

The Assyrian kings did conquer Arabia, as Isaiah predicted, although we do not know which conquest is referred to here. Assurbanipal describes a conquest of Arabia which resulted in the capture of so many camels that he apportioned them "like sheep, dividing them up among the people of Assyria. Throughout my land camels were sold for one and one-half shekels of silver in the markets."

Thus the prophet has shown that there is no country to which Judah can turn for help against Assyria, or even for protection in case of flight.

The next chapter deals with Judah itself.

## **Isaiah 22**

Isaiah 22 has been quite generally misunderstood. There are two causes for this. The first is that many interpreters have jumped to a conclusion as to its subject, instead of first reading its verses carefully and seeing exactly what is involved. The second cause for misunderstanding has been failure to examine the chapter in the light of its context, or to realize that it is actually the end of a continuous discussion which began with chapter 17.

As we begin to examine this passage, we note that it naturally divides into two parts. Verses 1-14 deal with a city; verses 15-25 deal with individuals; the two sections together make up one complete chapter. In approaching such a section as this we should begin by trying to see how the less clear verses fit themselves around the clearer ones. If at first sight a certain idea seems to stand out in a passage, one can take that idea as a starting-point. If however, as one goes on, he finds words or passages which clearly do not fit with this interpretation, he should then immediately seek a different starting-point, and not be satisfied until he finds one which fits the entire passage.

The introductory title -- "the Burden of the Valley of Vision" -- leaves us rather uncertain as to the subject, for it could have any one of a number of possible meanings. So we look ahead to verses 8-10, where Judah, Jerusalem, and the city of David are mentioned in such a way as to indicate clearly that Jerusalem is the subject of the chapter. In the light of this fact it is very easy to see the correct interpretation