

Verses 12 and 13 continue the rebuke to the people. God has given them the opportunity of securing rest and refreshment in following Him, but they would not hear. He has given them "precept upon precept" and "line upon line," but they were unwilling to pay attention to His desires. Therefore, they must hear Him speak in another way through the harsh and brutal commands of the wicked Assyrian invaders. These men that the leaders of Judah are calling in to help them against their neighboring enemies will prove ultimately to be the scourge of God against Judah itself.

### **A Covenant with Death**

All this might not be altogether clear if we had only verses 11-13. Verses 14-22, however, make it absolutely clear. Verse 15 describes the idea of the nobles. They think that they have made a covenant with death and are at agreement with hell; they think that the fact that they have made an alliance with the wicked and ungodly Assyrians will give them protection, and that when the overthrowing scourge comes through it will not pass near them, "for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves." God, however, declares in verse 16 that the only real protection is in the foundation stone which God Himself has laid -- God's plan which heads up in His own Immanuel, the One in whom alone faith can be placed. The people have refused to receive their help and protection through God's provision, and therefore will have to meet the judgment of verse 17 -- righteousness laid to the plummet and judgment to the line. God's hail shall sweep away their refuge of lies and the waters shall overflow their hiding place. At this point we recall that Isaiah, in chapter 8:7-8, compared the coming of the Assyrians to a great river overflowing its banks and filling all the land and passing onward into Judah. Here he declares that the waters will overflow the hiding place of the Judean nobles, and in verse 18 it is shown that their covenant with the Assyrians will prove to be useless. It will be disannulled; the agreement with hell will not stand; the Assyrian scourge will actually come right over them. Verse 20 uses a homely illustration to show the impossibility of securing safety in this world through human means that