

was nothing which would isolate it. It was a practice which the Assyrians carried on in many areas at this time. When they marched the great mass of the people, that is the leaders and the large number most of the people with any skill or training, out of Israel off to ~~xxx~~ other countries, then we read in verse 24 that the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon and from Kuka, from Hamath, ~~xxxxx~~ from Aviv, and from Sethavaim and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel. They possessed Samaria and dwelt in the cities thereof. So here you have a change now. Israel ~~is~~ no longer has the population that it had before. In the terrific invasion thousands had been killed. Others had died in the terrific condition and then the Assyrians had led many out into captivity and now they had brought in groups of people from other areas. The total population is far less than before and of that total population the leaders are all people brought from various ^{other} regions into this area. Now what is the natural result in such a situation? In such a situation nature gets out of hand. When nature gets out of hand it begins to show itself with the growing of weeds. Where there had been good gardens and fine farms, weeds are growing up. ~~xxxx~~ Occasionally in this area you will pass an abandoned farm and you will often see the little farmhouse there in the midst of the farm surrounded by weeds sometimes six or eight feet high with thorns and sharp protuberances reaching out with stickers that catch on you as you try to get into the building. There is no longer a path leading up to it. This is growing all around. Perhaps there are snakes and other creatures living inside of the house. Vegetation has encroached on the area of ~~xxx~~ cultivation before and so has the animal creation. Well, ~~xxxx~~ in this area depopulated soon results similar would naturally occur. We read in verse 25 that at the beginning of the dwelling of these people they feared not the Lord and therefore the Lord sent lions among them which slew some of them. Now, of ~~xxxxx~~ course, this statement here is a true statement of the situation. The Lord desired that in this area there should be some recognition of Himself and the Lord sent these lions among them but that doesn't mean that the Lord created lions expressly for the purpose or that