

should be a progress mixed with persecution, disappointment and frustration. It would be a progress in which eventually unbelief and false doctrine would gain such power that they could transform many institutions that at one time were devoted to Biblical teaching into centers for denial of the primary truths of Scripture.

It is reasonable to consider the verses following verse 16 as showing the later results of this development. Time does not permit that they be examined in detail. Like the earlier picture in verses 1-12 they are quite lacking in joy. They portray upheaval, turmoil, fear, and destruction. The conclusion is plain. God is here revealing to Isaiah that even while the message of God's mercy is being taken to the very ends of the world, men will turn to unbelief and treachery. There will be a leanness, a failure to produce the expected fruit. The age will end, not in a great paean of joy, but in a time of disappointment and destruction even worse than the one described in the first twelve verses of the chapter.

In these four verses the word "earth" occurs several times. When the question is raised whether it should be interpreted as "earth" or "land" it is found that not even one of the many evidences that pointed to the land of Israel in verses 1-12 is present here. By this time, as we have seen, the perspective has been extended to the very islands of the sea. Now a time of tribulation for the whole world is in view. The four verses, with their terrible picture of confusion, upheaval and misery, show what can reasonably be expected after great nations that have had the opportunity to know the Word of God have deliberately turned away from it.

The passage ends very differently from the one in verses 1 to 12. Verse 20 concludes with the words: "it shall fall, and not rise again." The great worldly civilization that would become possible when the Word of God was widely proclaimed, but that would turn away from this Gospel and forget it, is eventually to fall and not rise again.