

(both spiritual and physical) in her captivities. Often times the prophets use rain to symbolize the refreshing presence of the Spirit of God. Ezekiel represents the Spirit of God leaving the temple of God in Jerusalem near the end of the national existence of Judah (Cf. Ezek. 11:23).

V. 7 PRONOUNCEMENT OF THE VINEYARD'S IDENTITY: If the audience of the prophet has not already surmised who was being evaluated, the prophet would not leave it to doubt. The vineyard is Judah—God's covenant people (Israel does not here necessarily refer to the northern kingdom, but is synonymous with covenant-people). This is like Nathan's statement to David, "thou art the man!" God looked for His people, with all their advantages of having His word and being sustained by His power and seeing His love, mercy, justice and goodness exhibited, to produce the same kind of character—justice and righteousness. Having all this and appropriating it are two different things! This people appropriated the nature of the pagan gods they were so enamored of (Cf. Hosea 9:10). Where a man's treasure is, there will his heart be also!

## QUIZ

1. What kind of song was sung by the prophet?
2. Why use the figure of a vineyard?
3. Why did God have a right to expect the vineyard to produce a certain kind of harvest?
4. Why does God not do more to bring about the right kind of fruit in this vineyard?
5. How is God going to punish this vineyard?
6. Who will the beasts likely be that will trample down the vineyard?
7. What kind of character did the covenant people produce?

## 2. THE WOES OF APPLICATION

TEXT: 5:8-23

- 8 Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no room, and ye be made to dwell alone in the midst of the land!
- 9 In mine ears saith Jehovah of hosts, Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, even great and fair, without inhabitant.
- 10 For ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, and a homer of seed shall yield but an ephah.
- 11 Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that tarry late into the night, till wine inflame them!
- 12 And the harp and the lute, the tabret and the pipe, and wine, are in their feasts; but they regard not the work of Jehovah, neither have they considered the operation of his hands.
- 13 Therefore my people are gone into captivity for lack of knowledge; and their honorable men are famished, and their multitude are parched with thirst.
- 14 Therefore Sheol hath enlarged its desire, and opened its mouth without measure; and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth among them, descend into it.
- 15 And the mean man is bowed down, and the great man is humbled, and the eyes of the lofty are humbled:
- 16 but Jehovah of hosts is exalted in justice, and God the Holy One is sanctified in righteousness.
- 17 Then shall the lambs feed as in their pasture, and the waste places of the fat ones shall wanderers eat.
- 18 Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of falsehood, and sin as it were with a cart rope;
- 19 that say, Let him make speed, let him hasten his work, that we may see it; and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it!
- 20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter

for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

- 21 Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!
- 22 Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink;
- 23 that justify the wicked for a bribe, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!

### QUERIES

- a. What is wrong with acquiring houses and fields?
- b. What is "drawing iniquity with cords of falsehood"?
- c. Who would call "evil good, and good evil"?

### PARAPHRASE

Woe to you who acquire property so others have no place to live. Your homes are built on great estates so you can be alone in the midst of great expanses of land! But the Lord of Hosts has sworn your awful fate—with my own ears I heard Him say, Many a beautiful home will lie deserted, their owners killed or gone. Ten acres of vineyard will produce less than ten gallons of wine, and ten bushels of seed will produce less than one bushel of grain. Woe to you who get up very early in the morning to debauch and debase yourselves with endless carousing and drinking of strong drink. Your addiction is insatiable and you drink yourselves into a stupor. By the riotous merriment of your festivities accompanied by the loud, pagan music, you have very effectively turned your attention away from the work of the Lord and have made yourself insensible to His ways. Sin has so darkened your spiritual understanding you are as good as banished from the Lord's presence into captivity—there is no alternative left to Him but to punish the leaders and the people of this nation with the consequences of their rebellions. There will be both spiritual and physical starvation. Death and the grave are waiting with

mouths wide open to devour the multitudes that will die. Those who revel in injustice, drunkenness, and pompousness will be swallowed up in God's punishment. In that day the haughty shall be brought down to the dust; the proud shall be humbled; and the Lord of Hosts will be exalted above all, for He alone is holy, just and good. The devastation of what was once the vineyard of the Lord will be so complete as to turn the glorious land into pastures for wandering flocks of sheep and goats. Woe to those who are so enslaved to their sins that they drag them along with them everywhere they go like dumb oxen pulling carts. The ropes which bind them to their sins are the lying vanities with which they have deceived themselves. They are so brazen as to mock the Holy One of Israel and dare the Lord to punish them. Hurry up and punish us, O Lord, they say, We want to see what You can do! Woe to them that turn all values upside down and say that what is right is wrong and what is wrong is right; that black is white and white is black; bitter is sweet and sweet is bitter. Woe to those who are wise and shrewd in their own estimation! Woe to those who are heroes when it comes to getting drunk, and boast about the wine they can hold. Woe to those who pervert justice by taking bribes, letting the guilty go free and putting innocent men in prison.

### COMMENTS

After the general warning conveyed to Judah by the song or parable of the vineyard, six sins are pointed out as those which have especially provoked God to give the warning. He now pronounces woes of application against each of these sins.

V. 8-10 WOE AGAINST MONOPOLY AND GREED: Selfishness - greed for possession of land and houses. Many rich people are notorious for this sin. They are not satisfied to own a small business, however well paying; they must monopolize. It gives them a sense of security and power. God never intended for a few to control the wealth of the world. These men of Isaiah's day were "land-grabbers" to the extent that there was no room left

for the poor man who must either live on the property of the land-owners as slaves or immigrate to another territory. This violated the Mosaic law which had apportioned a parcel of land to each family head. This land was to remain in the family. If it should have to be sold, it was to be returned to the original family in the year of Jubilee. God's judgment is spoken directly into the ear of Isaiah. There can be no mistake—God will judge! Desolate houses; barren and unfruitful land. Ten acres of vineyard normally should produce 4,000 gallons of wine instead of 8 gallons. The land would produce but 1/10th the seed sown.

V. 11-17 WOE AGAINST DISSIPATION: Misuse of God's beneficence. They rise early, not to work and live constructively, but to revel and play in riotous music, feasting and dancing. A greedy, grasping, monopolizing people. Luxury loving, drinking, feasting and reveling. Consuming the land—while the rest of the people lived like slaves. The only liberty they care for is a selfish liberty—license to do as they please. There is no room in their drink-weakened, pleasure-loving brains for serious thought of sober government. Their only thought is how to enjoy this moment, this day; and they squeeze every day dry and fling it to one side after it is finished.

Captivity is the inevitable consequence of such dissipation. Moral, intellectual, political and spiritual enslavement surely follows such decadence. Loss of personal worth, personal identity and death await such actions. In this instance, the people, their wealth, and their haughtiness will come to an end. Both high and low will meet the same end—captivity.

The lambs and sheep of foreigners will feed in their land. The places formerly owned by the wealthy shall be occupied and used by strangers. Assyrians, Arabs, Samaritans and other nomadic tribes inhabited this land during their captivities.

V. 18-19 WOE AGAINST UNBELIEF: Not having faith in God they sin openly as those who draw or pull after them a load of sin with cords or ropes. They are so enslaved to their sins and to Satan, they are like harnessed oxen who pull heavy burdens; the difference being men voluntarily wish it to be so while animals have no choice. And we call animals, "dumb"! And far from

being penitent, they are brazen. When told of God's coming judgment, instead of fleeing to hide in the rocks, they scoff, "What is God waiting for—tell Him to come on. We would like to see Him come in judgment!" The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Absence of the fear of the Lord leads to stupidity (Cf. II Tim. chapters 3 and 4).

V. 20 WOE AGAINST MORAL CONFUSION: Moral confusion always results from unbelief (Cf. Rom. 1:18-32). Where there is no faith in God there are no clear-cut moral distinctions—no clear conception of what is right and wrong. There can only be moral relativism—a thing is right because we want it to be—moral anarchy. Dostoevski has his priest character say, in *The Brothers Karamasov*, "If there is no God everything is permissible." Nietzsche, the insane German philosopher, insisted that what the world needed was a "transvaluation of values." Nietzsche was simply carrying out his evolutionary atheism to its rational end. When unbelief takes over, all values are turned upside-down. What is good is said to be bad; what is bad is said to be good. The playboyism of our 20th century attempts to convince people that Christian ethics (especially in sex) are evil. Where this reversal of values occurs, cowardice becomes caution; recklessness becomes courage; stinginess becomes thrift; prodigality becomes generosity; sin becomes maladjustment! Right or wrong becomes a matter of custom. Cursing, drinking, promiscuous sexual activity, gambling are all justified on pragmatic bases. There appear as many ethical standards as there are individuals. People make up their own laws to suit their own purposes. Recognition of authority, except for oneself, disappears. Society soon resembles a chicken with its head cut off—no coordination, no purpose, no control. Moral anarchy results in civil and social destruction and death.

V. 21 WOE AGAINST CONCEIT: Not only do they sin blatantly—they take pride in their adeptness in sinning. They are wise in their own eyes. The farther men drift from God in unbelief the more conceited they become (Cf. Rom. 1:18-32; II Pet. 3:3-7; II Cor. 10:7-12). God becomes something to set on a table as a kind of ornament. Religion becomes a fetish, having no real place,

no real function in life. The real issues and problems of society are made relative to selfish interests. Pride is the snare of the devil. Pride brought the judgment of God upon angels.

V. 22-23 WOE AGAINST PERVERSION OF JUSTICE: Selfishness is the first step into degradation. Selfishness means dethronement of God. As a result of such dethronement men turn to false securities—false gods. Wine, sex, money all are sought as replacements for God. The leaders of Judah become sots—alcoholics. Drunkards administered the government! In America we have drunken legislators, drunken government executives, and drunken military leaders administering our government! Drunkenness, graft, bribery, injustice, corruption of all kinds were rampant in Judah at this time. The justification for such action was cynical unbelief. One important issue of such living is moral anarchy. The inevitable consequence of such a society is arrogant rulers and an oppressed populace. The leaders of the country boasted and prided themselves, not in how well they ruled, but in how well they mixed drinks and how drunken they were able to become.

## QUIZ

1. Name the sins for which the rulers are judged guilty in this section.
2. Show how unbelief leads to social, political and intellectual enslavement.
3. When have such sins been prevalent in men other than in Isaiah's day?

## 3. THE WRATH OF JUDGMENT

TEXT: 5:24-30

- 24 Therefore as the tongue of fire devoureth the stubble, and as the dry grass sinketh down in the flame, so their root shall be

as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust; because they have rejected the law of Jehovah of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

- 25 Therefore is the anger of Jehovah kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them; and the mountains tremble, and their dead bodies are as refuse in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.
- 26 And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss for them from the end of the earth; and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly;
- 27 none shall be weary nor stumble among them; none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken:
- 28 whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent: their horses' hoofs shall be accounted as flint, and their wheels as a whirlwind;
- 29 their roaring shall be like a lioness, they shall roar like young lions; yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey, and carry it away safe, and there shall be none to deliver.
- 30 And they shall roar against them in that day like the roaring of the sea: and if one look unto the land, behold, darkness and distress; and the light is darkened in the clouds thereof.

### QUERIES

- a. Why is God's anger so fierce?
- b. What is the "ensign to the nations" in v. 26?
- c. How successful will be God's punishment?

### PARAPHRASE

Therefore God will deal with them and burn them. They will disappear like straw on fire. Their roots will rot and their flowers wither, for they have thrown away the laws of God and despised



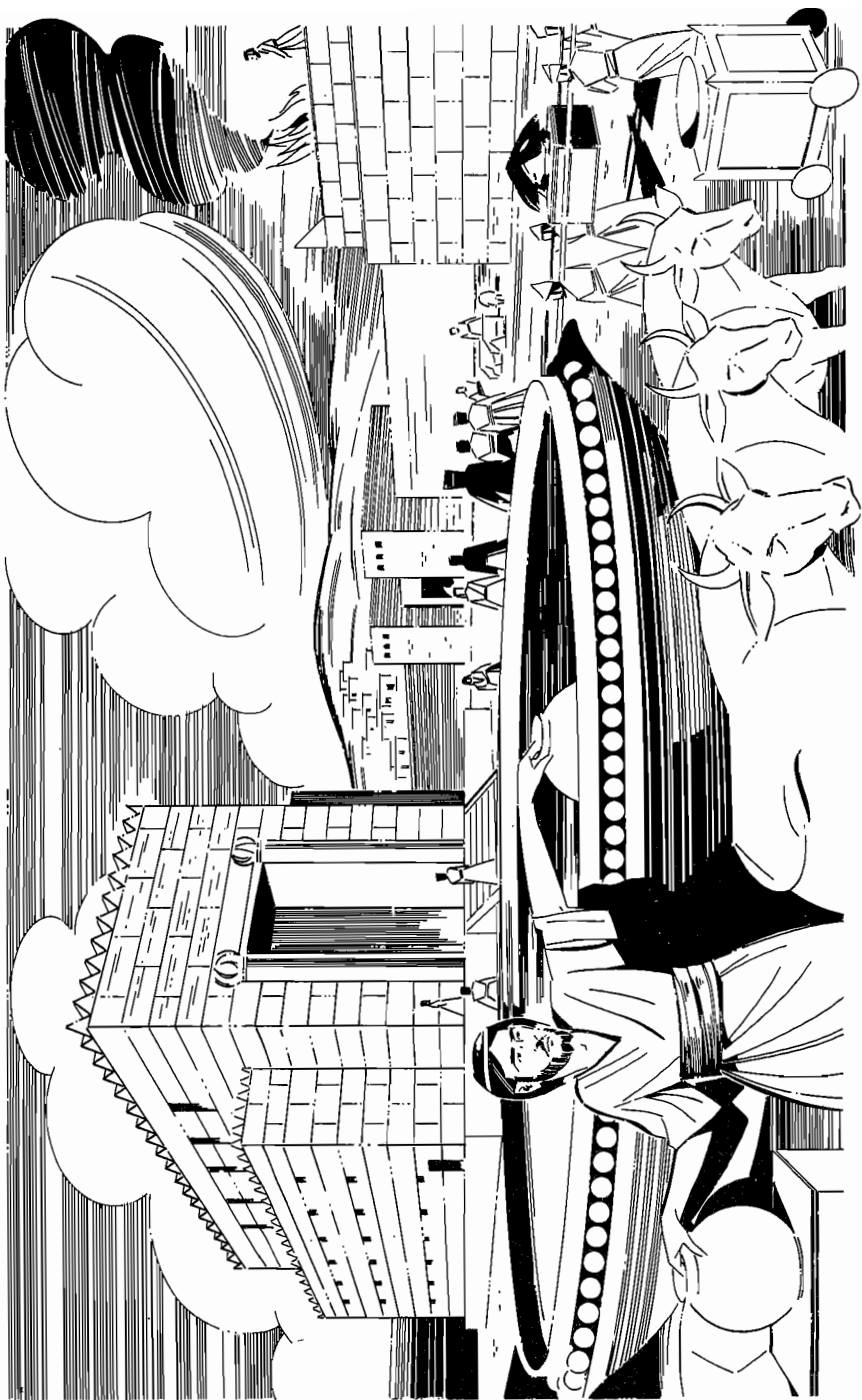
the Word of the Holy One of Israel. That is why the anger of the Lord is hot against His people; that is why He has reached out His hand to smash them. The hills will tremble, and the rotting bodies of His people will be thrown as refuse in the streets. But even so, His anger is not ended; His hand is heavy on them still. He will send a signal to the nations far away, whistling to those at the ends of the earth, and they will come racing toward Jerusalem. They never weary, never stumble, never stop; their belts are tight, their bootstraps strong; they run without stopping for rest or for sleep. Their arrows are sharp; their bows are bent; sparks fly from their horses' hoofs, and the wheels of their chariots spin like the wind. They roar like lions and pounce upon the prey. They seize My people and carry them off into captivity with none to rescue them. They growl over the victims like the roaring of the sea. Over all Israel lies a pall of darkness and sorrow and the heavens are black.

## COMMENTS

v. 24-25 THE ANGER OF GOD: The people are to be smitten. What happens to them will be in proportions of earthquake "shaking mightily the earth." Great numbers to be slain. His anger still unappeased. This judgment does not end in a single day or week or even a month. The fundamental cause for all their sin is the rejection of God's law (Cf. Jer. 6:19; 8:9; Isa. 30:9, 12). They not only reject His law, they *despise* it. (Hosea 4:6).

v. 26-28 THE ANGER STRIKES: The scourge comes. God is perfectly equipped. This scourging instrument is the invading armies of Assyria, composed of a conglomeration of peoples. God gives the signal - "Lift up an ensign" (a signal of some sort) He will hiss (whistle). These armies did not come except through His will and purpose. Strong - trained - efficiently accoutered. God sends His signal (stirs up the spirit of nations and rulers) and they serve Him (Cf. Obad. 1; II Chron. 36:22; Ezra 1:1; Isa. 44:28; 45:1; 10:5ff).

v. 29 GOD IS TERRIBLY FIERCE: Unwearied - courageous -

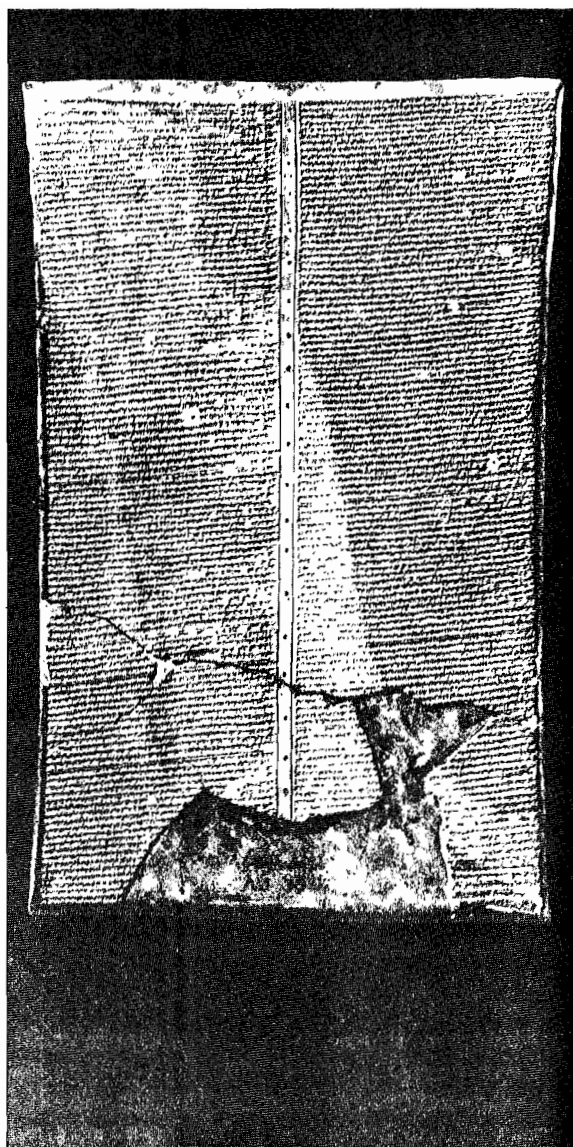


*"Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria . . ."*

*(II Kings 17: 5-6).*

*"I besieged and captured Samaria, and carried off 27,290 of its inhabitants as booty."*

The Assyrian text of this victory inscription of Sargon II dealing with his campaign in Israel, which is preserved in the original, reads like a confirmation of the biblical statement.



powerful - ferocious - cruel - bloodthirsty and terrifying - swift.

v. 30 GOD IS COMPLETELY OR OVERWHELMINGLY SUCCESSFUL: As a lioness overwhelms her prey and carries it away. The land is utterly desolated. And if Israel from Assyrian captivity looks toward the home land they will see only the darkness of a cloudy and obscure future. A future and a land darkened by divine judgement.

## CHAPTER SIX

### D. ILLUMINATION FROM THE ALMIGHTY 6:1-13

#### 1. THE PROPHET SEES GOD 6:1-7

##### a. THE GLORY

TEXT: 6:1-4

- 1 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple.
- 2 Above him stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.
- 3 And one cried into another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory.
- 4 And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

## QUERIES

- a. Why mention that Uzziah had died?
- b. Who are the "seraphim"?
- c. What does the shaking of the thresholds symbolize?

## PARAPHRASE

The year King Uzziah died I saw the Lord! He was sitting on a lofty throne, and the Temple was filled with His glory. Hovering about Him were mighty, six-winged seraphs. With two of their wings they covered their faces; with two others they covered their feet, and with two they flew. In a great antiphonal chorus they sang, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is filled with His glory." Such singing it was! It shook the Temple to its foundations, and suddenly the entire sanctuary was filled with smoke.

## COMMENTS

v. 1-4 **THE GLORY:** The throne of David is the throne of God on earth. Ex. 19:4-6; I Sam. 8:7; II Sam. 7:12-16 it should be established forever. I Chron. 29-23. Now the King is dead, the throne is vacant till a new King is crowned. Knowing the helpless, weak, vacillating condition of the people, a sense of impending national trouble comes to Isaiah. At this time is granted to him a vision of the glory of God. God is on the throne! Supremacy! Permanence and Power! *The earthly throne may be vacant, the scepter fallen from dead hands; but here is One whose throne is never vacant, from whose hand the scepter never falls.* Here is assurance, positive and beyond doubt that however weak man had corrupted the earthly counterpart of God's throne, God still reigns and controls all things. His "train," skirts, robes, fill the "Temple," His house, palace. Flowing robes of priestly royalty fill the temple. *No room for human glory and authority in God's house.* "Seraphim" - "Fiery ones." Cf. Rev. 4:8. "Four living creatures." Six wings - rapidity in carrying out God's orders, God's will. In the Holy Presence, however, the Seraphim covered his face with his wings from the intolerable effulgence of Divine Glory; another pair of wings covered the feet, soiled in their various ministrations, unmeet for all pure presence; while the third pair of wings sustained him in his place near the throne.

Ceaseless activity in God's service. One cried - "kept crying" (Cf. Rev. 4:8). This cry of worship and adoration was a result of their vision. Its first note is the affirmation of the holiness of God. Its second is the declaration that the earth is full of His glory.

### A Sermon from Seraphim

1. The lowliest Reverence becomes the Highest Created Beings v. 2
2. The Heavenly Life is largely spent in active service v. 2
3. The Celestial Intelligences have a keen appreciation of the Divine Holiness v. 3
4. The highest Intelligences see all things in their relation to God v. 3

The earthquake symbolizes that material, earthly things are temporary and shaken. Though the very temple itself be shaken and Old Testament religion itself undergo a change and old established customs of worship and institutions of administration pass away, God's throne and authority are eternal. In this vision of Isaiah we have a prelude or a preparation for what Isaiah is going to teach about the Messiah and His Kingdom. Isaiah will soon begin to proclaim that when the Messiah comes and establishes His Kingdom (the church), it will seem to the Jews as if the throne of God had been abandoned. All the Old Testament institutions were to be replaced. But what the Jews would need to understand was that God was still on His throne and that all the Messianic activity would really be God ruling. Paul deals with this Jewish problem in Hebrews (esp. 12:18-29). The word "holy" attributed to God emphasizes His absolute separation from man. He is Lord and not a man. Although the creation depends upon Him, He himself is entirely independent thereof. This is the heart and core of Isaiah's theology. God's holiness is a necessity if we are to be able to entrust our eternal destiny to Him.

## QUIZ

1. What is the connection between Uzziah's death and Isaiah's vision?
2. What do we learn about Heaven from the actions of the Seraphim?
3. When would the O.T. religion be "shaken"?
4. Why is the holiness of God an absolute necessity?

## b. THE GRACE

TEXT: 6:5-7

- 5 Then I said, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts.
- 6 Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:
- 7 and he touched my mouth with it, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin forgiven.

## QUERIES

- a. Why did Isaiah consider himself "undone"?
- b. What does the altar signify?
- c. Why touch Isaiah's lips?

## PARAPHRASE

Then I said, "My doom is sealed for I am a foul-mouthed sinner a member of a foul-mouthed, sinful nation, and I have looked upon the Holy King. Then one of the seraphs flew over

to the altar and with a pair of tongs picked out a burning coal. He touched my lips with it and said, "Now you are pronounced 'Not guilty' because this coal has touched your lips. Your sins are all forgiven."

### COMMENTS

v. 5-7 THE GRACE: The cry of need. v. 5. Isaiah's vision of the Holiness and glory of Jehovah brought conviction of his own sinfulness.

- (a) "I am cut off," "destroyed." He had seen God and could not expect to live. Ex. 33:20. Doomed to die.
- (b) "My lips are unclean!" And if his lips are unclean, then his heart is unclean. Jas. 3:2; Matt. 12:34.
- (c) My people are unclean, I Cor. 15:33.
- (d) Mine eyes have seen the king - *The Real King*.

The divine Response. v. 6. A glowing coal from the altar - a "hot stone." Altar of Incense - Prayer. Isaiah's prayer of confession of sin is answered as the angel takes a coal from Altar of Prayer to cleanse his impure lips. Here is revealed the Grace of God:

- 1. The prayer of the sinner is heard.
- 2. The song of the Seraphim is hushed that the prayer of the sinner might be answered.

Divine forgiveness. v. 7. "Thy sin is forgiven."

- (a) Sin can be purged.
- (b) The highest angelic nature alone cannot purge it.
- (c) God never acts alone in saving men from sin.
- (d) Forgiveness from sin is always conditional upon the following:
  - 1 Desire on part of sinner
  - 2 Intervention of second person (messenger - servant)
  - 3 Application of divinely appointed means.



## 2. THE PROPHET SEES THE WORLD 6:8-13

## a. THE COMMISSION 6:8-10

TEXT: 6:8-10

- 8 And I 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.
- 9 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.
- 10 Make the heart of this people fat and make their ears heavy and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn again and be healed.

## QUERIES

- a. Why does God speak to Himself in the "plural"? v. 8
- b. How does one make another person's heart "fat"? v. 10
- c. Did God hope that the people would *not* turn and be healed? v. 10

## PARAPHRASE

Then I heard the Lord asking, "Whom shall I send as a messenger to My people? Who will go?" And I said, "Lord, I'll go! Send me." And He said, "Yes, go. But tell My people 'Though you hear My words repeatedly, you won't understand them. Though you watch and watch as I perform My miracles, still you won't know what they mean.' Dull their understanding, close their ears and shut their eyes. I don't want them to see or to hear or to understand, or to turn to Me to heal them."

## COMMENTS

v. 8 WHO WILL GO: Someone must go to the nation with this message that God is still upon His throne. Someone must deliver the message that God is going to shake old institutions and provide the real believers (all believers) with a Heavenly King and a Heavenly Kingdom. Considering the present carnal, materialistic attitudes of the people, the messenger must feel a divine compulsion and be commissioned with a divine commission. God speaks of Himself and to Himself in the plural "us" referring, undoubtedly, to the triune Godhead. The concept of more than one Person in the Godhead is not absolutely foreign to the Old Testament (Cf. Gen. 1:26 and Proverbs 8 where Wisdom of the Word of God is personified). The word *Elohim* (God) is always in the plural in the original language of the O.T. And, of course, the O.T. prophets have a great deal to say about the Messiah who will be the incarnation of the Omnipotent God. Isaiah, having been captured mind, heart and will by the divine experience he had just participated in, immediately met the challenge—Here am I; send me! No man is ready to do God's special work of preaching His revelation until that man has grasped the holiness of God, his own total inadequateness and sinfulness, and the magnificent grace of God which cleanses him when he did not deserve it! This is, for all practical purposes, the same experience Saul of Tarsus had which turned him into Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.

v. 9-10 TELL THIS PEOPLE . . . hear what I am saying but . . . do not understand. What a strange commission. It will appear that Isaiah's ministry is a complete failure. People will hear him but not understand. In fact, the more they hear the more adamant they will be against what they hear. They will become "fat hearted," smug, self-satisfied. Their thoughts will be so thoroughly world-oriented they will be deaf and blind to spiritual things. God, using some *irony* of His own, commands Isaiah to tell the people to continue in this condition. Both Jesus and Paul repeated this characterization of Jews in their own ages (Matt. 13:14-15; Acts 28:26-27). Because Isaiah told them the

truth the people would not believe. Truth has the awesome power to harden the one who morally rejects it. The more he told the truth, the more they (the majority) refused to accept it. Noah faced the same attitude in his preaching. Jesus faced it (John 8:39-47). Ezekiel and Jeremiah faced it (Jer. 1:17-19; Ezek. 2:1—3:15). How many men would be willing to say, Here am I; send me, today, if they knew that their mission would be as difficult and bereft of any apparent success (as the world measures success)? Yet we all need to renew in our minds the promise of Jesus, the servant is not above his Master. If they rejected Jesus, they will reject the messengers of Jesus. But we are not to become discouraged. God does not measure success like the world measures it. God demands faithfulness—and He, Himself, takes care of the success.

### QUIZ

1. What does the O.T. say about the plurality of Persons in the Godhead?
2. How did Isaiah's vision prepare him to volunteer for God's service?
3. What awesome power does truth hold for those who continue to reject it?
4. Why would Isaiah not need to be concerned with the success of his mission?

### b. THE CONSEQUENCES

TEXT: 6:11-13

- 11 Then said I, Lord, how long? and he answered, Until cities be waste without inhabitant, and houses without men, and the land become utterly waste,
- 12 and Jehovah have removed men far away, and the forsaken places be many in the midst of the land.

13 And if there be yet a tenth in it, it also shall in turn be eaten up: as a terebinth, and as an oak whose stock remaineth, when they are felled; so the holy seed is the stock thereof.

### QUERIES

- a. Why did Isaiah ask "how long"?
- b. Why did God use a "tenth" to speak of those remaining?
- c. What is the "holy seed"?

### PARAPHRASE

Then I said, "Lord, how long will it be before they are ready to listen?" And he replied, "Not until their cities are destroyed . . . and without a person left . . . and the whole country is an utter wasteland. And they are all taken away, and all the land of Israel lies deserted! Yet a tenth . . . a remnant . . . will survive; and though Israel is invaded again and again and destroyed, yet Israel will be like a tree cut down, whose stump still lives to grow again."

### COMMENTS

v. 11-12 **HOW LONG:** This was a natural reaction. If his ministry was to be fraught with such apparent failure, how long would the Lord expect him to preach to deaf ears? Even Jesus indicated that the time comes when God's messenger should refrain from "giving that which is holy to the dogs and casting pearls before swine." God's answer is that the prophet is to preach until the captivity takes everyone away and there are no more people to whom to preach. For Israel, the northern kingdom, that would be only twenty years hence. For Judah approximately 136 years. Isaiah, of course, would not be alive when Judah was exiled, but his prophecy would live on in written form.

V. 13 A HOLY SEED SAVED: this will be the result of Isaiah's faithful persistence. Whatever or whomever is salvaged from apostasy by the ministry of Isaiah will be purged again by some form of testing (probably the captivity). "Tenth" is what we would call a "round number." A figure of speech to indicate a small percentage of return for his preaching. But even that will undergo further purging. God is interested primarily in quality. When the message of God's truth is preached without compromise quality will be the result. But when the messenger of God is inordinately concerned with quantity, there is a tendency to compromise the message. God demands that His messengers be faithful to the message and He will see to the quantity (numbers). Our success in the eyes of God is not judged on the basis of numbers.

There will be a small number of people turned back to the Lord through Isaiah's ministry and they will form the faithful remnant. This faithful remnant will continue through the captivity and pass on from generation to generation a faithfulness to the Lord and a hope in His promises. These generations will succeed one another in walking in the way of the Lord through 700 years until one of them, a virgin by the name of Mary of the tribe of Judah, will surrender herself to become the "handmaiden of the Lord" and give birth to the Incarnate Son of God. These generations will succeed one another until some of them become the nucleus of the Kingdom of God (the church).

God's judgment would not result in annihilation of the people. Here is expressed the Messianic potentialities of the people of God. They will continue to exist (a remnant of them) till Shiloh comes (Cf. Gen. 49:10). "The scepter shall not depart from Judah; nor the rulers staff from between his feet, until Shiloh come." This prophecy was fulfilled in an amazing way. There never was a ruler of the Jews not from the tribe of Judah until Herod the Great who was King of the Jews when Jesus was born. Herod was an Idumean by birth and not even a Jew. The Christ is "Shiloh" and when He came the scepter had departed from Judah. He came and established the rule of the royal family forever! Now we see why the "tenth" had to be purged again!

The Messiah must have a faithful, sanctified remnant through which to come!

### QUIZ

1. What was God's answer to Isaiah's "How long?"
2. Why did God indicate that the "tenth" would be purged again?
3. What was the result of the purging?
4. Who is "Shiloh" and when was He to come into the world?

### SPECIAL STUDY

#### THE PROPHET—MAN, MESSAGE, MEDIUM

by

John D. Pommert

#### THE MAN

##### I. Names and designations for the prophet.

The O. T. Prophets are called by many names and referred to in several ways each indicating something of the character of the man or the nature of his message.

1. "Man of God" Deut. 33:1; I Sam. 9:6; I Kings 12:22; 13:5; II Kings 5:14; Jer. 35:4; II Chron. 8:14; I Tim. 6:11; II Tim. 3:17. This name indicates the moral character of the prophet and the ethical quality of his message. (Cf. the N. T. designation "holy prophets"—Lk. 1:70; Acts 3:21; Eph. 3:5; II Pet. 1:21).
2. "Servants of God" I Chron. 6:49; I Kings 14:18; 18:36; II Kings 9:7; 14:25; Tit. 1:1. Similar to the above but indicating a "serving" status.
3. "Messenger of Jehovah" Isa. 42:19; 44:26; 6:9; Jer. 26:12-15; Ezek. 21:1-10; Jer. 20:7. An emphasis upon the

teaching or preaching function.

4. "Interpreter" Isa. 43:27; Cf. II Pet. 1:20,21. These men explained as well as announced the message.
5. "Man of Spirit" Hos. 9:7 Cf. I Cor. 1:21; 4:10; Acts 26:24; Mic. 3:8 (also translated "fool, mad, or wind" indicating the people's opinion of this speaker of strange words).
6. "Watchman" Ezek. 3:17. He is to the people spiritually what the watchman on the tower is to the city physically. Both have important functions; both are responsible for the message; both are to be believed by the people.
7. "Seer" I Chron. 29:29; I Sam. 9:9. He was a man of insight moved by the Spirit of God to see what others could not.
8. "Prophet" Ex. 7:1,2 etc. The most common term used indicating one who speaks for another—in this case, one who speaks forth for God. Again, a special relationship to God is indicated by this term.
9. "Sons of the Prophets" I Kings 20:35; II Kings 2:3-15; 4:1,38; 5:22; 6:1-7; I Sam. 10:5,10; 19:20. Indicating that the prophets were not holy ascetics but men who trained others to carry on their work.<sup>1</sup>

## II. Personality of the prophets.

What type of men were these holy prophets? Clovis Chappell summarizes them as follows: (1) human—they had the same feelings and frailties of other men—they were not angels or superhuman creatures; (2) men of insight—who could see (by aid of the Holy Spirit) God's meanings in daily events; (3) individualists—each has his own peculiarities and personality which refused compromise; (4) fiery zealots—men who did not preach a "Believe-what-you-want" message but with a "Thus-saith-the-Lord" authority and urgency; (5) unpopular men—who endured fire and sword and death because they refused to compromise their message (Heb. 11).<sup>2</sup> Too often we make these men something other than men whom God used. They were holy men, dynamic men, inspired men, courageous men, but MEN!

### III. MARKS of a Prophet

Kyle Yates shows us a different side of these men when he outlines the marks of a prophet.<sup>3</sup> He sees the prophet to differ from other men in: (1) his uncompromising individuality; (2) his consciousness of his divine call to be a mouthpiece for God; (3) his awareness of his privileged access to the inner counsel of God; (4) his boldness expressed in action and not just theory—he always commands attention; (5) his awareness of God's authority and backing in every emergency even when he is a lone man against a mob; (6) his prayer life and communion with God which often results in a separation from men; (7) his cleanness of life and holy moral character (none of the genuine prophets receive even a breath of scandal concerning moral lapses); (8) his outspoken and fearless criticism of social evils; (9) his ability to foresee and reveal the future.

### IV. Social Position and Background of the Prophets

Brant Lee Doty has an interesting two paragraphs about the backgrounds of these men when he writes:

God used a most heterogeneous selection of men for this purpose. Some were of royal blood, while others knew poverty and the hard life of farm or field. Some began their labors while yet virtually children, whereas others did not step fully into the position until well advanced in years. A few probably knew personal wealth, but the great majority were of humble, lowly background. Regardless of these factors of age or wealth or station, the messages came from God and must be delivered fearlessly.

The prophets were not trained by some standardized procedure. Some were called instantly from their occupations, perhaps without prior hint of their selection. Some spent a part of their lives in schools introduced by the time of Samuel (I Sam. 10:5,10; 19:20). They learned from the compounded wisdom of earlier men, with special attention to a full mastery of the laws of God, preparing their hearts in anticipation of



## THE MAN

the call from heaven, and springing to their tasks when this call clearly came.<sup>4</sup>

### V. Comparison to Modern Day Preachers

Some have compared the prophets to modern day preachers who also preach the Word of God. However, there are several differences—mainly that the prophet's message was directed by the Holy Spirit (II Pet. 1:21) whereas the present day preacher can claim no special guidance. The preacher has a regular congregation and receives a set salary while the prophet was not called by the people, did not preach regularly to the same group, and did not receive any pay. The preacher is under the authority of an eldership while the prophet was answerable only to God. The preacher plans his preaching and can even announce his text in advance; the prophet spoke at odd times and in odd places. The preacher spoke in a religious context to religious people; the prophet usually spoke outside to whatever people were present. Other differences could be noted all indicating the apparent similarity of preacher and prophet to be only in a few particulars.<sup>5</sup>

### VI. A Summing Up

To sum up the O. T. prophet, we should think of him as a "holy man" (i.e., one set apart with a special mission) speaking a message from God to an impenitent people. His message was often indicative (Webster's second definition of this word—"pointing out, giving intimation or knowledge"), sometimes predictive, but always productive (for God's Word does not return unto Him void.)

## THE MESSAGE

### I. The Context of the Message

1. The prophet always declared that his message was not his

own but came from God. Young in *My Servants the Prophets* uses up four pages simply listing the declarations of Isaiah, "Thus saith the Lord," "for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it," etc. These men were convinced that the message they preached came from God. In fact, they were not always happy in their ministry nor with the responsibility to preach but were faithful to its delivery nonetheless (Cf. Jer. 15:16ff; 20:7ff; Ezek. 3:3).

2. This message frequently contained predictions concerning future events, but the main burden of the message dealt with present evils and a call for immediate repentance. *Harper's Dictionary*<sup>6</sup> summed up the tension between today and tomorrow by noting, "Though prophecy was primarily concerned with current situations, the prophets realized that tomorrow is inherent in today."
3. This gave rise to double-prophecy—a message which had relevance for those of that day as well as also foreshadowing a far distant event such as the return of Christ from Egypt.

## II. The Content of the Message

"What, then, did these men preach? In terms of today they presented doctrine and duty. The doctrine had to do first of all and most of all with God. On the basis of what they believed about God, the prophets also dealt largely and boldly with ethics."<sup>7</sup> The prophets came with a message but it was not a new message primarily for as Martin Buber notes,

Generally speaking, it is not a new teaching they advance, but they fashion its form to fit the changing historical situations and have different demands, and they perfect a teaching they have received but where is the beginning of this teaching?<sup>8</sup>

They always point back to the Mosaic law or the Abrahamic covenant as a basis for their preaching. God's people have a special relationship to God and thus have certain obligations to Him and the world. When this call to repentance failed, they reached judgment, destruction, and hope. Halley summarizes

## THE MESSAGE

the mission and message of the prophets under five heads: (1) To try to save the nation from idolatry and wickedness; (2) With little response, to announce impending destruction; (3) But to give hope in that a remnant will be saved; (4) From this remnant will come an influence that will change the world; (5) That Influence will be none other than the Son of David, Jesus.<sup>9</sup>

### III. The Style of The Message

1. The prophets employed the noblest characteristics of the Hebrew people (at least in the writing prophets) as they used the poetical forms of that day with its balanced statement, parallelisms, etc. This structure added a structural force to the meaning of their words. A message delivered in a striking and memorable way has greater impact than the same message sloppily given.
2. They used many types and symbols.
3. They found that dramatic approaches made the message more urgent.

### IV. The Audience

1. Primarily, the prophets preached to all people as exemplified by Amos in the marketplace.
2. Sometimes the message was directed to the king or higher authorities (Nathan, Jonah.)
3. It was not restricted to Jewish audiences but also extended to foreign peoples (Cf. Amos, Jonah, Obadiah).
4. The prophets made use of every circumstance be it a home (II Kings 5:9), a wayside (I Kings 20:38), in the court (II Sam. 24:11), or in the temple (Amos 7:10ff).<sup>10</sup>

## THE MEDIUM

### To the prophet

1. The message came to the prophet in a variety of ways.

Sometimes it came in a dream as with Joseph (Gen. 37). But the prophet knew that it was the voice of God and not just a bit of undigested mutton.

2. The message might come in a vision or a series of visions such as those Ezekiel received. The prophet understood these scenes as containing a revelation from God and was able to interpret these to the people.
3. The message seems to come "directly" to the prophet in most instances. The means are not described, but the prophet is sure that the message came from Jehovah (II Pet. 1:21). I found this comment from the *Zondervan Pictorial Dictionary* quite interesting:

The Biblical prophet must be distinguished from the *prohetes* of Greeks. The latter really acted as an interpreter for the muses and the oracles. The prophets, however, were not interpreters. They uttered the actual words which God had given to them, without any modification or interpretation upon their part. The Bible itself gives an accurate description of the function of the true prophet, ". . . and will put my words in his mouth and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him" (Deut. 18:18b). The words are placed in the prophet's mouth by God, i.e., they are revealed to the prophet, and then the prophet speaks unto the nation precisely what God has commanded him.<sup>11</sup>

. . . From the Prophet

The prophet received the message from God; he delivered this same message to the people.

1. The basic medium used was that of words, those verbal symbols of spirit meanings. Thus, the prophet was very concerned about delivering the exact word(s) of the Lord. (Remember Young's emphasis upon the frequency of the "thus saith the Lord" in the prophets.) Rowley had a thought-provoking comment when he wrote, "We should

## THE MEDIUM

not forget that every prophetic word was believed to have a vitality within itself to work for its own fulfillment." (Cf. Isa. 45:23; 55:10f) "The prophet's word was not merely a forecast of the future. It was a living force which helped to mould the future."<sup>12</sup> (Remember the early chapter of Genesis when God spoke and the worlds were created.)

2. But the prophet also spoke by symbolic action. Isaiah would walk naked and barefooted (Isa. 20:3) as an object lesson to Israel; Jeremiah would bind a wooden yoke to his neck (Jer. 27:2) so that he could preach forecoming bondage for these hard-hearted people without saying a word; Hosea took a wife of whoredom to illustrate the love of God. Of course, the action in itself would not proclaim the message—it amplified the verbal one which preceded or attended it.
3. Some of the prophets put these messages into written form (Cf. Jeremiah and King Zedekiah); thus, they are able to speak to us today through these written forms.
4. We might even say that God spoke through the personality of the prophet himself (Hosea is a good example as he personifies the love of God as he lives his love for Gomer.)

Oftentimes the personality of the prophet even recedes completely into the background, and the speaker appears to be God Himself. Almost naturally, for example, one reads words such as "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins; return unto me; for I have redeemed thee" (Isaiah 44:32). The usage of the personal pronoun in the first person clearly refers to God Himself. Nor is such a phenomenon unusual. It appears throughout the prophecy, and is interwoven naturally with the utterances which the prophet speaks forth as having been given to him by God.<sup>13</sup>

The godly patience of Jeremiah incarnates the patience of God as did no other until Jesus came. Noble men and great preachers who lived their message—these were the prophets. Hebrews 11 well describes their faith, courage, and devotion concluding with this poignant statement, "of

whom the world was not worthy." A nobler group of men have not appeared—but the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than the greatest of all these. Praise God for a Christ Who can make the most insignificant Christian of greater import than the greatest of these great men. Greater than Jeremiah—by what grace has He wrought it?

## FOOTNOTES

1. Much of the foregoing was taken from Class Notes given by George M. Elliott at Cincinnati Bible Seminary, Cincinnati, O.
2. Clovis Chappell, *And the Prophets*, pp. 10-15. Abingdon Press, N.Y. 1946.
3. Kyle M. Yates, *Preaching From the Prophets*, pp. 3, 4. Broadman Press, Nashville, Tenn. 1942.
4. Brant Lee Doty, *Standard Bible Teacher and Leader*, July, 1958. Standard Publishing, Cincinnati, Ohio.
5. David Freedman and James Smart, *God Has Spoken*, pp. 151, 152. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, Pa. 1949.
6. Quoted by Jerry Phillips, "Elements of the Prophetic Call," *Christian Standard*, August 10, 1968.
7. Andrew W. Blackwood, *Preaching From Prophetic Books*, pp. 16, 17. Abingdon-Cokesbury, N.Y. 1951.
8. Phillips, *Ibid.*
9. Homer Halley, *The Pocket Bible Handbook*, p. 251. Homer Halley, Chicago, Illinois, 1951.
10. H. H. Rowley, *Prophecy and Religion In Ancient China and Israel*, Chapter 1. Harper & Brothers, N.Y., 1956.
11. Merrill Tenney, ed., *Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary*, "Prophet."
12. Rowley, *Op. Cit.*, p. 13.
13. Edward Young, *My Servants the Prophets*, p. 175. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1965.

## EXAMINATION

### EXAMINATION, CHAPTERS ONE THROUGH SIX

#### ASSOCIATION

(Associate the persons or events of column one with the correct person or event of column two. Some of column two are incorrect.)

1	2
Amoz	brother
Zion	Lebanon
plowshares	eyes
pruning hooks	coal
daughters of Zion	Hezekiah
ox	mountain of the Lord
ass	unclean
hands	owner
cedars	Sheol
song	died
Uzziah	haughty
altar	father
lips	spears
	full of blood
	crib
	vineyard
	Holy One of Israel
	swords

#### MEMORIZATION

Come now, and let us \_\_\_\_\_ together, saith Jehovah: though your \_\_\_\_\_ be as \_\_\_\_\_, they shall be as \_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_, though they be red like \_\_\_\_\_, they shall be as \_\_\_\_\_. If ye be \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and \_\_\_\_\_, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of \_\_\_\_\_ hath spoken it. Isaiah 1:18-20.

Then flew one of the \_\_\_\_\_ unto me, having a live \_\_\_\_\_ in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the \_\_\_\_\_:

## ISAIAH

and he touched my \_\_\_\_\_ with it, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy \_\_\_\_\_; and thine \_\_\_\_\_ is taken away, and thy sin forgiven. And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, \_\_\_\_\_ shall I \_\_\_\_\_, and who will \_\_\_\_\_ for us? Then I said, \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_. Isaiah 6:6-8

### EXPLANATION

1. Explain the meaning of God asking man to reason together with Him. 1:18-20
2. Explain how the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains. 2:1-4
3. Explain how Israel was like a vineyard planted on a hill. 5:1-7

### APPLICATION

(In its context every scripture has one meaning—the author's intended meaning. How may the following be applied in the believer's life?)

1. How may God's refusal to accept Israel's sacrifices and refusal to hear their prayers be applied to God's people today? 1:10-17
2. How may the idea of beating swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks be applied in the New Testament church? 2:1-4
3. How may the Christian apply Isaiah's vision of the Lord in the temple? 6:1-13



## II. CRISIS AND THE CHRIST (IMMANUEL)

## CHAPTERS 7 - 12

## CHAPTER SEVEN

## A. PROMISE OF IMMANUEL

## 1. THE CRISIS 7:1-9

TEXT: 7:1-9

- 1 And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz, the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to war against it; but could not prevail against it.
- 2 And it was told the house of David saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart trembled, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the forest tremble with the wind.
- 3 Then said Jehovah unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shearjashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, in the highway of the fuller's field;
- 4 and say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither let thy heart be faint, because of these two tails of smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria, and of the son of Remaliah.
- 5 Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have purposed evil against thee saying,
- 6 Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set up a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeel;
- 7 thus saith the Lord Jehovah, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass.
- 8 For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken in pieces, so that it shall not be a people:
- 9 And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.

## QUERIES

- a. Why was Isaiah told to take his son to meet Ahaz?
- b. Who is Tabeel?
- c. Who is warned "to believe"?

## PARAPHRASE

During the reign of Ahaz (the son of Jotham and grandson of Uzziah), Jerusalem was attacked by King Rezin of Syria and King Pekah of Israel (the son of Remaliah). But it was not taken; the city stood. However, when the news came to the royal court, Syria is allied with Israel against us! the hearts of the king and his people trembled with fear as the trees of a forest shake in a storm. Then the Lord said to Isaiah, Go out to meet King Ahaz, you and Shear-jashub, your son. You will find him at the end of the aqueduct which leads from Gihon Spring to the upper reservoir, near the road that leads down to the bleaching field. Tell him to quit worrying, the Lord said. Tell him he needn't be frightened by the fierce anger of those two has-beens, Rezin and Pekah. Yes, the kings of Syria and Israel are coming against you. They say, We will invade Judah and throw her people into panic, then we'll fight our way into Jerusalem and install the son of Tabeel as their King. But the Lord God says, This plan will not succeed, for Damascus will remain the capital of Syria alone, and King Rezin's kingdom will not increase its boundaries. And within sixty-five years Ephraim, too, will be crushed and broken. Samaria is the capital of Ephraim alone and King Pekah's power will not increase. You don't believe Me? If you want me to protect you, you must learn to believe what I say!

## COMMENTS

v. 1-2 THE CONFEDERACY: Rezin, King of Syria, and Pekah, King of Israel (Ephraim) in Samaria, had formed a coalition

against Assyria. It is probable that they tried to get the Judean ruler to join with them against Assyria. Rezin and Pekah first attacked Judah when Jotham was still on the throne (2 Kings 15:37) probably to coerce the Judean ruler to join their alliance against Assyria. In II Chronicles 28:5ff we learn that Ahaz was delivered into the hands of the Syrians who smote him and 120,000 men of Judah were slain. But Ahaz and his forces were suddenly released at Jericho and returned to Jerusalem. Then in II Kings 16:5 we learn of a third attack of Rezin and Pekah upon Jerusalem. At this time Ahaz was prepared to become a satellite-state to Assyria in return for Assyria's protection against the northern coalition (Cf. II Kings 16:7-9). It was, no doubt, just prior to Ahaz's overture to the Assyrians that Isaiah met with Ahaz to deliver the Lord's promise that the coalition of Rezin and Pekah would not be able to stand against Judah. Ahaz was beginning to be overcome with fear toward Syria and Israel. The coalition was determined to get rid of Ahaz and place a man on Judah's throne who would do their bidding.

v. 3-9 THE COMFORT: Isaiah and his son, Shearjashub ("A remnant shall return") were sent to meet Ahaz at a precise point—the point where the water from the upper pool emptied into the conduit. The boy was to serve as a symbolic sign of hope. Ahaz was told to be quiet and calm. Rezin and Pekah were "lots of smoke but no fire" according to the Lord. They are burned-out, smoldering stumps. God knows their threatenings and He knows that in 65 years they will both have disappeared utterly. The coalition wishes to set up the son of Tabeal (the original form of the name suggests he was a Syrian) on the throne of Judah in the place of Ahaz. But God promises, "It shall not stand, and it shall not come to pass." Israel and Syria have only human heads (v. 8) while the head of Judah is the Lord God. In 721-722 B.C. Sargon took Samaria (II Kings 17:16-24) and in 669 B.C. Esar-Haddon of Babylon sent colonists to occupy Samaria and entirely destroyed the nationality of Israel. This was 65 years from the time of Isaiah's prediction here (733 or 734 B.C.). All Ahaz had to do was to accept this promise and believe God and he would be established on the throne of Judah. But

Ahaz would not believe it (Cf. II Kings 16:7-18; II Chron. 28:16-20).

### QUIZ

1. What was the purpose of the confederacy of Syria and Israel?
2. Why had they attacked Judah?
3. What was the attitude of Ahaz toward the confederacy?
4. Why was Isaiah sent to speak with Ahaz?
5. What was God's promise to king Ahaz through the prophet Isaiah?

### 2. THE CHRIST 7:10-16

TEXT: 7:10-16

- 10 And Jehovah spake again unto Ahaz, saying,
- 11 Ask thee a sign of Jehovah thy God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above.
- 12 But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt Jehovah.
- 13 And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; is it a small thing for you to weary men, that ye will weary my God also?
- 14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign; behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel.
- 15 Butter and honey shall he eat when he knoweth to refuse the evil, and choose the good.
- 16 For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land whose two kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken.

## QUERIES

- a. Was Ahaz right in refusing to tempt Jehovah?
- b. Who is the virgin?
- c. Why mention that the child would eat butter and honey?

## PARAPHRASE

Not long after this, the Lord sent this further message to King Ahaz: Ask Me for a sign, Ahaz, to prove that I will indeed crush your enemies as I have said. Ask anything you like, in heaven or on earth. But the king refused. No, he said, I'll not bother the Lord with anything like that. Then Isaiah said, O House of David, you aren't satisfied to exhaust my patience; you exhaust the Lord's as well! All right then, the Lord Himself will choose the sign—a child shall be born to a virgin! And she shall call Him Immanuel (meaning, "God is with us."). By the time it would take for the child to be weaned and come to know right from wrong, the two kings you fear so much—the kings of Israel and Syria—will be dead.

## COMMENTS

v. 10-13 THE SIGN OFFERED AND REFUSED: Ahaz made no move to show that he believed God's promise concerning the continuity of the kingdom of Judah. He was silent. God, to stir up his faith, offers a sign to guarantee fulfillment of His promise. Ahaz haughtily refuses the sign in language he intended should sound pious and loyal, but Ahaz had already decided to do his own will. He knew as well as anyone that when God commands a man to ask for a sign it is not putting God to the test to obey Him. Ahaz, like many others before and after him, wanted to work things out in his own way! His way seemed to be so much better. To be an ally of this great and feared monarch of Assyria was so much better than being an ally of an invisible God. Isaiah

rebukes the king (v. 13) by pointing out that the king may try the patience of men (God's prophets) and not suffer dire consequences, but it is no small matter to try the patience of Jehovah by hypocrisy and rebelliousness.

v. 14-16 **THE SIGN COMPELLED:** Ahaz tried to fool the prophet with his feigned piety. But God was not fooled and spoke through Isaiah that He would give Ahaz a sign whether the king wanted one or not. This sign would not be wasted, as we shall see, for it would establish the faithfulness and veracity of God to keep His covenant. And if Ahaz refused to appropriate it, others of the "house of David" would!

To consider the "sign" here to be given, one must first consider the Hebrew word *almah*, translated in the ASV "virgin" and in the RSV "young woman" and in some other versions "maiden." The Hebrew and English Lexicon of The Old Testament by Brown, Driver and Briggs says of *almah*, "young woman (ripe sexually; maid or newly married)." Gesenius' Hebrew lexicon, the accepted authority among practically all Hebrew lexicographers says, "a girl of marriageable age . . . the notion of unspotted virginity is not that which this word conveys, for which the proper word is *bethulah*." Keil and Delitzsch say in their commentary here, ". . . whilst *bethulah* signifies a maiden living in seclusion in her parents' house and still a long way from matrimony, *almah* is applied to one fully mature, and approaching the time of her marriage . . . It is also admitted that the idea of spotless virginity was not necessarily connected with *almah*, since there are passages (e.g. Song of Sol. 6:8 where it can hardly be distinguished from the Arabic *surrije*); and a person who had a very young-looking wife might be said to have an *almah* for his wife . . . the expression itself warrants the assumption that by *almah* the prophet meant one of the young maidens of the king's (Ahaz') harem . . ." We conclude then, that a child was to be born to one who might be a young woman who was a virgin, or a young woman of marriageable age not necessarily a virgin, or a married woman who was very young looking, or perhaps a young woman who was a member of a king's harem whatever her state of virginity.

Perhaps the more immediate question is, Who is "Immanuel"? The literal meaning of the word is, of course, "God with us." It should be apparent that Immanuel of 7:14, 8:8, and the "child" of 9:6 and the "branch" of 11:1ff is one and the same mighty divine personage. This can be none other than Christ, the Messiah. But, if the passage here under discussion (7:10-16) constitutes a real prophecy of Christ, how are we to explain the plain reference in 7:16 to events belonging to the days of Ahaz and Isaiah? How can the coming of Christ to years of discretion, *some seven centuries after Ahaz*, be made to fix the time for the forsaking of the land of Israel and Syria? And how could a child's coming to age of understanding some seven centuries after Ahaz be a "sign" to Ahaz? Surely some more immediate birth of a child must be in view here.

The late Dr. J. Gresham Machen, famous defender of the inspiration of the scriptures and world-renowned scholar, wrote in his classical work, *The Virgin Birth of Christ*, "In reply, either one of two things may be said. In the first place, it may be held that the prophet has before him in vision the birth of the child Immanuel, and that irrespective of the ultimate fulfillment the vision itself is present. 'I see a wonderful child,' the prophet on this interpretation would say, 'a wonderful child whose birth shall bring salvation to his people; and before such a period of time shall elapse as would lie between the conception of the child in his mother's womb and his coming to years of discretion, the land of Israel and Syria shall be forsaken.'

"In the second place, one may hold that in the passage some immediate birth of a child is in view, but that that event is to be taken as the foreshadowing of the greater event that was to come . . . So in our passage, the prophet, when he placed before the rebellious Ahaz that strange picture of the mother and the child, was not only promising deliverance to Judah in the period before a child then born should know how to refuse evil and choose the good, but also, moved by the Spirit of God, was looking forward, as in a dim and mysterious vision, to the day when the true Immanuel, the mighty God and Prince of Peace, should lie as a little babe in a virgin's arms."

According to Machen's second explanation, then, a young woman (*almah*) contemporary with Ahaz and Isaiah would conceive and bear a son and call his name Immanuel. Before this child should reach the age to be able to choose the good and refuse evil, Israel and Syria would no longer be a threat to Judah. This contemporary *almah* and her child was a *type* of the virgin Mary and her child, the Christ! In view of the many prophecies of the Messiah or the messianic age (Hosea 11:1 etc.), and in view of the plain necessity for a contemporary sign to Ahaz, we have no problem in accepting Machen's second explanation.

But who is the *almah* whose child-bearing in Ahaz' day constitutes the "sign" that Jehovah gives? Two unsatisfactory answers have been given in the past: (a) Isaiah's wife. She named her son Maher-shalal-hash-baz and the *almah's* son was to be named Immanuel. Besides, Isaiah's wife would hardly be a young-looking woman since Isaiah was about 60 years old at this time; (b) Ahaz' wife, Abi (Abijah), mother of Hezekiah. But Hezekiah was born before Ahaz came to the throne (as pointed out by Jerome) so his birth could not have been referred to within the reign of Ahaz as lying still in the future! Who she was we do not know. We do know that she and the birth of her child and the divine deliverance of Judah connected to that birth became a type of the virgin who would conceive when the Holy Spirit came upon her and give birth to the Messiah who would bring the divine deliverance from sin and death finally and completely (Matt. 1:23), and would sit upon the throne of Judah forever. This is the concept Ahaz refused to believe, that God's throne, God's people, God's covenant could be perpetuated without some recourse to human power. So Ahaz thought to protect the throne of Judah and perpetuate it by making alliance with pagan Assyria. Ahaz assured himself that Assyria was his only source of help against Israel and Syria.

But God told Ahaz that he would be given a sign of the divine power to protect and perpetuate the throne of Judah whether Ahaz wanted such divine help or not! The immediate sign to Ahaz (and all in his day) of the divine protection of the covenant



would be the fulfillment of Isaiah's prediction that within a very short time the lands of Pekah and Rezin would be made desolate. The "very short time" is indicated by the prediction that before the child born to the *almah* could come to the age to make the moral choice of good and evil, these lands would be desolate. This "time" element is the real focus of the sign for Ahaz. Some have said that within two or three years from birth most children are able to choose good and reject evil. Isaiah delivered God's sign to Ahaz approximately 734 B.C. and in 732 B.C. Tiglath-Pileser captured Damascus (capitol of Syria) and invaded Israel. This immediate demonstration of God's foreknowledge and power in the perpetuation of His covenant of redemption should establish and confirm His faithfulness to complete His work of redemption in the dim and distant future in the "child" and the "branch" who would be Immanuel. This is the aim of Isaiah 7:14, and this is the application the inspired gospel writer, Matthew, made of the prophecy. The conception of the virgin Mary was the signal to all the world that God had at last arrived at the time for consummation of all His promises of establishing the throne of Judah forever. And the sign given to Ahaz was a type of this divine entry into history given seven centuries in advance.

The child born to the *almah* contemporary with Ahaz will eat butter and honey up to the day it shall be able to choose good and evil. In other words, the danger to Judah, then being caused by the war upon it by Pekah and Rezin would be only temporary—two or three years at the most. Butter and honey are not the ordinary food of an agricultural population. Rather such a diet indicates shortage of staple foods. Judah, under attack by the northern coalition, was suffering food shortages, but God would deliver them from this in a short time. However, because of Ahaz' unbelief and his enslavement of the whole country to Assyria, they would soon be back on their starvation diets (Cf. 7:22).

## QUIZ

1. What may the Hebrew word *almah* mean?
2. Who is the Immanuel of 7:14?
3. What are two possible interpretations of the "sign" to be given to Ahaz?
4. Why could the *almah* of Ahaz' day not be Isaiah's wife?
5. What is the overall idea God is attempting to deliver to Ahaz?
6. What is the application of this prophecy to the conception of the virgin Mary, Matthew 1:23?

## 3. CALAMITY

TEXT: 7:17-25

- 17 Jehovah will bring upon thee, and upon thy people and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah . . . even the king of Assyria.
- 18 And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah will hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria.
- 19 And they shall come and shall rest all of them in the desolate valleys, and in the clefts of the rocks, and upon all thorn-hedges, and upon all pastures.
- 20 In that day will the Lord shave with a razor that is hired in the parts beyond the River, even with the king of Assyria, the head and the hair of the feet; and it shall also consume the beard.
- 21 And it shall come to pass in that day, that a man shall keep alive a young cow, and two sheep;
- 22 and it shall come to pass, that because of the abundance of milk which they shall give he shall eat butter: for butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the midst of the land.
- 23 And it shall come to pass in that day, that every place, where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings, shall be for briers and thorns.

- 24 With arrows and with bow shall one come thither, because all the land shall be briers and thorns.
- 25 And all the hills that were digged with the mattock, thou shalt not come thither for fear of briers and thorns; but it shall be for the sending forth of oxen, and for the treading of sheep.

## QUERIES

- a. Why is Jehovah to bring judgment upon Judah?
- b. What part do flies and bees play in this judgment?
- c. Who is the "hired razor"?

## PARAPHRASE

But later on the Lord will bring a terrible curse on you and on your nation and your family. There will be terror, such as has not been known since the division of Solomon's empire into Israel and Judah . . . the mighty king of Assyria will come with his great army! At that time the Lord will whistle for the army of Upper Egypt, and of Assyria too, to swarm down upon you like flies and destroy you, like bees to sting and to kill. They will come in vast hordes, spreading across the whole land, even into the desolate valleys and caves and thorny parts, as well as to all your fertile acres. In that day the Lord will take this "razor" . . . these Assyrians you have hired to save you . . . and use it on you to shave off everything you have: your land, your crops, your people. When they finally stop plundering, the whole nation will be a pastureland; whole flocks and herds will be destroyed, and a farmer will be fortunate to have a cow and two sheep left. But the abundant pastureland will yield plenty of milk, and everyone left will live on curds and wild honey. At that time the lush vineyards will become patches of briers. All the land will be one vast thornfield, a hunting ground overrun by wildlife. No one will go to the fertile hillsides where once the gardens grew, for thorns will cover them; cattle, sheep and goats will graze there.

## COMMENTS

v. 17-20 **GOD'S TOOL FOR JUDGMENT:** Ahaz did not believe God's promise and he did not heed God's prophet. Ahaz turned to the Assyrian emperor for help. He so thoroughly submitted himself to the Assyrian he became a vassal of that pagan empire (Cf. II Kings 16:7-8). He also adopted much of Assyria's pagan idolatry (Cf. II Kings 16:10-16). So the prophet Isaiah goes from promises to threats. Days are coming upon Judah unequaled since the shame and humiliation of the revolt of the ten tribes. This judgment will be executed when Jehovah God calls, "pssst" (hisses) for the hordes of Assyrian soldiers to swarm into Palestine, overrun Israel and invade Judah. They will come in swarms like flies and bees. During the same time the Egyptians will swarm over the land of Palestine as these two great empires, Assyria and Egypt, struggle for domination of that territory. The "hired razor" will be the king of Assyria, God's instrument of shame and humiliation upon Judah. To shave the head and the beard completely off was a sign of deep humiliation and shame. Just how the Lord arranged for the king of Assyria to do His bidding we do not know. We know that the Lord "stirred up the spirit of Cyrus" to return the Hebrews to their land (II Chron. 36:22; Ezra 1:1) and that He sent a messenger among the nations to stir them up against Edom (Obadiah 1:1) and that in the book of Daniel the Lord deposed and enthroned pagan kings at His discretion.

v. 21-25 **GOD'S WAY OF JUDGMENT:** The swarming armies of Assyria and Egypt tramping through the land and encamping upon it would completely devastate the land's agricultural potentialities. The massive armies of antiquity fed and supplied themselves almost entirely from foraging upon the countryside where they camped. To feed, clothe and supply other necessities for armies in the hundreds of thousands took incredible amounts of agricultural and building commodities. The devastation would be so thorough that the only thing left to eat for the local residents would be milk, butter and honey (v. 22); the vineyards would be all stripped and weeds would grow in their place (v. 23);

only the hunter hunting the wild things of the thicket will be there, and tillable land will be so full of thorns and briers that tear clothes and flesh, no one will ever go there except animals to graze.

Precisely what Ahaz hoped to avert by becoming a vassal of the king of Assyria was what happened to the land because he refused to trust God and trusted in man.

### QUIZ

1. How thoroughly did Ahaz subjugate himself to Assyria?
2. To what extent will the foreign armies come into Palestine because of the sin of Ahaz?
3. How does God "hiss" for these foreign armies to do His bidding?
4. Why was the devastation of the land of Palestine so great?
5. How did the plan of Ahaz to use the king of Assyria for protection turn out?

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### B. PREVISION OF IMMANUEL

#### 1. THE PROPHECY 8:1-8

##### TEXT: 8:1-8

- 1 And Jehovah said unto me, Take thee a great tablet, and write upon it with the pen of a man, For Maher-shalal-hash-baz;
- 2 and I will take unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah, the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah.
- 3 And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son. Then said Jehovah unto me, Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz.
- 4 For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and My mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be carried away before the king of Assyria.

- 5 And Jehovah spake unto me yet again, saying,  
 6 Forasmuch as this people have refused the waters of Shiloah that go softly and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son;  
 7 now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth upon them the waters of the River, strong and many, even the king of Assyria and all his glory: and it shall come up over all its channels, and go over all its banks;  
 8 and it shall sweep onward into Judah; it shall flow and pass through; it shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of its wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.

### QUERIES

- a. Why tell Isaiah to name his son thus (v. 3)?
- b. What are the waters of Shiloah?
- c. Who is the Immanuel of v. 8?

### PARAPHRASE

Again the Lord sent me a message: Make a large signboard and write on it the birth announcement of the son I am going to give you. Use capital letters! His name will be Maher-shalhash-baz which means, Your enemies will soon be destroyed! I asked Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah, both known as honest men, to watch me as I wrote so they could testify that I had written it (before the child was even on the way). Then I had sexual intercourse with my wife and she conceived, and bore me a son, and the Lord said, Call him Maher-shalhash-baz. This name prophesies that within a couple of years, before this child is even old enough to say Daddy or Mommy, the king of Assyria will invade both Damascus and Samaria and carry away their riches. Then the Lord spoke to me again and said: Since the people of Jerusalem are planning to refuse My gentle care and are enthusiastic about asking King Rezin and King Pekah to come and aid them, therefore I will overwhelm

My people with Euphrates' mighty flood; the king of Assyria and all his mighty armies will rage against them. This flood will overflow all its channels and sweep into your land of Judah, O Immanuel, submerging it from end to end.

## COMMENTS

V. 1-4 PLEDGE OF GOD'S DELIVERANCE: It appears as if Isaiah turns away from his ministry to the general public and concentrates his teaching upon an inner circle of loyal believers in the kingdom. He lets the nation with its stubborn rulers and fat-hearted people go their way. They have rejected his message. It seems that what immediately follows is for the understanding and edification of the "remnant" that will remain faithful. It begins with a pledge of God's faithfulness to be symbolized in Isaiah's children. The sign of Immanuel was abstruse and hidden. In its more spiritual sense it appealed to faith in an event far distant. Even in its contemporary fulfillment it would not do much to cheer and encourage more than a few since neither the *almah* nor her child was pointed out with any distinctness. A fresh sign therefore was given by God's goodness to reassure those of the people who would accept the sign—the sign of the son of Isaiah himself. This son was to be born immediately. His name signified the rapid approach of the spoiler. Maher-shalal-hash-baz means literally, "Plunder speeds, Spoil hastens." Men could verify the prophecy concerning Isaiah's son; they could check the fulfillment against the written statement. The tablet was probably a large wooden or ivory slab (customary signboards of that day). Besides the written statement the fact of the prediction was verified by two men who were evidently chosen for their acceptability to the people.

The promise was that before this son of Isaiah could utter the first words that a child is supposed to be able to speak, Damascus and Samaria would be despoiled. The scripture does not record fulfillment of this prophecy, but archaeology does. Inscriptions of Tiglath Pileser state that he "sent population, goods of the

people of Beth-Omri and their furniture to the land of Assyria." That he "appointed Husih (Hoshea) to the dominion over them" and fixed their annual tribute at two talents of gold and a thousand talents of silver. (Cf. *Records of The Past*, Vol. 5, pg. 52). King Sargon also wrote, "Samaria I besieged, I captured. 27,290 people from its midst I carried captive. Tributes and taxes I imposed upon them after the Assyrian manner."

v. 5-8 PREDICTION OF GOD'S JUDGMENT: "Waters of Shiloah" referred in a general sense to the streams, springs, reservoirs (pools) and conduits which supplied the temple service and worship in Jerusalem. This then would be the same as refusing the temple service and worship which is exactly what Israel had done from the time of Jereboam. The gentle and soft persuasion of God through His priests and prophets the people had rejected. They set up their own priesthood and hired their own false prophets in Israel. God was going to send upon them the raging flood of the "River"—the king of Assyria and his massive horde of soldiers. That mass of Assyrian humanity would completely inundate the northern kingdom of Israel and sweep it away like a great flood. The "flood" would overflow even into Judah, the southern kingdom, "up to its neck." Assyria did sweep into the land of Judah and occupy all that territory except the city of Jerusalem and its immediate environs in the days of Hezekiah (son of Ahaz). God preserved Jerusalem and slew 185,000 Assyrian troops in one night and sent the Assyrians back to their land (Cf. Isaiah ch. 36-39; II Kings ch. 18-20).

The "Immanuel" of v. 8 is, we believe, the land or nation which is a type of the Messiah. Centuries later the Messiah is attacked by the god of this world and almost overwhelmed, but the Messiah is delivered by the omnipotent and miraculous act of God when He raised Him from the dead. Here the land or nation is almost overwhelmed but delivered by the omnipotent miraculous act of God—all in type. Later, in the book of Isaiah the nation of Israel is made to be a type of the Servant-Messiah (Cf. Isa. 44:1ff).



## QUIZ

1. Why does it appear Isaiah is turning to a ministry to the "remnant"?
2. What is the significance of making Isaiah's son a sign?
3. Where is the record of the fulfillment of the prophecy contained in Isaiah's son?
4. What are the "waters of Shiloah" and what do they symbolize?
5. When did Assyria come into Judah up "to its neck"?
6. Who is the "Immanuel" of v. 8 and what of its symbolic or typical relationship?

## 2. THE PROMISE 8:9-15

## TEXT: 8:9-15

- 9 Make an uproar, O ye peoples, and be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and be broken in pieces.
- 10 Take counsel together, and it shall be brought to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us.
- 11 For Jehovah spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me not to walk in the way of this people, saying,
- 12 Say ye not, A conspiracy, concerning all whereof this people shall say, A conspiracy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be in dread thereof.
- 13 Jehovah of hosts, him shall ye sanctify; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.
- 14 And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
- 15 And many shall stumble thereon, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.

## QUERIES

- a. Why does God direct the peoples to make an uproar?
- b. To whom did God speak "with a strong hand"?
- c. How would Jehovah become a "stone of stumbling"?

## PARAPHRASE

Do your worst, O Syria and Israel, our enemies, but you will not succeed . . . you will be shattered. Listen to me, all you enemies of ours: Prepare for war against us . . . and perish! Yes! Perish! Call your councils of war, develop your strategies, prepare your plans of attacking us, and perish! For God is with us. The Lord has said in strongest terms: Do not under any circumstances, go along with the plans of Judah to make an alliance with Assyria. Don't let people call you a traitor for staying true to God. Don't panic as so many of your neighbors are doing when they think of Syria and Israel attacking you. Don't fear anything except the Lord of the armies of heaven! If you fear Him, you need fear nothing else. He will be your safety; but Israel and Judah have refused His care and thereby stumbled against the Rock of their salvation and lie fallen and crushed beneath it: God's presence among them has endangered them!

## COMMENTS

v. 9-10 **ENEMIES DEFEATED:** Although God warned (8:1-8) that the people would suffer the ravages of Assyrian invasion, here Jehovah promises that the forces of the world will not be able to defeat His purposes nor harm His faithful believers. Jehovah, in effect, challenges the pagan nations to assemble themselves, arm themselves and do their very best against His chosen remnant ("Immanuel"). Jehovah assures His remnant their enemies will come to nought for He is with His remnant. This is a common expression of Jehovah through the prophets

(Cf. Joel 3:9ff; Isa. 10:5ff, etc.). Actually, Jehovah takes the evil machinations of worldly powers and uses them to serve His own purposes. In this instance Jehovah used the evil devices of Assyria to punish His rebellious land and strengthen His remnant.

v. 11-15 FAITHFUL PROTECTED: The Lord spoke to Isaiah in some dramatic and emphatic manner warning him not to go along with the plans of Judah to become an ally of Assyria. The people were crying against Isaiah that he was a "conspirator" against the policies of the king. But who were the real "conspirators"? Isaiah, Jeremiah and other prophets advocated a policy of dependence upon the Lord and not upon foreign powers. And for this they were accused of treason! Ahaz, the son of David, of all men, should have understood the pleas of the prophets. The nation was so low, spiritually, however, that when the prophets advocated that the theocracy act like the theocracy, they were accused of conspiracy. Those forces attempting to "enter the kingdom by violence" in the days of Jesus accused Him of treason because He called the people of God back to their divine mission.

Man seems bent on fearing and respecting and reverencing the wrong power. The tendency of man is always to fear and respect the power he can see and feel—worldly power. Surely Jehovah has manifested His power in the world sufficiently to direct man's fear toward Himself. Yet man in his pride refuses to trust and turns to his own devices for his salvation. Jesus reminded men, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28).

God is sanctified by man when man sets God apart in His rightful place—as sovereign of man's mind and motives and actions. When man thus sanctifies the Lord, the Lord becomes a "sanctuary" to man—a refuge, a place of safety. When man refuses to sanctify the Lord as sovereign of his life, the Lord becomes a means of man's destruction. Man is created a moral being whose life is dependent upon truth, innocence, good, beauty, righteousness and justice. God is the author and perfect source of all of man's need. When man rejects this only source and rebels against it, man's death is inevitable! This has been

demonstrated historically again and again. It was being demonstrated before the very eyes of the people of Israel and Judah in Isaiah's day. This text (esp. v. 14-15) is quoted as a typical prophecy of the evil forces arrayed against God's purposes in the Messiah when they sought to kill him (Cf. Matt. 21:44; Lk. 20:18).

## QUIZ

1. What is Jehovah's challenge to the pagan nations in v. 9-10?
2. What does God do with the evil actions of His enemies?
3. Why were the people calling Isaiah a "conspirator"?
4. How does God become a "stumbling block" to those who reject Him?

## 3. THE PEDAGOGY 8:16-22

### TEXT: 8:16-22

- 16 Bind thou up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.
- 17 And I will wait for Jehovah, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.
- 18 Behold, I and the children whom Jehovah hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from Jehovah of hosts, who dwelleth in mount Zion.
- 19 And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits and unto the wizards, that chirp and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? on behalf of the living should they seek unto the dead?
- 20 To the law and to the testimony! if they speak not according to this word, surely there is no morning for them.
- 21 And they shall pass through it, sore distressed and hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse by their king and by their God, and turn their faces upward:
- 22 and they shall look unto the earth, and behold, distress and

darkness, the gloom of anguish; and into thick darkness they shall be driven away.

### QUERIES

- a. Who were Isaiah's or the Lord's "disciples"?
- b. How were the children of Isaiah "signs" in Israel?
- c. Why were the people seeking "familiar spirits"?

### PARAPHRASE

Complete the written testimony which I have given you, authenticate and corroborate it among My faithful remnant, said the Lord to me. But, I will trust the Lord, who is presently withdrawing from this rebellious nation, but my hope is in Him because He has promised to be with us again. Behold, I and the children God has given me are signs that He keeps His word and fulfills His promises. Now when the unbelieving people shall advise you to try to find out the future by consulting mediums and witches, do not listen to their superstitions and jargon. Should not the people seek the truth from the God of all truth? How can they ever expect to find out about living from the dead? Seek for truth in the law and testimony of God! Check these so-called revelations of the witches and mediums and if they are different than God's testimony then you know they do not speak for Him; there is not even the slightest dawning of light in them. My people are going to be led away captive, stumbling, weary and hungry. And because they are hungry, those who do not trust Me will rave and shake their fists at heaven and curse their king and their God. Wherever they look there will be trouble and anguish and dark despair. And they will be thrust out into the darkness of captivity.

## COMMENT

V. 16-20 TRUE AND FALSE TEACHING: The real crisis in the nation was in its choice of its source for truth and light. Isaiah was commanded by the Lord to "bind up" (complete) the "testimony" (revelation from God) and "seal" (authenticate, prove, corroborate) it among God's "disciples" (followers, the faithful remnant). The "testimony" was all that God had revealed through Isaiah concerning the condition of Israel and Judah and how they might turn to God and be saved. The prophet and his children had even been named to symbolize God's promises. *Isaiah* means "Jehovah will save (His people);" *Shear-jashub* means "A remnant shall return;" *Maher-shalal-hash-baz* means "Your enemies will soon be preyed upon and spoiled."

Isaiah and his sons, displaying the image of God in their lives, in the midst of an unbelieving society, were given for testimony of God's presence and protection for those who trust Him. Their testimony is where the nation is to seek for Jehovah, not in the obscure and ambiguous and false teachings of witches and mediums. It is nothing short of shocking that even Christians are sometimes seduced into seeking the answers to life in witchcraft and spiritism. Seeking to learn from such false and demonic sources is absolutely condemned in both the Old and New Testaments. Verse 18 is quoted in Hebrews 2:13 as messianic. Christ, the Great Prophet, the Divine Being coming into the world in the form of flesh, and His disciples, partaking of the divine nature through faith, both displaying the image of God in the midst of an unbelieving society, are given for a testimony of God's power, presence and protection. Thus Isaiah and his children are types of the Messiah-Prophet and His children.

"To the law and to the testimony!" There is no alternative if man wants light and truth. Every claim to light and truth must be measured by God's law and testimony—God's revelation. If any teaching does not "speak" according to God's word there is no light in that teaching. It is darkness, falsehood and condemnation. Whatever it is or wherever it is found, if it is true it will agree in fact, principle and practice with God's revelation.

Witchcraft and necromancy does not agree with God's word. Therefore, there is not even the dawning of light in it.

v. 21-22 CONSEQUENCES OF CONSULTING FALSE TEACHING: When men choose ignorance falsehood and sin, deliberately, they lose the power to reason to relate and to understand. Nothing makes sense. Man suffers a dehumanizing, deranging, despairing experience. When calamity strikes, as it surely will do those who disobey God's moral principles of human social existence, chaos reigns. Distresses of many kinds are the consequences of casting away Divine truth—both physical and psychological. Such conditions are described in these verses—distress, famine, anxiety, cursing one's fellowman, cursing God, searching, darkness, gloom, anguish, being driven away. Such is a description of the chosen people at the time of their captivities.

## QUIZ

1. Where was the real crisis in the nations of Israel and Judah?
2. What was the "testimony" that Isaiah was to bind up and seal?
3. What does the word "seal" mean here?
4. How did the prophet and his children become a testimony for Jehovah?
5. How does verse 18 apply to the New Testament?
6. What are the consequences of false teaching?

## CHAPTER NINE

### C. PEACE BY IMMANUEL

#### 1. HIS PERSONALITY

TEXT: 9:1-7

- 1 But there shall be no gloom to her that was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali; but in the latter time hath he made

it glorious, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

- 2 The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.
- 3 Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased their joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.
- 4 For the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, thou hast broken as in the day of Midian.
- 5 For all the armor of the armed man in the tumult, and the garments rolled in blood, shall be for burning, for fuel of fire.
- 6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
- 7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even forever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this.

### QUERIES

- a. When is "Galilee" to be made glorious?
- b. Who is the "oppressor" that is broken?
- c. Who is the "child" that is born?

### PARAPHRASE

But that time of darkness and despair will not be forever upon God's covenant people. In fact, while the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali is being held in contempt by God because of the paganism of its people, in the day the Messiah comes He will make that territory glorious by His work there—that is the



territory that will then be Gentile territory, Galilee and beyond the Jordan. These who walk in the darkness of ignorance and sin will see a Great Light. This Light will illuminate the way for those who live in the realms of deep darkness. You, Jehovah, will multiply your covenant people, you will increase their joy; your multiplying people will be filled with joy like that of reapers when the harvest time has come, and like that of men dividing up the treasures they have captured. When The Light comes God will break the bondage of oppression upon His people by a great miraculous Divine act of victory over their enemy. At that time God shall utterly destroy the weapons of those who oppress His people and give His people complete peace. For unto God's people a child will be born; God will give His people a Son. And the government of God will be administered by this Son. These will be the royal titles indicating His nature and character: Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. His government will be one of continued growth and peace and it will never end. He will occupy the throne of His progenitor David and will rule in perfect justice and righteousness His kingdom forever. God's zeal to vindicate His faithfulness and His zeal for His people will accomplish all this.

## COMMENTS

V. 1-3 THE LIGHT DISPELLING DARKNESS: We must preface all comments on this section (9:1-7) by confirming that the entire section is messianic. It is plainly declared to be so by Jesus Christ Himself (Cf. Matt. 4:13-17). The ultimate fulfillment of this section, then, is in the first advent of the Messiah. To those who by faith accept the sign of the *almah's* son and the sign of Isaiah's sons, gloom and despair will be dispelled. The Great Light will come at some future time and turn God's contempt into God's glory upon God's people. This future glory of God will have its beginnings in Galilee, the region so abhorred by most of the people of Palestine. Of course, those people to whom Isaiah addresses these remarks, people of Isaiah's own day, would not

themselves live to see the reality of this prediction. However, by faith they might appropriate it to themselves at that moment—even as we may appropriate now some of the blessings of the future predicted in the New Testament.

Jesus Christ, The Light of the World, began His public ministry in Galilee. He was reared there in the village of Nazareth. He called most of His apostles from that territory. And, He gained His greatest acceptance and following from Galilee. This northern frontier of the Promised Land was the first to abdicate to paganizing inroads in the days of the Divided Kingdom—it was the first to be overrun by the invading forces of Assyria and Babylon—but it was the area God chose to bless and glorify with the presence of His Beloved Son! The method of Divine grace is amazing.

The coming of the Messiah-Light brought atonement for Divine contempt. His coming also brought fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham that from his seed would all the nations of the earth be blessed. His coming brought about the multiplication of the covenant nation through the institution of the kingdom and the calling of the Gentiles into covenant kingdomship. The two figures of speech in verse 3 are favorite prophetic vehicles to express the way in which this future, new, kingdom of God will extend itself among the Gentiles. The preaching of the gospel and conversion of the Gentiles is spoken of, prophetically, as a harvest and as a conquest wherein the Gentiles become the booty of God's war against His enemies (Cf. Obad. 17-21; Isa. ch. 60-66, etc.).

V. 4-5 THE LORD DELIVERING FROM OPPRESSION: These verses offer another favorite prophetic figure of speech. Oppression, whether physical or spiritual, is usually illustrated in the Old Testament by physical figures. Here we believe the oppression in its ultimate sense is the spiritual oppression of sin, its guilt and its estranging consequences. Of course, the immediate consequences of the sin of Israel and Judah were their captivities by foreign powers. However, even these captivities symbolized the greater oppression, the bondage to sin and Satan, to which God's people had surrendered. Now God delivered His people

from both the oppression of Babylonian captivity and from the oppression of sin. The deliverance from captivity became a type and prophecy of the mighty and miraculous deliverance from Satan and sin. Just as it was apparent that it was God delivering the people from the Midianites in the days of Gideon, so it would be apparent that it was God delivering from captivity and God delivering from Satan and sin. And when God delivers, the oppressor may as well burn his weapons for they will be of no use against God's people any more.

V. 6-7 THE LAD-DIVINE DISPENSING PEACE: The word "child" occurs first in the sentence in Hebrew, indicating all the emphasis is put there. The Son of David, Son of God Most High, actually coming to us as a child. The humanity of the Messiah is pointed out here. Young believes there are only four names for the Child, the first of which should be translated, Wonderful Counsellor. Actually the Hebrew word is "wonder" not "wonderful." The Child will not be merely wonderful, but He Himself will be a Wonder. To sit upon the throne of David as the Messianic King requires wisdom such as no mere man possesses. In this King there will be hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3). He will be the Word of God, the Logos (Jn. 1:14, 18). He will be the Wisdom of God (I Cor. 1:24). (Cf. also Isa. 11:2). This King will have no need of being surrounded with human counsellors and advisors. He is *pele yoetz*, a Wonder of a Counsellor.

This Child is also called *el gibbor*, Mighty God. Literally God-Hero. One who overcomes, a victor, would be appropriate synonyms.

The third appellation is *abi ad*, Father-Eternal. The word Father pictorializes a quality of the Messiah toward His people. Eternal modifies Father, thus, Eternally—a Father to His people!

The fourth name is *sar shalom*, Prince of Peace. Since the peace to be established is eternal, it is clear that this peace is something more than a temporary cessation of hostilities (which millennialists claim will be enforced during the so-called "thousand year literal reign of Christ in Jerusalem.") among nations. The cessation of warfare in itself does not bring about a desired

condition of existence. There must also be removed the cause of war, namely, human sin. When this cause of war is removed, then there can be true peace. For human sin to be removed, however, there must be a state of peace between God and man. Not only must man be at peace with God, but what is more important, God must be at peace with man. The enmity which had existed between God and man must be removed. It was human sin which had kept God at enmity with man. When that sin has been removed, then there can be everlasting peace (Cf. Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:11-22). The Prince of Peace was foreshadowed by Melchizedek, "King of Salem (peace)" and in Solomon, "peaceful one." See also our comments on Isaiah 2:4.

The nature of the reign of this Child will be in justice and righteousness. The two indispensable ingredients making for peace are justice and righteousness. There are two qualities so blatantly abused in the days of the prophets by the rulers and the people of Israel and Judah. Christ came and satisfied the justice of God teaching men to be just and imputed to men the righteousness of God teaching men to be righteous. And His kingdom has continued to reach out to all men everywhere, increasing in quantity and quality. Spiritual growth and development into the image of God is the very essence of the kingdom of God.

What will ever accomplish all this? The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do it. But "zeal" for what? There is one recurring phrase of great interest in the prophetic literature, God says, "For my own sake," or "For the sake of my name, I will do it." What could bring more blessedness or victory or safety or abundance to God's people than the vindication of the wisdom, power and faithfulness of God Himself? If God is zealous for His own honor, then His people will surely find honor in that!

## QUIZ

1. What is the ultimate fulfillment of this section of prophecy?
2. What is significant about the territory of Galilee in this prophecy?

3. What is the darkness referred to in verse 2?
4. How was the "nation multiplied"?
5. What figures of speech are used to depict deliverance from oppression?
6. Give the meaning of the four names for the Child-Son.
7. What is the peace to be brought by this Child-ruler? Where is it fulfilled in the N.T.?

## 2. ISRAEL'S PRESUMPTION

TEXT: 9:8-17

- 8 The Lord sent a word into Jacob, and it hath lighted upon Israel.
- 9 And all the people shall know, even Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria, that say in pride and in stoutness of heart,
- 10 The bricks are fallen, but we will build with hewn stone; the sycamores are cut down, but we will put cedars in their place.
- 11 Therefore Jehovah will set up on high against him the adversaries of Rezin, and will stir up his enemies,
- 12 the Syrians before, and the Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with open mouth. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.
- 13 Yet the people have not turned unto him that smote them, neither have they sought Jehovah of hosts.
- 14 Therefore Jehovah will cut off from Israel head and tail, palm-branch and rush, in one day.
- 15 The elder and the honorable man, he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail.
- 16 For they that lead this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed.
- 17 Therefore the Lord will not rejoice over their young men, neither will he have compassion on their fatherless and widows; for every one is profane and an evil-doer, and every mouth speaketh folly. For all this his anger is not turned

away, but his hand is stretched out still.

### QUERIES

- a. How did the Lord send “a word into Jacob”?
- b. Why was God’s anger not turned away?
- c. What significance is there in the prophet teaching lies?

### PARAPHRASE

The Lord has penetrated into Jacob with His word of warning—His word found its mark through the prophets. Soon all the people of Israel will experience what He has promised, because in the pride and haughtiness of their hearts they have said, Let the judgment come, if the bricks of our houses and walls fall, we will just build houses and walls of hewn stone; if the sycamore trees are cut down, we will put cedars in their place. The Lord’s reply to your bragging is to bring Rezin’s enemies against you—the Syrians on the east and the Philistines on the west. With bared fangs they will devour Israel. But even then the Lord’s righteous anger against you will not be satisfied—His hand will still be poised to smash you. For after all this chastening you will not repent and turn to seek Jehovah of hosts. Therefore the Lord, in one day, will cut off from Israel the high and the low; the elder and the honorable man is the high, and the prophet that teaches lies is the low. These false leaders and teachers have led the people in error, and the people have been willing to be led in error—both shall be destroyed. That is why the Lord has no joy in their young men, and no mercy upon even the widows and orphans; for they are all filthy-mouthed, wicked liars, foolish speakers. But even then the Lord’s righteous anger against you will not be satisfied—His hand will still be poised to smash you.

## COMMENTS

v. 8-12 **HAUGHTY HEARTS:** The Lord has not overlooked their rebellion. He has sent His word directly into their midst through the prophets. He has "hewn them by the prophets and slain them by the words of his mouth" (Hos. 6:5). They were without excuse, for God had warned them again and again. He pleaded with them through Joel, Jonah, Amos and Hosea, to no avail. They became prouder and prouder. There was no humility and no repentance for sin. In their haughty hearts they said, in effect, "Let the Lord's judgment come, we are fully capable of controlling every situation by our own hands. If God destroys our brick houses and city walls we will rebuild them with hewn stones which cannot be destroyed. If God takes away our sycamore trees we will replace them with cedars!" They refused to acknowledge that things were in God's hands. So God will let them know (by experience) that His word is omnipotent. Rezin's enemies, the Syrians on the east (probably those Syrians who had been subjugated by the Assyrians and made to fight with the Assyrians against Damascus), and the Philistines on the west, would form a military-vise, a pincer movement, and crush Israel and Judah between them. Yet, in spite of all this woe and chastening, there is no repentance in Israel, so the wrath of God will still be directed against them.

v. 13-17 **UNHOLY HARBINGERS:** The people had not turned to Jehovah, in spite of God's chastening and the preaching of God's prophets. The reason for their continued rebellion could be found in the fact that the leaders of the nation (its rulers and religious leaders—prophets) were teaching and leading the people in lies. From the head to the tail—from the king to the lowliest official—they were telling the people lies about Jehovah. There were only a very few of the prophets faithful to the truth of God. The majority were false prophets, preaching and teaching what a sinful people wanted to hear, hirelings, concerned with their own selfish ends, (Cf. Amos 2:12; Micah 2:6-11). Those being led astray into error (the people) would be destroyed also because they were willing to be led astray! God takes no pleasure

in any of these people (v. 17). The young men of the nation, its greatest treasure are an abomination. The nation is so totally corrupt even the widows and orphans are involved in its rebellion and God cannot even show mercy to these. *Everyone* is profane and irreligious. They plot evil deeds (Cf. Hosea 4:1-3; 7:1-16). Every person in the nation is speaking and acting foolishly. It is difficult to comprehend the extent of moral and spiritual decadence rampant in Israel at that time. But the biblical record is substantiated by archaeological data! For this reason God's hand of judgment is poised to fall heavily upon Israel.

### QUIZ

1. Why were the people without excuse for their rebellion?
2. What was Israel's presumption?
3. How would the enemies of Rezin deal with Israel?
4. How did the rulers and prophets contribute to the rebellion of Israel?
5. To what extent had the nation fallen into decadence?

### 3. ISRAEL'S PERVERSITY

TEXT: 9:18-21

- 18 For wickedness burneth as the fire; it devoureth the briers and thorns; yea it kindleth in the thickets of the forest, and they roll upward in a column of smoke.
- 19 Through the wrath of Jehovah of hosts is the land burnt up; and the people are as the fuel of fire: no man spareth his brother.
- 20 And one shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry; and he shall eat on the left hand, and they shall not be satisfied: they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm:



21 Manasseh, Ephraim; and Ephraim, Manasseh; and they together shall be against Judah. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

### QUERIES

- a. How does wickedness "burn"?
- b. What is the meaning of "snatching on the right hand"?
- c. Were they literally to eat the "flesh of their own arms"?

### PARAPHRASE

The consequences of your wickedness will consume you like a fire that burns up all vegetation. God's graciousness will be replaced by God's all-consuming wrath. He will devour everything in His anger. The people will be as fuel for the fires of His righteous indignation. They will fight against one another to steal one another's food, but they will never have enough. Finally they will even eat the flesh of their own people. Manassah against Ephraim and Ephraim against Manassah in civil war and then both Manassah and Ephraim in a truce long enough to unite against Judah. Yet even after all of this, God's anger is not yet satisfied. His hand is still heavy upon them, to punish them. ,

### COMMENTS

v. 18-21 CIVIL WAR: The plague of wickedness has infected the whole society and its culture. Rich and poor, powerful and weak, educated and illiterate alike are contaminated with evil. It has spread like fire spreads through dry stubble and forest. The fire which is about to consume the people and their land is the mighty moral rule of God which inevitably must fall upon those who break all moral bounds. The people were about to experience the removal of God's grace. When that happens man

PALESTINE  
after  
Assyrian invasion  
722 B.C.  
(Isaiah Chapter 10)

Isaiah 10: 24-34  
Cities in path of Assyrian  
assault upon Judah

PHOENICIA  
ASSYRIAN PROVINCES

AMMON

PHILISTIA

JUDAH

DEAD SEA

MOAB

EDOM





*"The days of visitation are come, the days of recompense are come:  
Israel shall know it" (Hosea 9:7).*

Among the armed units of Tiglath-Pileser III which forced their way into Syria, there was, besides infantry and charioteers, an element which was used for the first time in history on a large scale by the Assyrians, namely cavalry.

This relief shows mounted Assyrians engaged in battle with Syrian rebels. Behind the horsemen flies a vulture which has snatched up a dead man's entrails.

FROM: THE BIBLE AS HISTORY IN PICTURES  
By Werner Keller - Wm. Morrow Co.

is left alone to the consequences of his perversity and when that happens man consumes himself. Some commentators seem to think the statement, "they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm" means figurative cannibalism. However, literal cannibalism is not unknown to ancient history or modern history (Cf. II Kings 6:24-31; Jer. 19:9, etc.). In modern times the people of Russia in the siege of Leningrad (WW II) are reported to have eaten human flesh to survive starvation. Social and moral anarchy resulted in civil war—brother killing and robbing brother. And all these woes were but the beginning of tribulation on this once favored people. The hand of God was stretched out still. The end was not yet. That came with foreign conquest, captivity and slavery.

## QUIZ

1. What is the fire that is about to consume the people and land?
2. Does the Bible mention literal cannibalism anywhere? Where?
3. What brought on the civil war?
4. Why was this tribulation not the end of Israel's woes?

## CHAPTER TEN

### D. PRESERVATION IN IMMANUEL

#### 1. SOCIAL INJUSTICE

TEXT: 10:1-4

- 1 Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and to the writers that write perverseness;
- 2 to turn aside the needy from justice, and to rob the poor of my people of their right, that widows may be their spoil, and that they may make the fatherless their prey!
- 3 And what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desola-

tion which shall come from far? to whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your glory?

- 4 They shall only bow down under the prisoners, and shall fall under the slain. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

### QUERIES

- a. How were the writers writing "perverseness"?
- b. What is meant by "leaving your glory"?

### PARAPHRASE

Woe to the rulers that decree unjust decrees and woe to those who administrate them unjustly. These have taken away justice from the poor man. They have so perverted the law they are even robbing the fatherless and the widows. Now, what will you do in the day that the Lord of Justice visits you and sends desolation upon you from a distant land? To whom will you turn then for your help? Where will you hide for safekeeping all the things you glory in then? This people will be brought down. The haughty ones will fall among the slain. Even for all this Jehovah's anger is not turned away, but his hand is still stretched forth in judgment.

### COMMENTS

v. 1-2 ROBBERY: Through false and illegal decrees made orally by wicked judges and rulers, and through false and illegal documents written by perverse scribes, the poor and powerless people were being robbed. Those who most needed their human rights protected were the very ones being exploited. Those without political power and influence and without wealth were being "skinned alive." The rich and the influential able to pay bribes

were receiving all the civil judgments in their favor. Widows and orphans were at the mercy of the merciless. When a nation's courts and political officials become corrupt, the nation is in its death throes. A righteous and just God cannot allow such social and moral chaos to go uncorrected for long or constant civil upheaval would be the result.

v. 3-4 **RETRIBUTION:** When the day of Divine retribution comes, where will they go for help? When the Holy God visits them in judgment who will protect them? Can they depend upon their idol-gods? Will their foreign allies be able to deliver them? Can they buy their way out of God's judgment with their wealth? All these things Israel has gloried in, but what will become of their glory when God's wrath falls upon them? The answer is, it shall fail them. Israel will be taken prisoner and the unjust rulers and judges will fall along with all the other dead and captured.

## QUIZ

1. How were the needy turned aside from justice?
2. What two classes were especially being exploited?
3. Why can God not allow social injustice to exist for any length of time?
4. Where would Israel likely turn to for help when Divine judgment fell?
5. What will happen to the rulers and judges when judgment comes upon Israel?

## 2. SCOURGE OF GOD

TEXT: 10:5-11

- 5 Ho Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, the staff in whose hand is mine indignation!
- 6 I will send him against a profane nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil,

and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.

- 7 Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and to cut off nations not a few.  
8 For he saith, Are not my princes all of them kings?  
9 Is not Calno as Carchemish: is not Hamath as Arpad? is not Samaria as Damascus?  
10 As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols, whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and of Samaria;  
11 shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols?

### QUERIES

- a. Who is the Assyrian of verse 5? How was he to become a rod?  
b. Why is the Assyrian's attitude portrayed as one of resistance?

### PARAPHRASE

Assyria is the whip of My anger; his military strength is My weapon to bring My punishment upon this godless nation, says the Lord. He will enslave them and plunder their treasures and trample them like dirt beneath his feet. But the King of Assyria will not have My Divine will as his purpose when he comes against Israel. His purpose will be to attack My people as part of his plan to conquer the world. He is persuaded that all his princes will soon be ruling as kings over the various nations he plans to conquer. He says, I shall destroy Calno just as I did Carchemish and Hamath will go down before us as Arpad did; and we will destroy Israel just as we did Damascus. Indeed, we have finished off many a kingdom whose idols were far greater and more glorious than those in Jerusalem and Samaria. So when we have defeated Samaria and her idols we will destroy Jerusalem with hers.

## COMMENTS

v. 5-6 **GOD'S INTENTIONS:** This is one of those unique passages of the Old Testament which reveals the majestic, omnipotent, cosmic, sovereign purposes of God being carried out in conjunction with and in spite of the evil machinations of human power inspired and supported by the forces of hell. It is grand and glorious good news that Jehovah God controls and uses men and nations and events to carry out His purposes of redemption and salvation. God is going to take the evil purposes and intentions of the king of Assyria and use them to serve His long-range plan of preparing the Hebrew people to deliver the Messiah to the world! How breathtaking, how it staggers the mind and exhilarates the emotions to contemplate it! The terrible, blood-thirsty, cruel, inhuman Assyrians are, of their own choice, bent on conquering and plundering the whole world. God says, "Go ahead, have your way for a season—I'll use it to chasten My holy people and then I'll requite your wickedness upon your own heads." God plans to chasten and discipline His people so that those who believe Him and remain faithful to Him in the midst of this chastening may form the remnant through which the Messiah and the messianic kingdom (the church) may come to the world. The evil scheme of the Assyrian empire will serve that Divine purpose. Both Old and New Testaments teach such a philosophy or theology of history (Cf. Jer. 27:1-11; Dan. 2:20-22; Isa. 45:1-7; Jn. 19:11, etc.). For a fuller discussion of this see *Minor Prophets*, by Paul T. Butler, pub. College Press, 1968, pgs. 39-111, art. entitled, "Theo-Ramic Philosophy of History." God's ways are above us all. Should we ask, Why would God permit such a wicked and ruthless pagan people to plunder His chosen people—and then how can God claim such a perverse nation to be His instrument or servant? God does not forbid our asking. Habakkuk is a prime example of a believer with such a problem. Habakkuk could not understand how and why God would permit the evil and wickedness of the Hebrew people to continue unpunished (Hab. 1:1-4). God told the prophet He was going to punish the wickedness of Judah by



sending the Chaldeans (Babylon) upon them (Hab. 1:5-11). This created the more perplexing problem in Habakkuk's mind of why God would use a pagan nation to punish the Chosen people (Hab. 1:12-17). Habakkuk was confused but he did not despair. He couldn't understand but he had faith and waited for God to answer (Hab. 2:1). God's answer to Habakkuk is still valid today. That answer is, God works all things together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purposes (Cf. Rom. 8:28). God works all things out in His own good time. We are told simply to wait upon the Lord with faith and endurance (Hab. 2:2-4). Paul quotes Habakkuk 2:4 in Romans 1:17 to indicate that we cannot understand the working of God's redemptive scheme but we can accept it by faith and thus be justified. God always gives enough experiential, concrete, factual, historical evidence to convince the honest-minded person of His existence and nature. The Hebrew people at this stage of their national experience (Isaiah) had more than abundant evidence of God's active, providential, redemptive control of history so they could easily believe His use of the Assyrian empire, if they wanted to.

V. 7-11 ASSYRIA'S INTENTIONS: The king of Assyria certainly does not admit that he is an instrument of the Hebrew God. It is not his intention to serve any purpose but his own purpose of world-conquest. This is a graphic description of the thinking processes of a carnal-minded dictator. He reasons, Calno was taken by me (738 B.C.), Carchemish on the Euphrates was subdued by my people (717 B.C.), Hamath on the Orontes fell to us in 720 B.C. and Arpad in 740. Samaria was conquered in 721 B.C. and Damascus in 732 B.C. Where were the gods of these great peoples when I overcame them? Surely Judah's God is no greater than the gods of these. They did not stop me and neither will the God of Judah. The attitude of the Assyrian emperor is manifested in the words of Rabshakeh in later years when the armies of Assyria had made invasion of Judah and had Jerusalem surrounded, "Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria"? (II Kings 18:33-35). There was a long line of Assyrian kings with

intentions of world-conquest: Tiglath Pileser, Shalmaneser IV, Sargon II and Sennacherib. Sennacherib was probably the king of Assyria predicted by Isaiah here. He is mentioned in Isaiah chapters 36-38. He was planning to overrun Jerusalem and plunder her treasury and temple just as he had already done to most of the ancient world. He would take the people captive into slavery to build his palaces and city walls, etc. But, although the Assyrians captured most of the land of Palestine, they would never conquer Jerusalem.

### QUIZ

1. What does Isaiah say is God's purpose for the king of Assyria?
2. What does the rest of the Bible have to say about this grand philosophy of history?
3. What if we cannot understand how God does His work through pagan empires?
4. What is the king of Assyria's intention in history?
5. What is the Assyrian king's attitude toward the God of Judah?
6. Who was probably the king predicted by Isaiah here?

### 3. SMITING OF THE SCOURGE

TEXT: 10:12-19

- 12 Wherefore it shall come to pass, that, when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks.
- 13 For he hath said, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I have understanding: and I have removed the bounds of the peoples, and have robbed their treasures, and like a valiant man I have brought down them that sit on thrones:
- 14 and my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the peoples;

and as one gathereth eggs that are forsaken, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or that opened the mouth, or chirped.

- 15 Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? shall the saw magnify itself against him that wieldeth it? as if a rod should wield them that lift it up, or as if a staff should lift up him that is not wood.
- 16 Therefore will the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness; and under his glory there shall be kindled a burning like the burning of fire.
- 17 And the light of Israel will be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame; and it will burn and devour his thorns and his briers in one day.
- 18 And he will consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body: and it shall be as when a standard-bearer fainteth.
- 19 And the remnant of the trees of his forest shall be few, so that a child may write them.

### QUERIES

- a. Why does the Lord turn and "punish" the king of Assyria?
- b. How does the Lord punish him?

### PARAPHRASE

After the Lord has used the King of Assyria to accomplish His purpose of chastening the covenant people, then He will turn upon the Assyrians and punish them too—for they are proud and haughty. They boast, We in our own power and wisdom have won these wars. We are great and wise. By our own strength we broke down the walls and destroyed the people and carried off their treasures. In our greatness we have robbed their nests of riches and gathered up kingdoms as a farmer gathers eggs; and no one moved a finger or opened his mouth to peep against us.

But the Lord says, Shall the axe boast of greater power than the man who uses it? Is the saw greater than the man who saws? Can a rod strike unless a hand is moving it? Can a cane walk by itself? Because of all your evil boasting, O King of Assyria, the Lord of Hosts will send a plague among your proud troops, and strike them down. God, the Light and Holy One of Israel, will be the fire and flame that will destroy them. In a single night He will burn those thorns and briers, the Assyrians who destroyed the land of Israel. Assyria's vast army is like a glorious forest, yet it will be destroyed. The Lord will destroy them, soul and body, as when a sick man wastes away. Only a few from all that mighty army will be left; so few a child could count them!

### COMMENTS

v. 12-15 **BRAGGING BULLY:** The King of Assyria, like so many ruling tyrants before and after him, refused to acknowledge Divine Providence in his military success. He would not even avail himself of logic and reason to consider that there might be a Divine Ruler of the cosmos and man's affairs by whose permission he conquered and prevailed against other nations. He magnified himself as a god like so many other rulers have done. Recall rulers like Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:28ff) and Belshazzar (Dan. 5:1ff).

God rules in the affairs of earthly governments to carry out His divine purposes of redeeming all men who are willing to be redeemed. He permits nations and rulers to govern the earth "as a terror to the evil doer and a rewarder of those who do good" (Cf. Rom. 13:1-7). God permits even evil rulers to exercise their tyranny—but only so far! There is always a point, in the wisdom of God, beyond which He will not permit evil to govern (Cf. Jer. 27:1-15). When evil reaches that point the Sovereign Ruler of the Universe intervenes!

When Sennacherib's army had overpowered most of the northern kingdom, Israel, and had besieged Jerusalem, God spoke through Isaiah the prophet (II Kings 19:20ff), and

promised to defend the city (II Kings 19:34; Isa. 37:35). The angel of the Lord went forth and smote the Assyrian army, leaving one hundred eighty-five thousand "dead corpses" (II Kings 19:35; Isa. 37:36). Sennacherib returned to Nineveh without capturing the city of Jerusalem (II Kings 19:36).

To the rationalist and unbeliever, this story of the angel's smiting an army and causing a great king to return to his native land without capturing a city seems beyond the realm of historical possibility. However, confirmation of the fact that Sennacherib did not take Jerusalem was found in an inscription on a prism called the Taylor Cylinder, discovered at Kouyunjik, the site of ancient Nineveh, in 1830 by J. E. Taylor. An almost identical inscription is found on the Oriental Institute Cylinder in the University of Chicago. In the inscription Sennacherib tells that he made other Palestinian cities yield, but when he comes to describe his campaign against Jerusalem he fails to tell of the capture of that city and its king Hezekiah. Rather the text of the inscription tells of King Hezekiah in these words, "As for himself, like a bird in a cage in his royal city Jerusalem, I shut (him) up." Since Sennacherib did not capture Jerusalem (as indicated in the Bible), he made as good a story out of the siege as possible, and reported that he had shut up poor Hezekiah "like a bird in a cage." Actually, Hezekiah was reposing quite safely in his "cage."

V. 16-19 **BROKEN BRAGGART:** There is no evidence in the archaeological records that Sennacherib ever returned to the region of Palestine. The Bible gives us an adequate reason—the loss of his army before the walls of Jerusalem. The slaughter of 185,000 soldiers in one night, even with our modern death-dealing weapons would be considerable defeat to any army!

The Bible tells us that Sennacherib finally met his death at the hands of his own sons (II Kings 19:37; Isa. 37:38). Esarhad-don (681-668 B.C.), Sennacherib's son and successor, tells of this very event in the following inscription: "In the month Nisanu, on a favorable day, complying with their exalted command, I made my joyful entrance into the royal palace, the awesome place, wherein abides the fate of kings. A firm

determination fell upon my brothers. They forsook the gods and turned to their deeds of violence, plotting evil . . . To gain the kingship they slew Sennacherib, their father."

In 625 B.C. the Assyrians were driven out of the Mesopotamian-Babylonian area by the Chaldean prince Nabopolassar, founder of the Neo-Babylonian or Chaldean empire and father of Nebuchadnezzar. He had joined forces with the Medes in 614 B.C. and attacked the city of Ashur. Two years later in 612 B.C. they again joined forces to bring about the destruction of Nineveh, captial city of Assyria. With the fall of Nineveh (see Nahum for a graphic prediction of the fall of Nineveh), the Assyrians were reduced to chaos and retreated westward to set up a government at Haran under Ashur-uballit II (612-609 B.C.). Assyria awaited help from Egypt—her one time enemy— against the new danger from Babylon, but help did not come. Josiah of Judah marched his armies to Megiddo to prevent Necho II of Egypt from passing through the valley of Esdraelon en route to Haran. Josiah was killed at Megiddo (II Kings 23:29-30), but he probably succeeded in delaying Necho long enough to permit Nabopolassar to strike the death blow to the Assyrian Empire. And so about all that was left of Assyria, that "great forest" were a few scattered "trees"—so few "that a child may write them."

## QUIZ

1. Why did the King of Assyria brag so?
2. How could God, on the one hand, use the King of Assyria to punish the covenant people, and on the other hand, turn and punish Assyria?
3. Is there any confirmation that the King of Assyria considered the besieged Hezekiah as one that could not "move the wing, or . . . chirp"?
4. What happened to the army of the King of Assyria?
5. What happened to the King of Assyria?
6. What happened to Assyria?

#### 4. SALVATION OF THE REMNANT

TEXT: 10:20-27

- 20 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and they that are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again lean upon him that smote them, but shall lean upon Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.
- 21 A remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God.
- 22 For though thy people, Israel, be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them shall return: a destruction is determined, overflowing with righteousness.
- 23 For a full end, and that determined, will the Lord Jehovah of hosts, make in the midst of all the earth.
- 24 Therefore thus saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian, though he smite thee with the rod, and lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt.
- 25 For yet a very little while, and the indignation against thee shall be accomplished, and mine anger shall be directed to his destruction.
- 26 And Jehovah of hosts will stir up against him a scourge, as in the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb: and his rod will be over the sea, and he will lift it up after the manner of Egypt.
- 27 And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall depart from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed by reason of fatness.

#### QUERIES

- a. When would the remnant return?
- b. Who is this "remnant"?
- c. What was the "yoke" God would remove from Israel's shoulder?

## PARAPHRASE

Then at last, those left in Israel and in Judah will trust the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, instead of fearing the Assyrians. A remnant of them will return to the mighty God. But though Israel be now as many as the sands along the shore, yet only a few of them will be left to return at that time; God has rightly decided to destroy His people: Yes, it has already been decided by the Lord God of Hosts to consume them. Therefore the Lord God of Hosts says, O My people in Jerusalem, don't be afraid of the Assyrians when they oppress you just as the Egyptians did long ago. It will not last very long; in a little while My anger against you will end, and then it will rise against them to destroy them. The Lord of Hosts will send His angel to slay them in a mighty slaughter like the time when Gideon triumphed over Midian at the rock of Oreb or the time God drowned the Egyptian armies in the sea. On that day God will end the bondage of His people. He will break the slave-yoke off their necks, and destroy it as decreed.

## COMMENTS

v. 20-23 REPENTING REMNANT: A *shear*, "remnant" of Israel would survive the Assyrian captivity. Remnant is a small "left-over." In this case the "left-over" piece of Israel is precious to God for it is the only part of the whole nation which has repented and turned back to Jehovah. The Assyrian captivity served as a sifting experience for those who claimed to be the covenant people. The majority of the ten northern tribes (the nation of Israel) were never to return to Palestine after the Assyrian captivity. They were dispersed all over the world by being sold as slaves, etc. Some who might have returned chose to stay where they had been taken and were the ancestors of that colony of Jews we read of in Esther. That a small "remnant" of the ten northern tribes did return in the days of Zerubbabel and Ezra is evident from the listing of tribal names in the book of Ezra. Judah, the southern



kingdom, was taken captive by the Babylonians some 120 years after Israel's captivity. Then in about 536 B.C. the king of Persia, Cyrus, decreed the release of the Jews to return and rebuild their cities and temple. Jews from Israel and Judah returned as one nation. After many long years in forced exile among a vast sea of heathenism there was a sincere attitude of repentance and determination to do God's will permeating the returning Jews. This attitude of penitence did not last long with some of the people, however, and Jewish history became one long story of the struggles of a small "remnant" trying to remain faithful in the face of persecution and efforts to heathenize them.

The statement "A remnant shall return" is in Hebrew literally, "shear-jashub." This was the name of one of Isaiah's sons (Cf. Isa. 7:3) and was a sign or symbol to Ahaz that God would deliver a believing remnant. The idea is that deliverance is predicated upon one's spiritual relationship to God and not on one's national ancestry. This is the meaning of verse 22. God promised Abraham that his progeny would, physically speaking, become as numerous "as the sand of the sea." But God's spiritual promise of forgiveness, redemption and salvation was made to those who were the children of Abraham "by faith" (Cf. Gal. 3:1—4:7). Even in the days of Isaiah God's deliverance was focused *not* on physical relationship but spiritual relationship.

These repenting Jews who believed God as He spoke through His prophets produced a small but steadfast line of faithful descendants down through the centuries. From their heritage of faith came people like the parents of John the Baptist, Mary, mother of Jesus, the apostles and others of Jesus' day. Thus the Messiah, the "seed" of Abraham, was produced through this faithful remnant.

**v. 24-27 RESTORED REMNANT:** Israel is warned and exhorted not to fear the Assyrians. The prophet bids them remember how mightily God delivered them from Egyptian bondage in the days of Moses. He also reminds them of the deliverance God wrought through the man Gideon after they had suffered years of bondage to their oppressors in the days of the judges. History proves God is able! The deliverance of God upon which man may depend

is not wishful thinking. It is demonstrated time and again in history! Prophetic preaching today must take God's deeds demonstrated in history as its fundamental and ever-recurring basis! If preaching to our age is to accomplish its goal of evangelizing the world with the gospel of Christ it must concentrate on bringing a "remnant" to repentance.

The term "indignation" in 10:25 is a technical term used by the prophets to designate the wrath of God executed in giving the covenant people over to captivity (Cf. Dan. 8:19; 11:36).

The Hebrew word *shomen* in verse 27 translated "fatness" may also be translated "anointing" or "fertility." For this reason some commentators think this passage is messianic and points to an ultimate deliverance when all men shall have opportunity to become seed of Abraham and a part of the "remnant" through Christ. Other commentators hold to the translation of "fatness" insisting it means only that deliverance from the Assyrian will be from within Israel because of her repentance (or "fatness") as well as from God or without.

## QUIZ

1. What is a "remnant"?
2. How do we know a "remnant" of Israel returned?
3. Did God mean the whole Jewish nation would be the "remnant"? Why not?
4. What did this "remnant" become?
5. Why did the prophet appeal to past history?
6. What does the term "indignation" mean?
7. How may the word "fatness" be otherwise translated?

## 5. SHAME OF ASSYRIA

TEXT: 10:28-34

- 28 He is come to Aiath, he is passed through Migron; at Michmash he layeth up his baggage;  
29 they are gone over the pass; they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah trembleth; Gibeah of Saul is fled.  
30 Cry aloud with thy voice, O daughter of Gallim! hearken, O Laishah! O thou poor Anathoth!  
31 Madmenah is a fugitive; the inhabitants of Gebim flee for safety.  
32 This very day shall he halt at Nob: he shaketh his hand at the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.  
33 Behold, the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, will lop the boughs with terror: and the high of stature shall be hewn down, and the lofty shall be brought low.  
34 And he will cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one.

## QUERIES

- a. Where are all these cities mentioned?  
b. Why are they mentioned?

## PARAPHRASE

Look, the mighty armies of Assyria are coming! Now they are at Aiath, now at Migron; they are storing some of their equipment at Michmash and crossing over the pass; they are staying overnight at Geba; fear strikes the city of Ramah; all the people of Gibeah—the city of Saul—are running for their lives. Well may you scream in terror, O people of Gallim. Shout a warning to Laish, for the mighty army comes. O poor Anathoth, what a fate is yours! There go the people of Madmenah, all fleeing, and the citizens of Gebim are preparing to run. But the enemy stops at Nob for the remainder of that day. He shakes his fist

at Jerusalem on Mount Zion. Then, look, look! The Lord, the Lord of the armies of heaven, is chopping down the mighty tree! He is destroying all of that vast army, great and small alike, both officers and men. He, the Mighty One, will cut down the enemy as a woodsman's axe cuts down the forest trees in Lebanon.

### COMMENTS

v. 28-34 **ASSYRIA CUT DOWN:** These verses are an imaginative description of the approach of the Assyrian army. It is what is called in prophecy, "predictive present." The prophet predicts what is to come as if it were presently occurring. Entering the borders of Judah at Ai and leaving his heavy baggage train behind because it would be in the way when contact was made with their enemies, Assyria attacks the land of the Jews. As they advance the inhabitants flee from their towns and cities, trembling and crying for help. At last the Assyrian stands at Nob (the priestly city destroyed by Saul, I Sam. 22:19) which must have been in sight of Jerusalem. From this vantage point the Assyrian makes threatening gestures at Jerusalem (Cf. comments on 10:12-19) recorded in Isaiah 37:22-23.

But God's judgment catches up with Assyria. Again using the figure of trees with their boughs, the prophet describes how Assyria will be "cut down." The Assyrian King is a great tree in Lebanon and the boughs are lopped off. This is a favorite figure of Old Testament prophecy (Cf. Daniel 4). When the angel of death slew 185,000 soldiers of the Assyrian army there was much terror among the Assyrians. That powerful, cruel, proud, arrogant and boastful nation was soon reduced to a fleeing horde of refugees chased by the Babylonians and eventually Assyria was reduced to oblivion as a nation. God keeps His word!

### QUIZ

1. What particular form of prophetic address has the prophet used here?
2. With what detail has the prophet described the Assyrian

assault upon Judah?

3. Why does the prophet describe the Assyrian king as a "tree" cut down?

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### E. PROGRAM OF IMMANUEL

#### 1. DIVINE DIRECTION

TEXT: 11:1-9

- 1 And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit:
- 2 and the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah;
- 3 and his delight shall be in the fear of Jehovah; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither decide after the hearing of his ears;
- 4 but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.
- 5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins.
- 6 And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.
- 7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
- 8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.
- 9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea.

## QUERIES

- a. Who is the "shoot" of the stock of Jesse?
- b. When will this harmony between children and wild beasts be?
- c. How shall the earth "be full of the knowledge of the Lord"?

## PARAPHRASE

Although the "tree" of David will be cut down with the captivity, from the stump of the house of Jesse will grow a Shoot—yes, a new Branch from the roots of that stump. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel and might; the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. His delight will be obedience to the Lord. He will not judge by appearance, false evidence, or hearsay, but will defend the poor and the exploited. He will rule against the wicked who oppress them. For He will be clothed with fairness and with truth. In that day the wolf and the lamb will lie down together, and the leopard and goats will be at peace. Calves and fat cattle will be safe among bears; cubs and calves will lie down together, and lions will eat grass like the cows. Babies will play safely among the snakes, and a little child who puts his hand in a nest of deadly adders will pull it out unharmed. Nothing will hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain; for as the waters fill the sea, so shall the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord.

## COMMENTS

V. 1-5 CHARACTER OF THE BRANCH: The Assyrian king will be felled like a mighty tree being cut down. His whole forest (nation) will be felled and will not grow back. Israel is soon to be felled in the captivity. However, from the stump ("remnant") that is left of Israel, a Shoot or Branch will sprout. This Branch will be a supernatural person. He will have a full measure of the Spirit of the Lord. There can be little doubt that the Branch is

the Messiah (Cf. Isa. 4:2; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 3:8; 6:12). The main emphasis focuses on His character. He will be in complete contrast to Israel's human rulers. He will rule righteously, justly, fairly. He will judge according to facts because He will be filled with divine wisdom, divine counsel and divine power. Israel's human kings, for the most part, delighted in doing their own will. The Branch will delight in doing God's will (Cf. Jn. 4:34; 5:30; 14:31; 15:10; 17:4). The absolute righteousness and faithfulness of the Branch will bring a change in the character of those who commit themselves to Him. They will be able to trust Him to take care of all judgment. Thus they will be at peace and harmony with one another and with their surroundings. This leads into the next section.

V. 6-9 CONDITION OF THE BELIEVER: The condition of the believer is directly dependent upon the character of the Branch. Without the Branch the believer falls into the sinful and decadent condition which Israel finds itself. Social injustice, political anarchy, human enmity and personal fragmentation are the consequences of impotent human leadership. Sinful, rebellious man is out of harmony with the will of God and out of harmony with God's whole creation. He trusts nothing and no one. He hopes in nothing. Filled with despair and meaninglessness he cares for nothing. He is at war with himself, with other human beings and with all that surrounds him. He perverts and exploits nature.

But when man finds he has a Divine Ruler who will judge with righteousness and faithfulness, and commits himself in faith and obedience to that Ruler, life begins to make sense. Man finds wholeness in himself, with his fellow man and harmony with his circumstances and surroundings. Nature becomes a help to him, and even those circumstances which seemed before to be contradictory and meaningless now become aids in the perfecting of his character.

We believe Isaiah is here speaking figuratively of a condition that will be accomplished in the believer at the first coming of the Messiah. When the Messiah has completed His messianic work, peace will be made possible in the hearts of those who believe.

When men believe and obey Him they will be regenerated. They will begin the process of perfecting that will fit them for the time when the "earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah." Some day even creation itself shall be redeemed (Cf. Rom. 8:18-25) and God will create a new heaven and a new earth. But new circumstances do not a heaven make! C. S. Lewis once said that heaven will not be so much the glory that surrounds us as the glory that is in us! Even when God makes a new heaven and new earth with docile animals and a stormless natural order, it will not be heaven without regenerated people. Man had perfect natural conditions to start with in the Garden of Eden! When man listened to a liar (the Devil), he got out of harmony with God and himself and sinful men have been perverting and exploiting everything he can get his hands on since then.

Isaiah is talking here about man's conversion. *Potentially*, man's dominion over creation, which he once enjoyed in Eden but lost, has been restored through the work of God-Man, Jesus Christ (Heb. 2:5-18). Man can now enter into that *potential* dominion by faith in Christ, for Christ has destroyed the power the Devil formerly had over man through man's fear of death. Thus entering this potential dominion, man begins to prepare himself for the realization or consummation of the dominion which will come at the consummation of the ages—the Second Advent of the Messiah!

The condition described in these verses cannot apply to a supposed millennium. Advocates of a millennial theory maintain that even during the millennium there is sin, for after the millennium the nations will again gather for a battle. The picture before us, however, is one in which there is no sin, but in which the fullest manifestation of peace is to be seen. And right now, within the kingdom of the Messiah, there is peace. Of course, the kingdom is still *in* the world—not *of* the world. And so the world makes war on the kingdom of God. But within the kingdom itself there is peace! And some day, even the world, nature and all its inhabitants will be at complete harmony.



## QUIZ

1. What connection does the idea of a "Branch" out of Jesse have with the foregoing idea that Assyria will be completely "cut down"?
2. What is emphasized concerning the "Branch"?
3. How does the character of the Branch tie in with the condition of the believer?
4. Why must men be made "fit" to dwell in a new heaven and new earth?
5. How has Christ restored man potentially to his former dominion?
6. Why is this section probably not referring to a "millennium"?

## 2. DRAMATIC DELIVERANCE

TEXT: 11:10-16

- 10 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse, that standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto him shall the nations seek; and his resting-place shall be glorious.
- 11 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord will set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, that shall remain, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.
- 12 And he will set up an ensign for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.
- 13 The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and they that vex Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.
- 14 And they shall fly down upon the shoulder of the Philistines on the west; together shall they despoil the children of the east; they shall put forth their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them.

- 15 And Jehovah will utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his scorching wind will he wave his hand over the River, and will smite it into seven streams, and cause men to march over dryshod.
- 16 And there shall be a highway for the remnant of his people, that shall remain, from Assyria; like as there was for Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.

### QUERIES

- a. Who are the "peoples" to whom the root of Jesse shall be an "ensign"?
- b. Why mention the disappearance of envy between Ephraim and Judah?
- c. What is the "highway" for the remnant?

### PARAPHRASE

In that day He who fulfilled the royal dynasty of David will be a banner of salvation to all the world. The nations will rally to Him, for His dwelling place will be glory! In that day the Lord will again deliver a remnant of His people remaining in Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath and the islands of the sea. He will raise a standard among the nations for them to rally to and He will gather the covenant people from all over the earth. The enmity between all peoples will disappear; especially the jealousy between Israel and Judah will end. All together God's people will assault the enemies of God, conquer them and bring them under God's rule. God will destroy every obstacle that stands in the way to deliverance. He will provide a Divine Way upon which they may travel to deliverance from their bondage.

# COMMENTS

v. 10-13 RALLYING POLESTAR: This first section speaks of the dramatic way in which the Branch, the Messiah, will be a rallying polestar. He will bring together those that were separated through strife and schism. The glory of the Lord manifested in the Messiah will be the polestar. A literal translation of the word "glorious" in vs. 10 would be "glory." It is the Hebrew noun *kavod* and not the adjective. "The word became flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father." (Jn. 1:14) God's resting-place is where He has settled down to rule. As the Tabernacle and Temple of the O.T. had the glory of God dwelling in them, so the glory of God now rules and dwells in the Church through Christ (Cf. Isa. 6:19; 44:5; 55:5; Zech. 2:4-5).

Around this *glory*, which would be a Person, men of all nations would gather in unity. Barriers of hatred and separation would be broken down (Cf. Eph. 2:11-22, etc.). Gentile and Jew would be at peace (Cf. Zech. 9:9-10).

The great scandal in the history of God's covenant people was the division caused by envy and jealousy. It happened first in the original family with Cain and Abel. It was repeated over and over and occurred even in the theocracy between Jeroboam and Rehoboam. In fact, Jeroboam is known as "the man who caused Israel to sin." Involved in this schism in Israel was an apostasy, a complete rejection on the part of the northern tribes of the promises which had been made to the house of David. God sent prophets throughout the subsequent history of the apostate nation, to call it to repentance and to point it to the Messiah who alone could heal the breach. The prophets delight to picture as one of the blessings of the Messianic age the healing of the breach between the northern and southern kingdoms (Cf. Ezek. 37:15-28). In Christ all national, sectional and regional distinctions will be abolished. The Messiah is the true Polestar of unity.

v. 14-16 RANSOMED POSSESSION: This true unity does not hide itself in cringing self-defense, expecting attack. It takes the offensive; the enemies of the Messiah must be conquered. In the

strength of unity which the Polestar (Messiah) gives, the ransomed (both Gentile and Jew in one body) "fly upon" the enemy (here represented by the Philistines, Edom, Moab and Ammon) and conquer them. What Isaiah is describing here cannot be understood in a literal sense. It is a picture of the evangelizing of the world by missionaries and Christians all over the world. The glorious hope here held out for God's unified people does not consist in a literal despoilation of nomad Arabs of the desert. It rather consists in the glorious task of making the saving power of God known even to those who are enemies of God in expectation of rescuing them from the kingdom of Satan and delivering them to the kingdom of His dear Son. Elton Trueblood has said that a people trying to be a "remnant," keeping itself pure and undefiled in the midst of a wicked world, may reveal a certain nobility of character, but it is radically different from the pattern taught by Christ. The wonder of heaven is that it is effective, not by keeping itself separate from the world, but rather by *penetrating* the world. God's Messianic people (the Church) must conquer or be conquered!

As remarkable as the unity of God's "remnant" is, the secret of their victory is that the Lord fights for them. Two great obstacles of the ancient world, the tongue of the Red Sea and the Euphrates River, vividly blocked the ancient covenant people from their homeland. In figurative expression Isaiah depicts the supernatural power of God removing obstacles that stand in the way of the "remnant's" conquests. The greatest of all obstacles to the ransomed ones possessing the nations for God are *spiritual* obstacles such as lack of love, lack of motive, division, etc. Jesus promised the disciples that if they had faith as a grain of mustard seed they could say to any mountainous obstacle, "be removed" and it would be removed into the deepest sea. Jesus was speaking, of course, of spiritual obstacles.

Not only will God remove the obstacles, He will provide The Way for dramatic, supernatural deliverance. Isaiah is not speaking primarily of the return from Babylonian exile, although that may be the type of the ultimate deliverance. Rather he is thinking of a deliverance so great that it can only be performed by

God and it is for *all nations*. God will provide The Way to bring mankind up out of the house of spiritual bondage and prison of sin. That Way is the Messiah (Jn. 14:6). (Cf. also Isa. 42:16; 43:19; 48:21; 49:11; 35:1-10). For further comments on the "remnant" possessing its enemies see our comments on Obadiah 20 and Amos 9:11-12 in *Minor Prophets*, by Butler, College Press.

### QUIZ

1. What is meant by the "resting-place shall be glorious"?
2. Who is the "ensign" to the nations?
3. What was to be accomplished by setting up this "ensign"?
4. What is to be the effort of the "ransomed" remnant?
5. How does God help in the effort of the remnant?

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### F. PRAISE FOR IMMANUEL

TEXT: 12:1-6

- 1 And in that day thou shalt say, I will give thanks unto thee, O Jehovah; for though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me.
- 2 Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid: for Jehovah, even Jehovah, is my strength and song; and he is become my salvation.
- 3 Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.
- 4 And in that day shall ye say, Give thanks unto Jehovah, call upon his name, declare his doings among the peoples, make mention that his name is exalted.
- 5 Sing unto Jehovah; for he hath done excellent things; let this be known in all the earth.

6 Cry aloud and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion; for great in the midst of thee is the Holy One of Israel.

### QUERIES

- a. What is the "day" spoken of in verses 1 and 4?
- b. How would they "draw water out of the wells of salvation"?
- c. Who is the "inhabitant of Zion"?

### PARAPHRASE

On that day you of the remnant will say, Thanks be unto You, O Jehovah, for You were angry with me but now Your anger is turned away and You comfort me. See, you will say, God is my salvation and no one else. I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord is my strength and of Him I sing. He is my salvation! With unbounded joy you, O remnant, will draw and drink from the Water of Life. In that day you will proclaim, Give thanks to Jehovah and call upon Him! Tell the whole world about His mighty works and glorify His name among all peoples. Sing in thanksgiving and praise of Jehovah's name for His works excel everything and sing His praises unto all the world. Cry aloud, you who are the true inhabitants of Zion, for the Great and Mighty and Holy One of Israel lives among you.

### COMMENTS

v. 1-6 PRAISE IMMANUEL: This is one of the most beautiful peans of praise in all the Bible! In the day that Immanuel shall make His advent into the world of man and shall conquer man's enemies and shall set up His kingdom, the Church, God's remnant (those who believe and are redeemed) will be able to give thanks and praise Jehovah's name for His grace. It will be by His grace that God will satisfy His wrath upon His Son and

turn His wrath away from man. In the substitutionary death of the Messiah men will find comfort and strength and salvation. It will be a work of salvation totally initiated by God and not by man. Man's response will be to trust and enter into covenant relationship through the covenant terms revealed by God.

Water is a beautiful figure of salvation, especially for a people of a dry and arid land. (Cf. Isa. 41:17-18; Jn. 4:14). There is an interesting practice attendant to the Feast of Tabernacles in Jesus day in connection with Isaiah 12:3. Each day of the feast the people would come with palm branches and limbs of willows to the temple. They held these branches over the great altar of burnt offering until they formed a sort of roof and the people marched around the altar. While the people were thus marching, one of the priests went, according to the ceremony, to the pool of Siloam and filled a golden pitcher with about two pints of water. As he returned through the Water Gate, the people chanted Isaiah 12:3 . . . "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." The figure of water for Messianic salvation permeates the Old Testament (Cf. Isa. 35:7; 49:10; 55:1; Psa. 42:1; 36:9; Jer. 2:13; 17:13; Ezek. 47:1-12; Zech 13:1; 14:8; Jn. 4:7-26; 7:37-38).

When men enjoy the blessings of salvation they must make known the glories of their discovery. In John 7:37-38 Jesus says, "If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water." Perhaps Jesus meant that those who drink from the wells of salvation will also become, as it were, "springs" of salvation to others. When men proclaim the Living Water and direct men's hearts to Him they have, by their preaching, become secondary sources of the Water of Life.

Notice carefully that the content of true praise and preaching of God is to praise and preach His doings. The church does not exist to give the opinions of men, or to teach that all religions are equally good, or to beg men to unite with her, or to "psych" them into joining her by emotionally-charged entertainments and mass-hypnotic salesmanship methods. Her one supreme task is to cause men to praise the name of God through the direction of their minds to the record of His doings! A part of

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that proclamation may be done through singing His praises.

The inhabitant of Zion is the member of the new covenant people. Zion is the church of Christ (Cf. Heb. 12:22). The Holy One of Israel dwells in His church which is His temple (Cf. Eph. 2:11-22). Isaiah will have a great deal more to say about the glory of Zion (chapters 60 through 66 especially), which is all future to Isaiah's day and cannot refer to anything but the Church.

### QUIZ

1. What are the "wells of salvation"?
2. What is to be declared among the peoples?
3. Where is Zion?

### SPECIAL STUDY

#### THE CHRIST IN ISAIAH

By Jeff Robertson

#### I. The History of the Christ in Isaiah

##### A. His Birth

1. Prophecy - Isa. 7:14
  - a. Sign to Ahaz - a virgin, or young woman, to conceive and bear a son
  - b. His name to be called Immanuel
2. Fulfillment - Matt. 1:18, 22, 23
  - a. Jesus born of virgin Mary
  - b. The true Immanuel - "God with us"

##### B. His Family

1. Prophecy - Isa. 11:1, 10 - "a shoot from the stump of Jesse," the father of David - Messiah to be of David's line (Cf. Isa. 9:7)
2. Fulfillment - Matt. 1:1, 6 - Christ descended from David (Cf. Rev. 5:5 - "the root of David"; Lk. 1:32 - "The throne of his father David")  
David (Cf. Rev. 5:5 - "the root of David"; Lk. 1:32 -



## THE CHRIST IN ISAIAH

“the throne of his father David”)

### C. His Anointing

1. Prophecy - Isa. 11:2 - the Messiah to be anointed by the Spirit of the Lord (Cf. Isa. 42:1; 61:1)
2. Fulfillment - Matt. 3:16 - the Spirit's descent upon Jesus at the time of His baptism (Cf. Jn. 1:32)

### D. His Death

1. Prophecy - Isa. 53:9, 12
  - a. Put to death along with criminals
  - b. Buried in rich man's tomb
2. Fulfillment - Lk. 22:37; 23:32; Matt. 27:57-60
  - a. Crucified with two criminals
  - b. Buried in Joseph's tomb

## II. The Characteristics of the Christ in Isaiah

### A. Wisdom

1. Prophecy - Isa. 11:2 - “the spirit of wisdom and understanding”
2. Fulfillment - Lk. 2:40, 52 - “filled with wisdom . . . increased in wisdom”

### B. Spiritual Discernment

1. Prophecy - Isa. 11:3 - “He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear . . .”
2. Fulfillment - Jn. 2:25 - “he knew all men . . . he himself knew what was in man” (Cf. Jn. 7:24)

### C. Justice

1. Prophecy - Isa. 11:4 - “with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth” (Cf. Isa. 9:7; 42:1, 3, 4)
2. Fulfillment - II Thess. 2:8 - Jesus to destroy the lawless one (Cf. Matt. 12:18, 20)

### D. Righteousness

1. Prophecy - Isa. 11:5 - “righteousness . . . the girdle of his loins” (Cf. Isa. 9:7; 32:1)
2. Fulfillment - Eph. 6:14 - “the breastplate of righteousness”

### E. Silence

## ISAIAH

1. Prophecy - Isa. 42:2 - "He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street" (Cf. Isa. 53:7)
  2. Fulfillment - Matt. 12:19 - "He will not wrangle or cry aloud, nor will any one hear his voice in the streets" (Cf. Matt. 26:63)
- F. Gentleness
1. Prophecy - Isa. 42:3 - "a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench"
  2. Fulfillment - Matt. 12:20 - "he will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick"
- G. Perseverance
1. Prophecy - Isa. 42:4 - "He will not fail or be discouraged"
  2. Fulfillment - Matt. 12:20, 21 - "till he brings justice to victory; and in his name will the Gentiles hope."
- H. Radiance
1. Prophecy - Isa. 42:6 - "a light to the nations" (Cf. Isa. 9:2; 49:6)
  2. Fulfillment - Lk. 2:32 - "a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to thy people Israel"
- I. Compassion
1. Prophecy - Isa. 53:4 - "Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows" (Cf. Isa. 50:4)
  2. Fulfillment - Matt. 8:16, 17 - Jesus healed many - "to fulfill what was spoken . . . 'He took our infirmities and bore our diseases' "
- J. Meekness
1. Prophecy - Isa. 53:7 - "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth" (Cf. Isa. 50:6)
  2. Fulfillment - Matt. 26:62, 63, 67; Mk. 14:61; Lk. 22:63 (Cf. Acts 8:32)
- K. Vicarious Suffering
1. Prophecy - Isa. 53:10 - "when he makes himself an offering for sin" (Cf. Isa. 52:14; 53:12)
  2. Fulfillment - Heb. 9:28 - "so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many . . ."
- L. Rejection

## THE CHRIST IN ISAIAH

1. Prophecy - Isa. 53:3 - "He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief . . ."
2. Fulfillment - Jn. 1:10, 11 - "He was in the world . . . yet the world knew him not. He came to his own home, and his own people received him not."

### M. Sinlessness

1. Prophecy - Isa. 53:9 - "although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth"
2. Fulfillment - I Pet. 2:22 - "He committed no sin; no guile was found on his lips" (Cf. Lk. 23:14, 15, 41; Jn. 8:46)

### N. Greatness

1. Prophecy - Isa. 53:12 - "Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong" (Cf. Isa. 52:13)
2. Fulfillment - Matt. 12:6 - Christ greater than the temple

### O. Saving Power

1. Prophecy - Isa. 53:11 - "he shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one . . . make many to be accounted righteous . . ."
2. Fulfillment - Jn. 10:14-18; Rom. 5:18, 19 - "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous"

### P. Exaltation

1. Prophecy - Isa. 52:13 - "Behold, my servant shall prosper, he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high."
2. Fulfillment - Phil. 2:9 - "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name . . ."

### Q. Eternal Kingdom

1. Prophecy - Isa. 9:6, 7 - "Of the increase of his government . . . there will be no end, upon the throne of

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David . . . to establish it, and to uphold it . . . from this time forth and for evermore."

2. Fulfillment - Lk. 1:32, 33 - "and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end."

### III. The Titles of the Christ in Isaiah

- A. Immanuel
  1. Isa. 7:14
  2. Matt. 1:23
- B. Mighty God
  1. Isa. 9:6
  2. Jn. 20:28; (Cf. Jn. 1:1-3, 14; 8:58; Matt. 28:18; Rev. 19:16)
- C. Everlasting Father
  1. Isa. 9:6
  2. Rev. 5:13; Lk. 1:33
- D. Prince of Peace
  1. Isa. 9:6
  2. Eph. 2:14; Jn. 14:27
- E. Righteous King
  1. Isa. 32:1 (Cf. Isa. 9:7; 11:5)
  2. Lk. 1:32, 33; Rev. 19:16
- F. Good Shepherd
  1. Isa. 40:11
  2. Jn. 10:11
- G. Divine Servant
  1. Isa. 42:1
  2. Matt. 12:17, 18
- H. Arm of the Lord
  1. Isa. 53:1
  2. Jn. 12:37, 38
- I. Anointed Preacher
  1. Isa. 61:1
  2. Lk. 4:18

#### IV. The Mission of the Christ in Isaiah

##### A. Illuminator

1. Prophecy - Isa. 9:2 - "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light . . ." (Cf. Isa. 42:6; 49:6)
2. Fulfillment - Matt. 4:15, 16 - "... the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light . . ." (Cf. Lk. 2:32)

##### B. Judge

1. Prophecy - Isa. 11:3,4 - "He shall not judge by what his eyes see . . . but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth"
2. Fulfillment - Jn. 2:25 - see under II, B, 2

##### C. Reprover

1. Prophecy - Isa. 11:4 - "... he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked."
2. Fulfillment - II Thess. 2:8 - see under II, C, 2

##### D. Law-giver

1. Prophecy - Isa. 42:4 - "... the coastlands wait for his law."
2. Fulfillment - Matt. 12:18 - "... he shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles."

##### E. Liberator

1. Prophecy - Isa. 42:7 - "... to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness."
2. Fulfillment - Lk. 4:18 - "He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed"

##### F. Burden-bearer

1. Prophecy - Isa. 53:4 - see under II, I, 1
2. Fulfillment - Matt. 8:17 - see under II, I, 2

##### G. Sin-bearer

1. Prophecy - Isa. 53:6 - "... the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

## I S A I A H

2. Fulfillment - Heb. 9:28 - see under II, K, 2
- H. Intercessor
  1. Prophecy - Isa. 53:12 - "yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."
  2. Fulfillment - Heb. 9:24 - "For Christ has entered, not into a sanctuary made with hands, a copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf."
- I. Only Saviour
  1. Prophecy - Isa. 53:5 - "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed."
  2. Fulfillment - Rom. 4:25 - "[Jesus] who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification."

## EXAMINATION

### CHAPTERS SEVEN THROUGH TWELVE

#### ASSOCIATION

(Associate the persons or events of column one with the correct person or event of column two. Some of column two are incorrect.)

1	2
Ahaz	millenium
Rezin	Persia
Remaliah	Babylon
Ephraim	king of Israel
Shearjashub	lamb
Damascus	Armenia
Immanuel	king of Judah
Maher-shalal-hash-baz	sucking child
virgin	king of Syria

## EXAMINATION

Samaria	Israel
Naphtali	Egypt
Assyria	Messiah
Holy One of Israel	branch
Jesse	Galilee
wolf	Syria
asp	rod of anger
Elam	almah
	a remnant shall return
	capital of Israel
	spoil speeds, prey hastes
	the Lord

## MEMORIZATION

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a \_\_\_\_\_; behold a \_\_\_\_\_ shall conceive, and \_\_\_\_\_ a son, and shall call his name \_\_\_\_\_. 7:14

For unto us a \_\_\_\_\_ is born, unto us a \_\_\_\_\_ is given; and the \_\_\_\_\_ shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_. Of the increase of his \_\_\_\_\_ and of \_\_\_\_\_ there shall be no end, upon the throne of \_\_\_\_\_, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with \_\_\_\_\_ and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The \_\_\_\_\_ of Jehovah of hosts will perform this. 9:6-7

## EXPLANATION

1. Explain how a virgin's conception and giving birth could be a sign to Ahaz. Isa. 7:1-16
2. Explain why Isaiah named his children as he did. Isa. 7:3; 8:3
3. Explain when the time came when the wolf lay down with the lamb, etc. Isa. 11:1-11

## APPLICATION

1. How may Isaiah's statement "to teaching and to the testimony" be applied by Christians today? Isa. 8:20
2. What application for today's world may be made of God's use of Assyria as "the rod of my anger, etc." Isa. 10:5-19
3. How may Isaiah, chapter 12, apply to the New Testament church?

## III. PEOPLE AND PAGANS - CHAPTERS 13 - 23

## A. IMPLACABLE EMPIRE CH. 13-14

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

## 1. BABYLON

## a. PREDICTION OF JUDGMENT

TEXT: 13:1-8

- 1 The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see.
- 2 Set ye up an ensign upon the bare mountain, lift up the voice unto them, wave the hand, that they may go into the gates of the nobles.
- 3 I have commanded my consecrated ones, yea, I have called my mighty men for mine anger, even my proudly exulting ones.
- 4 The noise of a multitude in the mountains, as of a great people! the noise of a tumult of the kingdoms of the nations gathered together! Jehovah of hosts is mustering the host for the battle.
- 5 They come from a far country, from the uttermost part of heaven, even Jehovah, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land.
- 6 Wail ye; for the day of Jehovah is at hand; as destruction from the Almighty shall it come.



- 7 Therefore shall all hands be feeble, and every heart of man shall melt;  
8 and they shall be dismayed; pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman in travail: they shall look in amazement one at another; their faces shall be faces of flame.

### QUERIES

- a. How does Isaiah know of an empire 100 years from his time?
- b. Who is from the "uttermost part of heaven"?
- c. How was it "the day of Jehovah"?

### PARAPHRASE

This is the vision God showed Isaiah (son of Amoz) concerning Babylon's doom. See the flags waving as their enemy attacks. Shout to them, O Israel, and wave them on as they march against Babylon to destroy the palaces of the rich and mighty. I, the Lord, have set apart these armies for this task; I have called those rejoicing in their strength to do this work, to satisfy my anger. Hear the tumult on the mountains! Listen as the armies march! It is the tumult and the shout of many nations: the Lord of Hosts has brought them here, From countries far away. They are His weapons against you, O Babylon. They carry his anger with them and will destroy your whole land. Scream in terror, for the Lord's time has come, the time for the Almighty to crush you. Your arms lie paralyzed with fear; the strongest hearts melt, and are afraid. Fear grips you with terrible pangs, like those of a woman in labor. You look at one another, helpless, as the flames of the burning city reflect upon your pallid faces.

## COMMENTS

**V. 1-5 REQUIEM FOR BABYLON:** This is the beginning of the third part of Isaiah's prophecy to the Remnant and consists of the judgments upon the pagan nations. In this section Isaiah interprets to his readers, those faithful who will heed him, the activity of the Divine government as God deals with the heathen empires and their sin. He especially is led to write of pagan destinies in relation to God's faithful kingdom-people. These prophecies were not for the benefit of the Babylonians but for the people of God. From them they would learn that the hostile power of the world in its most powerful manifestation would finally be brought to ignominious defeat and ruin. No power that sets itself against God, be it as haughty and pretentious as was Babylonia, can prevail. Israel would learn that God does not permit to go unpunished the wickedness of those who have set themselves against the Lord and against His anointed, and who oppose His people.

To see the opponents of God's purposes punished would bring consolation and encouragement to the Jews, for it would teach them how precious their salvation was in God's sight. God is in control of all things. A topsy-turvy world is not really topsy-turvy. Even the darkest moments are in God's providential control and rule.

Isaiah probably wrote this section around 730 B.C. Babylon did not come to world domination until about 606 B.C., some 124 years later, and Babylon was not conquered until 536 B.C., nearly 200 years after Isaiah predicted it. How could Isaiah know it? Plainly, it was by super-natural revelation directly from God. Isaiah states that it was an oracle he "saw" (i.e. in a vision).

The three means of summoning the invaders of Babylon, raising an ensign—lifting up the voice—motioning with the hand, indicate the highest degree of urgency! Israel is bidden to cheer the conquerors of Babylon on.

The supreme note is the authority and government of God. He is directing the campaign against Babylon. The mighty hosts here assembled are not named but they are described as "my

consecrated ones," "my mighty ones" and "my proudly exulting ones," showing they were chosen of God and led by God. The Medes and Persians were a mountain people and Isaiah hears the noise of a mighty host of people armed for war and gathering together for conflict. They came from a far country—"the uttermost parts of heaven." Both Media and Persia were, as far as the Hebrews were concerned, "at the end of heaven" or where heaven and earth meet at the horizon. God is so absolutely the author of this that it is represented as the actual "day of Jehovah." Jehovah is at the head of the attacking army.

v. 6-8 REACTION OF BABYLON: Babylon will not brag and boast on this day of Jehovah as did Nebuchadnezzar upon his housetop (Dan. 4:27). Babylon will scream with terror and howl and mourn, (Cf. Jer. chs. 50-51).

The people of Babylon are pictured as paralyzed with astonishment and fright. This harmonizes with both Jeremiah 50:43; 51:30; and Daniel 5:6. After having caused Cyrus' withdrawal from the walls of Babylon, Belshazzar was surprised by the Persians stealing into the city on a dry river bed whose waters had been physically diverted around the city by the Persian army (see our comments in *Daniel*, College Press, chapter 5). Convulsing agitation and desperate perplexity came upon the Babylonians. Theirs is the deepest anguish for the day of Jehovah has broken upon them.

This is the ultimate destiny of all earthly kingdoms. This will be the reaction of all men and women who have put their trust in this world and its doomed systems.

## QUIZ

1. What is the main thrust of this section of Isaiah's prophecy?
2. For whose benefit were these prophecies against the nations?
3. How would the doom of the pagan empires be a source of encouragement?
4. How much is God involved in the downfall of Babylon?
5. What was Babylonia's reaction to be to God's judgment?

## b. PURPOSE OF JUDGMENT

TEXT: 13:9-16

- 9 Behold the day of Jehovah cometh, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger; to make the land a desolation, and to destroy the sinners thereof out of it.
- 10 For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in its going forth, and the moon shall not cause its light to shine.
- 12 I will make a man more rare than fine gold, even a man than the pure gold of Ophir.
- 13 Therefore I will make the heavens to tremble, and the earth shall be shaken out of its place, in the wrath of Jehovah of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.
- 14 And it shall come to pass, that as the chased roe, and as sheep that no man gathereth, they shall turn every man to his own people, and shall flee every man to his own land.
- 15 Every one that is found shall be thrust through: and every one that is taken shall fall by the sword.
- 16 Their infants also shall be dashed in pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be rifled, and their wives ravished.

## QUERIES

- a. How would the lights of the heavens cease to shine?
- b. How would the heavens and the earth be "shaken"?
- c. Why all the slaughter of human beings?

## PARAPHRASE

Behold! The judgment day of Jehovah upon Babylon is coming. It will be a day of terrifying cruelty when God's wrath and anger is poured out. The land of the Babylonians will be made wasteland and its sinful people will be destroyed. The

suddenness and completeness of the downfall of this world-encompassing empire will be as if the whole universe of planets were destroyed and obliterated. The slaughter of men will be so great there would not be enough rare gold anywhere to buy a man. The downfall of Babylon will be so great it will shake the very foundations of society all over the earth. Long established structures will crumble and fall. The chaotic and helpless condition of the Babylonians will be as pathetic as the hunted deer and scattered sheep without a shepherd. People will flee Babylon like rats leaving a sinking ship. When their enemies pounce upon them they will slaughter every Babylonian they can find. Their enemies will perform atrocities upon their babies, dashing them to death before their eyes, ransacking their homes and raping their wives.

### COMMENTS

v. 9-14 ABOLITION OF BABYLON: Jehovah, using the secondary means of the Medo-Persian conquest, is going to lay waste the massive and powerful Babylonian empire. Their societal structures, their culture, their name, their very existence is to be obliterated. It will be such an upheaval of the whole structure of society then known it would be as if God had turned off all the light in the world. When a government and culture like that of Babylon, which had such influence all over the world (Cf. Dan. 4:1-27), comes to such a sudden and chaotic end, it would seem as if the whole universe had caved in. The figure of the stars and the sun and the moon being darkened is a favorite figure of prophetic literature (Cf. Joel 2:10; 2:31; 3:15; Amos 8:9; Micah 3:6; Matt. 24:29). It is a figure that depicts downfalls of anti-God human structures to such an extent that men turning everywhere and anywhere for light and hope find only darkness and despair. The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. was such a downfall of Judaism that those who had rejected the Messiah and Christianity were victims of the wrath of God and it appeared to them as if the sun had darkened and the moon turned to

blood, etc. (Cf. our comments in *Minor Prophets* on Joel 2:30-32).

Babylon's destruction will be so complete that a man cannot be found. So many Babylonian men will be killed that one man will be as rare as the finest gold in the world. The trembling of the heavens and the "shaking" of the earth out of its place is another figurative way of describing the complete downfall of this world-encompassing empire. It is our opinion that this is the figure the writer to the Hebrews in the New Testament (Heb. 12:25-29) is applying to the imminent downfall of Judaism in 70 A.D. God was going to "shake" down once and for all the old system of Judaism and the Hebrew Christians should be grateful for receiving a kingdom (the Church) that could not be shaken. Here, God is going to "shake" down the empire of Babylon, and it will be such a cataclysmic event it will be as if the whole earth were being shaken out of its place. All of this, is, of course, typical of the final judgment day of God when He will judge "Babylon" (Cf. Revelation) and shake down the old heavens and earth and create new ones. The condition of the people of Babylon, once so arrogant, haughty, wicked and complacent, is described as pathetic. They will run helter-skelter in wild-eyed fashion like a deer being hunted or like sheep being scattered.

V. 15-16 ATROCITIES UPON BABYLON: Historians tell us there was great bloodshed, carnage and atrocities of every kind perpetrated when the Medo-Persian coalition assaulted the city of Babylon. People of other nations (Babylon was a very cosmopolitan city) who were visiting fled in every direction to their own country. Those caught were destroyed. In the night of capture, there was a horrible massacre. A party of Persian soldiers burst into the palace and slew Belshazzar in the midst of great confusion and carnage. Young and old alike were impaled upon swords and spears. The city was fired and when morning came Cyrus was undisputed master of Babylon! (Cf. our comments in *Daniel*, ch. 5, College Press).

### QUIZ

1. Who did God use to carry out His wrath on Babylon?
2. How thorough was their downfall?
3. What does "shake the heavens and the earth" mean?
4. What kinds of atrocities were committed upon the Babylonians?

### c. PROLONGATION OF JUDGMENT

TEXT: 13:17-22

- 17 Behold I will stir up the Medes against them, who shall not regard silver, and as for gold, they shall not delight in it.
- 18 And their bows shall dash the young men in pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children.
- 19 And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldean's pride, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.
- 20 It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall shepherds make their flocks to lie down there.
- 21 But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and ostriches shall dwell there, and wild goats shall dance there.
- 22 And wolves shall cry in their castles, and jackals in the pleasant palaces; and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.

### QUERIES

- a. Who are the Medes?
- b. Why would the Arabian not pitch his tent there?

## PARAPHRASE

For I will stir up the Medes against Babylon, and no amount of silver or gold will buy them off. The attacking armies will have no mercy on the young people of Babylon or the babies or the children. And so Babylon, the most glorious of kingdoms, the flower of Chaldean culture, will be as utterly destroyed as Sodom and Gomorrah were when God sent fire from heaven; Babylon will never rise again. Generation after generation will come and go, but the land will never again be lived in. The nomads will not even camp there. The shepherds won't let their sheep stay overnight. The wild animals of the desert will make it their home. The houses will be haunted by howling creatures. Ostriches will live there, and the demons will come there to dance. Hyenas and jackals will den within the palaces. Babylon's days are numbered; her time of doom will soon be here.

## COMMENTS

V. 17-22 ABOMINATION UPON BABYLON: The Medes are first mentioned as Japhethites in Gen. 10:2. They are Aryans and first called themselves *Arioi* in Greek language. At first they were a people divided into small village communities each governed by its own chiefs. About 720 B.C. they were united into a kingdom under Deiokes (or Dayaukku). Their capital was Ecbatana. They first formed a coalition with Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians against Assyria (Nineveh). But now they are forming an alliance with the Persians led by Cyrus the Great against Babylon! The Medes populated the area generally known today as Iran and Iraq. The Median empire gradually merged into that of Persia (see our comments in *Daniel*, chs. 5, 7 and 8; College Press).

Babylon was conquered in 538 B.C., having been one of the greatest, if not the greatest, cities of all times. At one time there were more than fifty temples in Babylon. Many of these had walls overlaid with gold with altars overlaid with gold, and golden



statuettes. It was also home of the famous hanging gardens, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Nebuchadnezzar married a woman whose homeland was mountainous. She occasionally got homesick for her homeland so the king of Babylon built her some "mountains" (the hanging gardens) right in the city. The city occupied 200 square miles of land, protected by a double brick wall with moat in between the walls. Its walls were 90 feet thick and 300 feet high, with towers rising much higher all along the walls. The Euphrates River flowed through the center of the city guaranteeing its water supply. There was enough land within its walls to supply the city with food. It had no fear of siege.

The area of ancient Babylon has never been inhabited since its fall. Actually, it was destroyed in increments. Cyrus the Great left the walls and the city of Babylon itself still standing. Later, in 518 B.C. the walls were destroyed. Then Xerxes ruined the temple of Belus. As Seleucia rose, so Babylon declined, and in Strabo's time (63 B.C.—24 A.D.) Babylon was a desert of which he says, "a great desert is the great city." Though the Arabs will pitch their tents at nearly any spot, they are superstitious about Babylon, and though you hire one as a guide, he will not stay there at night. Modern-day travelers and tourists to this area attest to the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy! The ruined city is uninhabited by humans; jackals and many kinds of wild beasts live in the ruins. There are no sheepfolds about the ruins of ancient Babylon!

## QUIZ

1. Where did the Medes live?
2. Who was the leader of the Medes and Persians against Babylon?
3. Describe ancient Babylon?
4. Has the prediction of Babylon's demise come to pass?

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

## 2. BABYLON (Continued)

## a. DESPISED

TEXT: 14:1-11

1 For Jehovah will have compassion on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land; and the sojourner shall join himself with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob.

2 And the peoples shall take them, and bring them to their place; and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of Jehovah for servants and for handmaids: and they shall take them captive whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors.

3 And it shall come to pass in the day that Jehovah shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy trouble, and from the hard service wherein thou wast made to serve,

4 that thou shalt take up this parable against the king of Babylon and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!

5 Jehovah hath broken the staff of the wicked, the sceptre of the rulers;

6 that smote the peoples in wrath with a continual stroke, that ruled the nations in anger, with a persecution that none restrained.

7 The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing.

8 Yea, the fir-trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid low, no hewer is come up against us.

9 Sheol from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming; it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.

- 10 All they shall answer and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us?  
11 Thy pomp is brought down to Sheol, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and worms cover thee.

## QUERIES

- a. How would the house of Israel "possess" their former captors?  
b. Why was the whole earth at rest at Babylon's downfall?

## PARAPHRASE

And Jehovah will have mercy upon His covenant people; He will yet fulfill all His covenant promises to them. Their blessings will one day be so glorious that those now outside the covenant of Israel will be joined to God's covenant people and become a part of them. God will cause those who once took His covenant people captive to return them to their land and eventually His people will make some of these heathen a possession of God's kingdom and servants of the Most High God. Yes, even people from those nations which once took the covenant people captive will one day be taken "captive" by them. Those who once ruled over God's people will one day come under the rule of God. When that day comes to pass God will have delivered His covenant people from sorrow, trouble and servitude, and His people will proclaim concerning their great enemy, At last our enemy has been defeated and his kingdom destroyed. God has broken the power of the enemy that ruled over us so long in unrestrained terribleness. The whole earth and all of nature rejoices at the rest it receives from the defeat of God's enemy. All the citizens of Hades crowd to meet him as he enters the same place where they dwell. World leaders and earth's mightiest rulers, long dead, are there to greet him. With one voice they all cry out, Are you as weak as we are? Have you become like us here? All this enemy's grandeur and power has been stripped from him and all his reveling is over. His covering now is not silk and satin, but worms and maggots.

## COMMENTS

V. 1-6 DELIVERANCE AND DOMINION: Here is an instance of the prophet's use of shortened perspective. It is a favorite vehicle of prophetic literature. The prophet first speaks of the return of the covenant people from the Babylonian captivity when the Persian emperor Cyrus (Cf. Isa. 44:28; 45:1ff) "took the Jews and brought them to their place" by his edict and financial aid to rebuild Jerusalem. But then, skipping over some five centuries between the Persian release of the Jews to the time when their former captors will become their captives, the prophet shortens his perspective. There can be only one meaning to the prophet's indication that "sojourners would join themselves" to the Jews and "cleave to the house of Jacob." We believe there is only one way to interpret the statement that "the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of Jehovah for servants and for hand-maids: and they shall take them captive whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors," and that interpretation is one that finds the fulfillment in the Messianic kingdom, the church. This is the only possible interpretation considering the fact that such widespread Jewish domination never literally occurred. This interpretation is also substantiated by parallel passages (Cf. Isa. 2:3; 49:22-26; Zech. 8:20-23). All of these hyperbolic figures of speech find their fulfillment in Ephesians 2:11-14. God delivers the Jews after their period of chastening in captivity. Out of that delivered people comes a faithful remnant which will through five centuries produce a faithful progeny through which the Messiah will be born in the flesh. He will establish God's kingdom, the church, upon the earth. The Gentiles, former enemies and captors of God's covenant people, will become members of God's covenant people. What the prophet leaves out here is all the history of the Jewish people between the restoration from captivity and the establishment of the church. All this history is not important to Isaiah's purpose. The deliverance from Babylonian captivity actually becomes a *type* of the ultimate deliverance from the bondage of Satan and sin, man's greatest enemies. See our comments in

*Minor Prophets* on Obadiah 7-21 and Amos 9:11-12.

v. 7-11 DELIGHT AT DEGRADATION: Whenever God delivers His people and destroys His enemies the whole world is benefited. Most of the world does not realize it as a benefit because the world sees through eyes of flesh not faith. God's people rejoice when His enemies are defeated for they see through eyes of faith their deliverance. Even nature itself benefits when those in rebellion against God are defeated for rebels against God's sovereign rule usually deface and pervert God's natural creation. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had built a road in the Wady Brissa in Lebanon in order to plunder the territory of its magnificent cedars and take them back to Babylon to build pagan temples and palaces.

Sheol is the Old Testament place of the dead. The Old Testament speaks of life hereafter, of judgment and of resurrection. But the whole experience of the hereafter is in the shadows. Nothing really clearly outlined. Here the king of Babylon is said to be welcomed into the region of the dead with a great stirring of those who have gone on before. Especially great world rulers and leaders long ago dead now greet the king of Babylon with the taunt, "So you also are as weak as we were? You died too! All your former pomp and glory has passed away like curs!" Death is inevitable to all, great and small, rich and poor, powerful and weak. Every human body has a cover of worms in its destiny. We wonder which king of Babylon this is. Nebuchadnezzar seems to have acknowledged Jehovah as God in Daniel 4:34-37 (see our comments in *Daniel*, College Press). Perhaps Isaiah is referring to Belshazzar who would not learn from his father's experience (Cf. Daniel 5:17-23). Whoever it may be, the lesson is inescapable—earthly kings and kingdoms dare not lay their hand on "the apple of His eye" (His covenant people) for God will bring all His enemies down to Sheol.

## QUIZ

1. What is shortened perspective as the prophets use it?
2. Why is it improbable that this text is to be taken as figurative hyperbole?
3. What is the Babylonian captivity and deliverance typical of?
4. Why does the world rejoice when God's enemies are defeated?
5. Why mention the fact that the king of Babylon was taunted in Sheol?

## b. DEPOSED

TEXT: 14:12-20

- 12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O day-star, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, that didst lay low the nations!
- 13 And thou saidst in thy heart, I will ascend into the heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; and I will sit upon the mount of congregation, in the uttermost parts of the north;
- 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.
- 15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to Sheol, to the uttermost parts of the pit.
- 16 They that see thee shall gaze at thee, they shall consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms;
- 17 that made the world as a wilderness, and overthrew the cities thereof; that let not loose his prisoners to their home?
- 18 All the kings of the nations, all of them, sleep in glory, every one in his own house.
- 19 But thou art cast forth away from thy sepulchre like an abominable branch, clothed with the slain, that are thrust through with the sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a dead body trodden under foot.

20 Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, thou hast slain thy people; the seed of evil-doers shall not be named for ever.

### QUERIES

- a. What is a "day-star"? Who is the "day-star"?
- b. Why would he not be "joined with them in burial"?

### PARAPHRASE

O how you have fallen from the highest place, you brilliant Star! how you are cut down to the ground, you who overpowered nations! However, you said: I will climb as high as the heavens; above the stars of God I will place my throne. I will enthrone myself at the top of the mountain of the gods which is far away in the north. You said: I will climb above the clouds and make myself equal to the Most High. In truth, however, you will be thrust down to the abode of the dead, Sheol, the uttermost abyss. Everyone there will stare at you and ask, Can this be the Star who shook the earth and the kingdoms of the world? Can this be the one who devastated the earth and made it into a desolation and demolished its greatest cities and had no mercy on his enemies? All the kings of the nations like in stately glory in their graves, but your body is thrown out like a broken stick; it lies in an open grave, covered with the dead bodies of those slain in war; it lies as a carcass in the road, trampled and mangled by horses' hoofs. You will not be entombed with the other kings in stately glory for you have destroyed your nation and slain your people. Your offspring will be known as evil because of you.

## COMMENTS

v. 12-14 KING'S BOAST: The Babylonian king, a brilliant star on the stage of human political history, had boasted (Cf. Dan. 4:28ff). This is an occupational hazard of kings and other rulers! (Cf. Dan. 8:10). They are sorely tempted to exalt themselves into various forms of god and savior and ruler of mankind instead of servant. Herod allowed himself this luxury (Acts 12:20-23) and died an excruciating death for it. Many of the Roman Caesars arrogated to themselves the title, god. Here Isaiah is predicting the king of Babylon's exaggerated estimate of himself. Daniel writes down the actual historical fulfillment of the king's boasting some 150 years after Isaiah predicts it. Day-star in Hebrew is *helel ben shachar*, means literally "son of morning dawn." From the highest of political heights, high as the heaven, where he had shone in glory and splendor, he has tumbled to disgrace to the lowest of the low. He boasted he would make himself equal with the highest of the gods and he would enthrone himself at the top of the "mount of congregation" (which is the Semitic counterpart to Mount Olympus of the Greeks and lay in the remote, mythological regions of the north).

Early church fathers and some modern expositors have referred this to the fall of Satan (Cf. Lk. 10:18), but the context indicates it is to be applied primarily to the king of Babylon. There may be here a symbolical or typical allusion to the history of Satan the "god of this world" since ancient world rulers were sometimes considered personifications of the "prince of the power of the air" (Cf. our comments on *Daniel*, ch. 10, College Press). The word *Lucifer* is not in the original text. It is a Latin interpolation. Certainly the Babylonian king's pride reaches satanic proportions. And here is represented the fall of all Satan's earthly helpers who dare to resist God, and presume to sit in places of heavenly authority (Cf. II Thess. 2:2-12).

v. 15-20 KING'S BANISHMENT: The estimate of the king of Babylonia by his long-since-dead predecessors is quite different than that of the king's own self-estimate! When Almighty God deposes the king of Babylon and gives the Babylonian empire



over to another people (Cf. Jer. 27:5ff) and the king of Babylon dies and goes to Sheol, the residents of Sheol scrutinize and stare at him in amazement. They reflect, "So this is what the world's great braggart comes to—so this is the man that made the earth to tremble and shook kingdoms"? The downfall is to be to the uttermost. The one who was so glorified, so powerful, who even attempted to deify himself, has been thrust down so low. It seems almost incredible. Only Almighty God could do it! He is not only deposed, he is despised and humiliated. His carcass will lie like a vile corpse on the earth. He will be cast out upon the ground like a dead and useless branch.

Other kings may have done evil, but not like this one. In his greed and egotism he wasted his nation, both the people in wars and the resources in selfishness. He will not be buried. His body will be trampled by men and horses. For him there is to be no grave, no monument which will cause his name to be remembered. His demise will be so complete that all remembrance of the seed of evildoers will be forgotten forever.

The utter downfall and degradation of the king of Babylon reminds one of tyrants (Hitler, Mussolini, et.al.) whose opposition to God and truth and justice brought about their death and shame. Their bodies were burned and hanged in humiliating defeat.

## QUIZ

1. What is an "occupational hazard" of kings and rulers?
2. Why is the king of Babylon called "day-star"?
3. To whom does this text refer—Satan?
4. Why is *Lucifer* not a good translation?
5. Have other despots been shamed and degraded like this?

## c. DESTROYED

TEXT: 14:21-27

- 21 Prepare ye slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers, that they rise not up, and possess the earth, and fill the face of the world with cities.
- 22 And I will rise up against them, saith Jehovah of hosts, and cut off from Babylon name and remnant, and son and son's son, saith Jehovah.
- 23 I will also make it a possession for the porcupine, and pools, of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith Jehovah of hosts.
- 24 Jehovah of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely, as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:
- 25 that I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulder.
- 26 This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations.
- 27 For Jehovah of hosts hath purposed, and who shall annul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

## QUERIES

- a. Why such total eradication of Babylon?
- b. What is a "besom"?
- c. Why mention Assyria in the same context as Babylon?

## PARAPHRASE

Let all the world prepare for the slaughter of the descendants of this wicked king and his empire. Let them be destroyed lest they rise up in rebellion against God's intentions for man's

redemption and try to possess the earth and man for the kingdom of darkness. I, Jehovah, will rise against Babylon and destroy his posterity and prevent them from ever taking over the whole human race. I will make the land of the Babylonians to be taken over and possessed by wild animals and I will make it become a territory of swamps and marshes. I will sweep the nation from the face of the earth with my broom of destruction. Jehovah has taken an oath to do all this! It is His immutable purpose to do it! When He purposes to do it, it is as good as done. He says, I will break the Assyrian army when it is in My land and I will crush them utterly; I will take the Assyrian's yoke of servitude off My people. This is My plan for mankind—to break the yoke of paganism and conquer the worldly powers so that man will no longer be a slave of darkness. The Lord God of hosts has declared this as His plan and who can thwart His plan? He has begun to extend His hand to accomplish His purpose and who will stop it?

#### COMMENTS

v. 21-23 **BABYLON DECIMATION:** These verses are God's statement of the complete eradication of some of the most implacable enemies of His covenant people. Babylon was noted for its materialism, paganism and sheer wealth. It was dedicated to exploitation of weaker peoples for its own pleasure and wealth. Many weaker nations prostituted their own national sovereignty to Babylon for survival's sake as well as for indulgence's sake. Israel and Judah were two such nations. Weaker nations adopted the ways of the Babylonians, signed military and trade treaties with her and finally ended up paying extortion in the form of tribute. Babylon was used some 800 years later by the apostle John in Revelation as a symbol of Rome's materialism and spiritual harlotry. Babylon characterized all the most subtle and tempting dangers to the faithfulness of God's people. She posed such a threat that God vowed to make a "clean sweep" of the whole nation. He would so thoroughly "mop up" on Babylon (the word

*besom* means "broom") no Babylonians would be left to rule the world ever again! When God finished with Babylon (see Daniel, chapters 4 and 5) there was none left to claim the throne. During the reign of Darius Hystaspis (a Persian emperor) pretenders rose claiming descent from Belshazzar's grandfather Nabonidus. The pretenders were proven false and executed.

v. 24-27 ASSYRIA'S DEMISE: Assyria and Babylon were world-engulfing empires. They were representatives of mankind in rebellion against God's rule of the earth and man. Man, in sin and rebellion, is carrying out a war against God's sovereignty. Man, by force or by persuasive falsehood, attempts to rule this terrestrial planet and its occupants. God has vowed that He will not permit this to happen. Man may rule in subservience to and in harmony with God's sovereignty but man must conform to the revealed will of God and enter into covenant relationship with Him to receive this honor of ruling *with* God. God's program for providing man with co-rulership would be to establish His kingdom here upon the earth (the church). When men willingly become members of His kingdom He assures them they have entered a kingdom that will be victorious over all rebellious kingdoms of man and will rule with Him. God demonstrated time after time that He has the power to deal with His enemies and did deal with them. So God defeating Babylon and Assyria (and numerous other pagan nations) literally and historically is a typical and symbolic message as well as a literal account. The typical message is that God will keep His word to defeat all His enemies and give rule to His kingdom. Actually, as Revelation portrays, the old dragon, Satan, is the leader of all of mankind's rebellion. Satan's war against God is joined and executed on the earth by godless political forces, godless materialism and sensuality and by godless religion. Through the centuries God proves again and again He and His saints will be the ultimate victors. What His saints must do is believe Him! When has history ever proven God to fail?!

## QUIZ

1. For what was Babylon noted?
2. Why did weak nations prostitute themselves to the "harlot" Babylon?
3. How does the apostle John use Babylon?
4. To what extent did God eliminate Babylon?
5. What did Assyria and Babylon represent in relationship to God's rule?
6. How does their demise symbolize God's purpose for the world?

## d. DOMINATED

TEXT: 14:28-32

- 28 In the year that king Ahaz died was this burden.
- 29 Rejoice not, O Philistia, all of thee, because the rod that smote thee is broken; for out of the serpent's root shall come forth an adder, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent.
- 30 And the first-born of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety; and I will kill thy root with famine, and thy remnant shall be slain.
- 31 Howl, O gate; cry, O city; thou art melted away, O Philistia, all of thee; for there cometh a smoke out of the north, and there is no straggler in his ranks.
- 32 What then shall one answer the messengers of the nation? That Jehovah hath founded Zion, and in her shall the afflicted of his people take refuge.

## QUERIES

- a. What does the "serpent," the "adder" and the "flying serpent" represent?
- b. What "Zion" is here meant?

## PARAPHRASE

At the time of the death of king Ahaz this message concerning Philistia was revealed to me to be proclaimed. Don't begin rejoicing, Philistines, that the oppression upon your nation has been temporarily broken and lifted. This momentary relief does not mean you are going to prosper. In fact, a successive worsening of oppression and destruction is going to overcome your nation. It will be like a succession of snakes getting worse with each; from the snake will come the adder and from the adder a fiery flying serpent will come to destroy you. I will protect and provide for My people Israel; even the lowliest of the low shall not lack food in Israel, and the poor shall enjoy safety. But as for you, O Philistia, I will wipe you out with famine and what is not killed by famine I will kill with war. Weep and wail, O cities of Philistia, because you are destined to go up in the smoke of an invader's destruction. An army from the north will invade your land and will destroy you with methodical diligence. What shall be told all who inquire about these events? They shall be told that Jehovah of hosts has established Zion, His covenant people, on a sure and safe foundation and all those afflicted by Jehovah's enemies will find refuge in Zion.

## COMMENTS

v. 28-32 PHILISTIA PUNISHED: Isaiah clearly remembered the date of his oracle against Philistia. It was 728 B.C., the year that king Ahaz died. It appears the Philistines, for some reason or another, had been relieved of some degree of former oppression or subjugation and were now rejoicing that their future looked bright. They evidently were assuming that now (perhaps that the Assyrian domination was checked by Hezekiah) they could have free reign in the land of Palestine to wrest its control from the Jews. The message of God's prophet, however, is that several military or political situations shall arise successively (likened to first a serpent, then an adder, then fiery flying

serpent), one always worse than the other, which would eventually wipe out the Philistine nation clear down to its roots. The utter destruction and obliteration of Philistia is contrasted with the utter salvation and protection of God's small, weak remnant, Judah. The lowliest of the low, the godly poor will feed and dwell secure in God's remnant. Philistia will wail and cry for a destructive force from the north will come upon her. The "smoke" may refer to the campfires of the army coming or to the Philistine cities being burned. The force from the "north" probably refers to the successive and progressively worsening attacks upon Philistia by the Assyrians after the days of Hezekiah. Sargon, Assyrian emperor (722-705 B.C.) captured the Philistine cities, deported some of the inhabitants and set over them an Assyrian governor. Later struggles between Egypt and Assyria were the cause of great suffering to the Philistine cities, and practically close their history as strictly Philistinian. The Assyrians were very cruel and methodical in their bloody warfare upon the world. There were no "stragglers" in their armies. They went about their work of destruction with diligence.

v. 32 ZION PROTECTED: What should one answer messengers of the nation of Judah when they saw all around the destruction of the neighboring peoples by the bloodthirsty Assyrians? Will Zion (Judah) fall too? The prophet's answer is brief but emphatic. The message is simply, "Jehovah hath founded Zion, and in her shall the afflicted of his people take refuge." Jehovah so powerfully and consistently demonstrated His purpose and ability to save and protect His people from all enemies all the messengers needed to know was, Jehovah hath founded Zion! The same message applies today. God has demonstrated in history His power to save, even from death. He has demonstrated His power and purpose to preserve His church. All we need to know is He has founded the Church. We take refuge in Him.

In contrast to the obliteration of Philistia as a kingdom, God protected Judah. Even when Babylon came and took Judah captive, God preserved them and delivered them and out of them He formed His eternal kingdom, the Church, reigned over by King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus Christ.

## QUIZ

1. Approximately what year did Isaiah pronounce the doom of Philistia?
2. Why should Philistia not rejoice?
3. When did Philistia probably disappear from history as a nation?
4. What is the "smoke out of the north"?
5. Why such a brief answer to the "messengers" v. 32?

## B. IMPUDENT EASTERNERS - CHAPTERS 15-17

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

## 1. MOAB

## a. INVASION

TEXT: 15:1-9

- 1 The burden of Moab. For in a night Ar of Moab is laid waste, and brought to nought; for in a night Kir of Moab is laid waste, and brought to nought.
- 2 They are gone up by Bayith, and to Dibon, to the high places, to weep: Moab walleth over Nebo, and over Medeba; on all their heads is baldness, every beard is cut off.
- 3 In their streets they gird themselves with sackcloth; on their housetops, and in their broad places, every one walleth, weeping abundantly.
- 4 And Heshbon crieth out, and Elealeh; their voice is heard even unto Jahaz: therefore the armed men of Moab cry aloud; his soul trembleth within him.
- 5 My heart crieth out for Moab; her nobles flee unto Zoar, to Eglath-shelishiyah: for by the ascent of Luhith with weeping they go up; for in the way of Horonaim they raise up a cry of destruction.



- 6 For the waters of Nimrim shall be desolate; for the grass is withered away, the tender grass faileth, there is no green thing.
- 7 Therefore the abundance they have gotten, and that which they have laid up, shall they carry away over the brook of the willows.
- 8 For the cry is gone round about the borders of Moab; the wailing thereof unto Eglaim, and the wailing thereof unto Beer-elim.
- 9 For the waters of Dimon are full of blood; for I will bring yet more upon Dimon, a lion upon them of Moab that escape, and upon the remnant of the land.

## QUERIES

- a. Why "baldness" on every head and "beards cut off"?  
b. Whose "heart crieth out for Moab"?

## PARAPHRASE

God's message to Moab: In a night your cities of Ar and Kir will be destroyed. Your people go mourning to Bayith and Dibon, their pagan temples and altars, to weep for the fate of Nebo and Medeba; they shave their heads and cut off their beards in public display of their grief. They wear sackcloth through the streets, and from every home comes the sound of weeping. The weeping and wailing from the cities of Heshbon and Elealeh are heard very far away, even in Jahaz. The bravest warriors of Moab cry in utter terror. There are no heroes in Moab now! My heart weeps for Moab! His people flee as refugees to Zoar and Eglath. Weeping, they climb the upward road to Luhith, and their moaning will be heard all along the road to Horonaim. Nimrim River is desolate! The grassy banks are dried up and the tender plants are gone. The desperate refugees take all their possessions they can carry, and flee across the Brook of Willows. The whole land

of Moab is a land of weeping, from one end to the other. The waters of Dimon will run red with blood. But I am not through with Dimon yet! For the refugees of Moab I have appointed a lion to hunt them down.

### COMMENTS

v. 1-4 DESOLATION: Moab the arrogant, the insolent, will be overtaken by a destroyer in such suddenness it will transpire in only a night, as it were. Moab was a grandson of Lot by incest with his elder daughter (Gen. 19:30-38). Israel, on its march to the Promised Land under the leadership of Moses, was seduced when Balaam a prophet of God advised Balak, king of Moab, how best to resist Israel. Moab dominated and exploited Israel for 18 years during the reign of Eglon, king of Moab, but was delivered by the Israelite judge, Ehud (Judg. 3:30).

God, through His prophets, pronounced Moab's doom for her pagan sins and atrocities (human sacrifice, etc.). Isaiah's prediction of complete desolation was fulfilled by Shalmanezar of Assyria and his successors (Cf. also Ezek. 25:8-11; Jer. 48:1ff; Zeph. 2:8-11). A vivid picture of Semitic or Oriental demonstrativeness is portrayed. When peoples of these races mourn they do so in a highly emotional state and make a public display of it by shaving their heads and beards, by tearing their clothes, by wearing sackcloth, and by weeping and wailing so abundantly they literally exhaust themselves emotionally over it all and "collapse in tears." The bloody destruction of the Assyrian hordes in this territory was awful to behold.

v. 5-9 DESPERATION: The speaker in this verse is no doubt Isaiah himself. He is a man of God, tender in his regard for human beings. He is not oblivious to the great suffering of this neighbor nation, (Cf. 16:9, 11). There were racial and social ties between Israel and Moab, as well as hostilities. In the days of the judges Elimelech of Bethlehem took his family to Moab to sojourn during a famine; there his two sons married and died, and Ruth, the Moabitess returned with Naomi, married Boaz