

It must have shocked Ahaz that Isaiah could have known anything about it. He says in v. 19, "In that day the Lord will whistle for flies from the distant streams of Egypt and for bees from the land of Assyria." What does he know about that distant land of Assyria? What does he know about the fact that Ahaz has secretly sent representatives up there to ask the King of Assyria to come and deliver him from these people. But the fact is, as Isaiah points out, when the king of Assyria comes and gets rid of the people of Aram and Israel and carries them off into captivity, the Assyrian power is right next to them. And in the days of Ahaz' son, Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria will come and as he describes it here, he will go through the land depopulating many parts of it. He doesn't explain here as he does in later chapters that God is going to deliver Jerusalem from him so he will destroy a great deal of the rest of the land, in the days of Ahaz' son. That's the background of chs. 7-12, that great section that is called the Book of Immanuel.

But I want today to speak of the section chs. 28-35--a section that does not speak of Ahaz, that does not mention specifically the background, a section that deals not with the king who is going to be replaced by God's own Man as king, but of the people, the leaders of the people who were against the king in this secret plan. Who should be leaders for God but who are actually leading him against Him. He is speaking to them.

So as we study ch. 28 (and the background of it) you realize-- as you put the different passages together and see what the situation is--you realize that actually you have a section here dealing not with the king but with the leaders of the people. It is dealing with the leaders of the people, with those who are in on this secret plan of king Ahaz. It is dealing with them and it is telling us what our Lord Jesus said in Mat. 21:43, "Therefore I say to you that the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit." He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces but he on whom it falls will be crushed." Just as in ch. 7 He said, God is going to send His own leader in place of this degenerate man Ahaz, here he is saying, God is going to take away the kingdom from the leaders that are false and he wants to raise up a new nation that will bring forth the fruits of righteousness.

So we have these leaders who are in on the plan and these leaders are so happy the King of Assyria is going to come and deliver them that they are holding a big banquet. The banquet is open. Anyone who wants to come in and partake is welcome. The leading nobles are sitting there at the tables and the people of their type are coming in and mulling around. To their disgust in comes Isaiah. Isaiah stands up and begins to speak. They say, What's this fool doing in here? What right has he to speak? But they say, Many think highly of him; we won't throw him out unless we have to."

So Isaiah says, "Woe to that wreath, the pride of Ephraim; drunkards, to the fading flower, his glorious beauty set on the head of a fertile valley-- to that city, the pride of whose laid low by wine!" They say, Oh isn't that good! Isaiah, instead of ranting as he so often does, he is helping us in our patriotic plan to get the people to stand against Israel to the north; he is speaking about Samaria the great city up there the troops of which are coming against us. Isaiah says, "See, the Lord has one who is powerful and strong. Like a hailstorm and a destructive wind, like a driving rain and a flooding