

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 *kovod* 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.