

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 briars, 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.