

There were good tidings of great joy for a captive race. The Baptist in the wilderness preaching repentance saw among the thronging multitudes the hope of Israel, and, pointing to Jesus of Nazareth, cried, "Behold the Lamb of God;" and the larger fulfillment of prophecy had come.—*Rev. Willis P. Odell, A.M.*

1. It was fulfilled in Old Testament history by the return of the Jews from the captivity in Babylon, brought about by the decree of Cyrus, who overthrew the Babylonish Empire and founded the Persian in its room. The natural road homeward was across the great desert which lay between the two countries, and the prophets assured the people that God would go before them and prepare the way. 2. It was fulfilled in New Testament by the establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom and the deliverance of his people from the bondage of sin. As the prophets announced the coming of Cyrus, so John the Baptist announced the coming of the Messiah.—*Rev. Henry C. Jameson.*

There are two branches to this prophecy: one the Exilian, the other the Messianic. Verses 1 and 2 treat of the deliverance from Babylon as an image of the greater redemption. They are therefore prophetic of the advent which the New Testament confirms by frequent quotations from the Messianic chapters in this "royal" prophecy. That both have been fulfilled is among the undisputed historic treasures of the world. Prophecy and its fulfillment constitute the theme of the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation, and if it were possible to prove that there has been no fulfillment the divinity of the word would thereby be invalidated. But very much has already passed into history as well as this dual prophecy of the greatest of prophets, save One. The "seventy" years' captivity did come to an end; their "warfare" in this respect was "accomplished," and "a remnant" were restored to Jerusalem, where they did rebuild the temple and rehabilitate the State. This Old Testament history is amply supported by the pages of profane writers. In respect of New Testament history, "Messiah," "to whom gave all the prophets witness," did come; wherein the Jewish people did receive "of the Lord's hands double for all their sins," and were effectually healed of their idolatry, as has been adduced in connection with Lesson X.—*Dr. Quest.*

Cyrus rose to power; Babylon was overthrown; Israel was restored—all obstacles were overcome—all people saw Jehovah's presence in this movement, and thus the Old Testament prophecy was fulfilled. Its New Testament fulfillment was plainly the coming of Christ, who should rule in power, before whose sway every obstacle should vanish, the true Israel be brought in, all splendor of earthly might fade away, and whose glory should appear to all—a fulfillment still unfolding. John

the Baptist was his wilderness messenger calling his nation to make ready for its coming Lord and his kingdom.—*Rev. A. Inwood.*

It was fulfilled in Old Testament history by the repentance of the Jews, as expressed in the prayer of Daniel; the pardon of their iniquity, and the preparation of a way whereby they were brought back to Jerusalem. In the New Testament the way was prepared by whatever made ready for the coming of Christ, especially by the preaching "in the desert" of John the Baptist; and "the glory of the Lord" was revealed in the person of Jesus, the Son of God.—*Rev. Edward R. Perkins.*

Analytical and Biblical Outline.

A Message to God's People.

I. GOD'S PEOPLE COMFORTED.

1. *Comfort ye my people.* v. 1.
"Not leave you comfortless." John 14. 18.
2. *Iniquity is pardoned.* v. 2.
"We have....forgiveness of sins." Eph. 1. 7.

II. GOD'S WAY PREPARED.

1. *Prepare ye the way.* v. 3.
"Will send my messenger." Mal. 3. 1.
"John the Baptist....is he." Matt. 3. 1-3.
2. *Every valley....exalted.* v. 4.
"Fruits worthy of repentance." Luke 3. 8.

III. GOD'S GLORY REVEALED.

1. *The glory....be revealed.* v. 5.
"We beheld his glory." John 1. 14.
2. *All flesh shall see it.* v. 5.
"Lighteth every man." John 1. 9.

IV. GOD'S WORD PROCLAIMED.

1. *All flesh is grass.* v. 6.
"His days are as grass." Psa. 103. 15.
2. *Word....shall stand.* v. 8.
"Shall not pass away." Mark 13. 31.

V. GOD'S PROMISE FULFILLED.

1. *Behold....God will come.* v. 10.
"Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Rev. 22. 20.
2. *His reward is with him.* v. 10.
"To give every man." Rev. 22. 12.

Thoughts for Young People.

Preparers of the Lord's Way.

This was a voice in the wilderness, not an articulation, and it has sounded through all the centuries since. Every man who has helped to make history has heard it, and felt its power, though not every one has understood it. Isaiah translated it into "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." And it is a fact that every great natural force let loose since that time has helped to prepare the way for the universal dominion of Christ.

1. *Those who preach and live the Gospel.* Philip on the road to Gaza, Paul on Mars' Hill, John writing down the Revelation in his rocky island