

The second section of the chapter, verses 8-17, presents the Lord's condemnation of the leaders of the people for their indifference. The teaching of this whole part of the book of Isaiah is summed up in verse 15: "For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not." God is offering the Israelites salvation through simple trust in Him, but they are unwilling to accept it. They desire their prophets simply to be of assistance to them in carrying on their own schemes and plans. They are determined to trust in themselves instead of in God, and the result is that sudden destruction will come upon them (vv. 13-14).

Verse 17 gives a terrible conclusion to this section. Because the people have rejected God, they are to be thrown into such a state of panic and confusion that one thousand of them will flee at the approach of a single enemy and the whole nation will flee from five attackers. Yet He does not say that this will continue until the nation is entirely blotted out. It will continue "till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill."

Thus, in the midst of the declaration of punishment, there is suggested a note of hope. Some of the nation are to be spared. A small remnant is to will continue and will stand as a witness to the whole world of God's judgment and of God's power.

How marvelously this verse has been fulfilled. The Assyrian and Egyptian empires of antiquity have sunk into the dust, but the Jew remains as an ensign upon a hill testifying by his very existence to the continuing power of God and His determination to carry out His purposes.

Millennial Blessing

The third section of the chapter, verses 18-26, develops this note of hope. Since the Lord is a God of judgment, He is now declaring justice and punishment in order that He may eventually be gracious and have mercy. Blessed are all they that wait for Him. A glorious future is promised to the people of Zion after the misery of the present judgment is passed. The promise looks far to a time that will come when the people will have