

Isaiah 28-35

Chapter 28

Commentaries sometimes refer to Isaiah 28-35 as a section of miscellaneous promises and threats. Examination of the section, however, discloses that it is a closely knit unit with many striking parallels to the Book of Immanuel (chs. 7-12). It was given at the same general time as the Book of Immanuel, but is primarily addressed to a different portion of God's people. We found that the Book of Immanuel tells of God's promise that to provide His own perfect king to replace Ahaz and his successors on the throne of David. In this section Isaiah addresses himself to the leaders and rulers, and makes similar declarations about them.

The historical background of the Book of Immanuel was clearly stated at the beginning of chapter 7. There is no such statement at the beginning of chapter 28, but as we look through these chapters it becomes clear from allusions contained in them that the historical events in the background of the prophet's mind are exactly the same as in chapters 7 to 12. As a result of the danger from the attack by Syria and Ephraim the people of Judah are frightened. Ahaz and his leaders have formed a secret plan of making an alliance with the distant king of Assyria, in order that this great aggressor may attack Syria and Israel and thus free Judah from its present danger. In chapter 7 Isaiah assured Ahaz that God was perfectly able to protect His own country when and as He chose, but that the appeal to Assyria, instead of bringing protection, would merely remove the buffer states and thus lead to greater danger to Judah itself.

There is also a striking similarity in the general message of the two sections. We noticed that the primary message of chapters 7-12 was that the people should not look to these wicked alliances for protection, but should trust God who was abundantly able to give them safety if they would be true to him. There was also the much stressed note of God's rebuke upon Ahaz for his wickedness and lack of faith, and of God's determination that, in His own time, He would put his own Immanuel, "God with us," on the throne in place of Ahaz. In chapters 28-35 the message is not addressed to the king but to his nobles, and the rebuke and declaration of judgment are