God to do in verse nine? _____.

vv. 10-12: The faithful Hebrew is truly penitent. He says to the Lord, we have suffered so greatly. Our temple, our holy city, our gardens, all is in ruins. Please forgive us and help us.

Question: Do you think that we also should confess our sins to God and ask for His mercy?

_____.

Question: Do you think that God will keep silent or forgive us? _____.

APPENDIX**Isaiah in the New Testament**Note A

Isaiah 65, 1: The New Testament reference is Romans 10, 20. The apostle St. Paul says: “Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, ‘I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me.’”

Note B

Isaiah 64, 4: The New Testament reference is 1 Corinthians 2, 9. St. Paul says: “As it is written, What no eye has seen or ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him -- these things God has revealed to us through the spirit ...”

LESSON SEVENTEEN

GOOD NEWS! GOD WILL BRIGHTEN OUR LIVES AND ENLIGHTEN THE WORLD

Transition thought: Lesson 16 emphasized the struggle against evil and the need for forgiveness. In this final lesson the assurance comes that God will grant us pardon. He will do so because the Servant-Saviour whom He sent, the Light of the World, has borne our sins for us.

[The order of the readings is chapters 60, 61, and 62;
then 66, 5-13; 65, 17-25; 66, 18-23.]

CHAPTER 60

THE DAWN APPEARS

Light is a powerful religious symbol. It is associated with revelation and learning, purification and piety, beauty and hope. In the Bible God is often referred to as Light. His light will overcome the darkness. The Servant-Saviour is the Light of the world. Those who reflect God's light as His followers are called the children of light. God will brighten their lives, and through them He will enlighten the world. And heaven too will be the city of light. In the final verses of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah God's messenger sees the dawn. In conclusion he presents the splendour of God's salvation.

v. 1

Question: Who is the Light that has come? _____.

Question: What should people do who follow the light? Two words _____
and _____.

Have you ever walked in the dark and felt great fear? Maybe I will be robbed. Or maybe a snake will bite me. Suddenly you see lights ahead, and your fears are overcome. Then you tell other people the story. So it is with the light of God. Once you have experienced it, you cannot keep quiet. It is good news that must be shared. In English another word for good news is "gospel." Children sing a song: "I'm going to let it shine!"

v. 2

Question: What ends the darkness in Nature? _____.

Question: Who ends the darkness in the spiritual realm? _____.

vv. 3-5: The coming of God's Light will have two great effects. First, the dispersed children of Israel will be reunited. Second, many non-Hebrews will become spiritually enlightened by the good news.

Question: Which of the two results is referred to in verse 2? _____.

Question: Which of the two results is referred to in verse 3? _____.

vv. 6-7: Midian and Ephah were non-Hebrew tribes living east of Palestine. Sheba was either Ethiopia or southwest Arabia. Kedar was northwest Arabia. Nebaioth was northern Arabia.

Question: What will these people do? _____.

Question: Why do you think the Prophet does not mention Kerala or Malabar? _____.

vv. 8-18 JERUSALEM WILL BE THE SYMBOL OF LIGHT

These verses refer to the restoration of Jerusalem as the city of the Lord. Its citizens will have special qualities. It will be the symbolic community of light.

v. 15

Question: What is the promise given in this verse? _____.

v. 16

Question: What four names reflect God's mighty acts? _____,
_____, _____, and _____.

v. 17

Question: Who will be the overseer of the city? _____.

Question: What will the taskmaster ask of its citizens? _____.

v. 18

Question: What will no longer be found in the city and its land? _____.

Question: What will the city walls be called? _____.

Question: What will be the name of the city gates? _____.

Question: In your opinion, is there anyone who does not need the light that flows from God's deliverance? _____.

vv. 19-22 THE FINAL RADIANCE

The promises made to Abraham and his descendants have been fulfilled. So also God's promises to all believers of whatever nation and language are fulfilled. Before them all is the vision of Paradise, the final radiance. We will come there, where sun and moon will not be needed.

vv. 19-20

Question: Who will be its everlasting light? _____.

v. 21

Question: What spiritual quality will the saved people have? _____.

v. 22

Question: Why can we be sure of the hope of salvation? _____.

Note: God keeps His promises. In the New Testament Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, sang this song:

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them. He has raised up a mighty saviour for us. ... By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace” (Luke 1, 68-69; 78-79).

A few months later the prophetic words were fulfilled. Jesus, the Servant-Saviour, was born in Bethlehem. When he grew up, he announced: “I am the Light of the World. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life” (John 8, 12).

CHAPTER 61

AS THE LIGHT BRIGHTENS, THE DARKNESS RETREATS

The Prophet reminds us that it is the earth-shaking work of the Servant-Saviour that gives new life to troubled people and hope to the world.

v. 1

Question: The Servant-Saviour announces some of the tasks and duties that he must undertake. Name six of them. _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____.

v. 2: A new era dawns as the result of these efforts. At the end of every fifty years in Hebrew culture the last year was celebrated as a special one. It was called the "jubilee year." All slaves were to be released, mortgaged lands were to be returned, and all wrongs were to be corrected. The task of the Servant-Saviour was to establish a spiritual and a lasting "Year of the Jubilee." We are now in that enduring year.

Question: Who has been released from slavery and whose wrongs have been corrected by the Redeemer? _____.

v. 6: The people of God who follow the Servant-Saviour will have duties similar to his. They will receive God's blessing to help them in their tasks.

Question: What will those people be called? _____ and _____.

v. 8: The inner secret of our salvation becomes plain in this verse. It is the God of Justice Himself who is working through the Servant-Saviour. That is why the deliverance is effective, universal and enduring.

Question: What does our faithful Lord and Redeemer establish with those who are true to Him? _____.

vv. 9-10: Those who accept God's salvation have a special enlightenment experience that other people can and do notice. Their behaviour becomes beautiful like wedding garments. They are joyful in their everyday life, despite their problems. They appear as people who have been somehow blessed.

v. 11

Question: What does their life resemble? _____.

Question: What two fruits do they produce for the world? _____ and _____.

Note: Kerala is famous for its fruits: coconut, banana, mango, orange, lime, papaya, guava, jackfruit, pineapple, custard apple and others. God's sincere followers must also become known for the fruits of His Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, goodness, gentleness, self-control and others.

Please read Appendix, Note B.

CHAPTER 62

GOD TAKES DELIGHT IN HIS PEOPLE

We have learned that God's salvation is a much deeper and wider idea than the recovery of territory and fame for a particular ethnic group. It is deeper because it is a profound spiritual concept -- God's loving forgiveness. It is wider because it includes the whole world -- past, present and future. Yet the Prophet does not allow us to forget the promise of restoration for God's chosen people. Hence the Prophet returns to this promise one last time. He assures the Hebrew remnant that God will rescue them from their physical and emotional distress.

Question: What will the restoration of Judea and Jerusalem be like? _____.

In the Prophet's time there were no batteries, no artificial lights. The people made a torch when they went out at night, just as Keralites once did. The torch forced the darkness to retreat. Salvation is like a burning torch.

Question: Whose task is it to carry the torch? _____.

vv. 2-5: Enemies used to mock Jerusalem, calling it names like "Forsaken" and "Desolate." Now, the Prophet says, God will give it two new names.

Question: What are they? _____ and _____.

Note: The meaning of Hephzibah is "in her is my delight." The meaning of Beulah is "the married one." God acts like a loving husband does towards his bride.

vv. 6-9: The oppressors of the Hebrews made life very difficult for them. Even ordinary food and drink was in short supply. God did four things for them: (a) He liberated them from the oppression. (b) He put guardians around them. (c) He made sure they would have grain and grapes. (d) He invited them to pray to Him without ceasing. It is evident that God cares for our everyday needs as well as our spiritual needs.

Note: For a long time in Kerala poor farmers could barely survive from what they produced. The verumpattumdar (tenant) received only one-third of his crops. Many day labourers were virtual slaves. In 1960 the Kerala Agrarian Relations Act brought full reform to the land tenure system, and great joy burst out. Those who were saved from their hopeless condition at that time would appreciate the joy of the Hebrews when they no longer had to give their grain and grapes to their oppressors.

Question: When God blesses us, whether physically or spiritually, what should we do? (See verse 9.) _____.

vv. 10-11: Salvation time is festival time! The Hebrews have three major annual festivals, and some minor ones. Parades, feasts, lights and family joys are normal features of their festivals. The Prophet, as it were, cries, "Attention! It is time for a new celebration! It will be a spiritual harvest festival in which people from the ends of the earth will join in a jatha of joy!"

Question: The first four (Malayalam) words of verse eleven give the reason for the new celebration. What are they? _____.

v. 12

Question: What name will the saved people receive? _____.

Question: What name will the city of God receive? _____.

Ch. 66, 5-13 GOD'S CARE FOR HIS PEOPLE: LIKE MOTHER LOVE

The Prophet now finds another picture to illustrate the special nature of God's love and how we experience it. In these verses he uses the illustration of mother love.

Before giving that message, however, the Prophet makes a strong declaration about the Word of God. Some people give it no attention, others make fun of its prophecies. Be very careful, warns the Prophet, **THE WORD OF GOD IS THE VOICE OF THE ALMIGHTY.**

v. 5

Question: We should do two things in relation to the Word of God. What are they?
_____ and _____.

vv. 7-12: Jerusalem is pictured as a mother. The mother gave birth to a child, who was the chosen people, the descendants of Abraham. Enemies separated mother and child, but now they are together again. The children can receive milk from mother Jerusalem once again and be satisfied. In future days God will bless Jerusalem with prosperity and give her children protection and care.

v. 13: In this verse God Himself is pictured as a mother. Like a mother cares for her children God consoles and cares for His creatures.

Question: What will God give His children? _____.

Note: In differing ways the concepts of "father" and "mother" both teach us the meaning of divine love. Even these pictures, however, are inadequate. God's love is so great and wonderful that human analogies can never reveal its full depth.

Ch. 65, 17-25 THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORLD:
GOD'S NEW CREATION

The -grand final vision of the Prophet is now before us. In due time the present age will end, and God will create a glorious new world.

v. 17

Question: What does God say that He will do? _____.

vv. 17-25: These verses outline the characteristics of God's new creation. In the left column eleven characteristics are listed. In the blank spaces on the right side insert the verse number for each of these blessings:

Past evils will be forgotten v. _____

Rejoicing will be its mark v. _____

It will go on forever v. _____

There will be no more sorrow v. _____

Death's power will be overcome v. _____

There will be an active life v. _____

People will enjoy the fruits of their labours v. _____

There will be no more disasters v. _____

God will be near to listen and help v. _____

There will be peace in nature v. _____

There will be no more hurting v. _____

Ch. 66, 18-23 THE VISION OF GLORY

Can you imagine the scene? The Lord of the World is gathering His faithful believers from every nation and tongue. He will bring them together in His new creation. There they will see God's glory and rejoice. We can be thankful that God gave this stirring vision to the Prophet, that we can see it through his eyes, and that we can live with hope and peace.

v. 18

Question: Who is coming to gather the faithful? _____.

Question: From where will they come? _____.

Question: What will they see? _____.

v. 19

Question: What is the sign that God's kingdom is at hand? _____.

vv. 19-23: The proclamation of the Good News of God's salvation to all people will complete God's plan of salvation. Who are the proclaimers? They are "the survivors," God's people who have resisted the forces of evil, who know the love of the Servant-Saviour, and who give testimony to that love. Where have they gone? Everywhere in the world so far as it was known in the Prophet's time. Tarshish is Spain. Javan is Greece. Put and Lud are Africa. Tubal is the Black Sea area. And beyond these known areas they have gone to various "coastlands." In the vision this has already happened.

In the New Testament of the Bible Jesus, the Servant-Saviour, sent His followers to be proclaimers. The first ones were called apostles, which means "the sent ones." One of them, St. Thomas, is believed to have come to Kerala.

The procession of people will stream from the ends of the earth to attend God's feast of love, to rejoice in His presence, and to give Him praise.

Please read the Appendix, Note C.

v. 23

Question: Do the words "all flesh" include you? _____.

Everyone who reads Isaiah's prophesy must ask himself or herself, what should I do now?

APPENDIX

Isaiah in the New Testament

NOTE A

Isaiah 6, 1-2: The New Testament reference is Luke 4, 18-19. On a Sabbath day Jesus was in Nazareth, and he went to the synagogue. As a well-known person he was asked to read. The scroll of the Prophet Isaiah was handed to him. He read these words: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Note B

Isaiah 61, 11: The New Testament reference is Ephesians 5, 8-10. The apostle St. Paul says: "Live as children of light -- for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord."

Note C

Isaiah 66, 18-23: The New Testament reference is Revelation 21, 1-7. It directly quotes the Prophet Isaiah in verse one, but the whole passage reflects some of his themes: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

See the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.

And the One who was seated on the throne said, 'See I am making all things new.' Also he said, 'Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.' Then he said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I give water from the spring of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children'."

A CLOSING WORD TO THE BCC ENROLLEE

Dear Friend,

Congratulations! You have done fine work and have successfully completed the course.

A beautiful diploma and gift is being sent to you.

When the Saviour Jesus was born, Wise Men from the East came to Bethlehem to see him and to bring their gifts. In doing so they showed their learning and good judgment.

To learn more about the Saviour of mankind is a mark of wisdom. Would you like to complete a Bible Correspondence Course on the Life of Jesus? Perhaps the Prophet Isaiah has inspired you to give the gift of your attention to the Servant-Saviour. If so, he is continuing his noble task.

If you are interested in this possibility, please do the following