

[Remarks commending those students who were sitting further toward the front of the chapel. Much easier to speak]

Now I hope you have your Bibles today because I'm not going to deal with one verse but with an extended passage. If you don't have your English Bible you may follow in the Hebrew because it is going to be a passage in the OT. I'm going to speak on Isaiah 28. I don't know whether many of you have heard a sermon on any verse in Is 28. It is not one of the more familiar passages in the Bible. This whole section from Is 28-35 forms one unit, and it is a unit which is much less known than other parts of the book of Isaiah--a unit in which the background is not clearly stated and brought out as it is in some other places. It took me quite a bit of study to get a clear understanding of the background of this section. Actually I found the background of this section is the same as that of Is 7-12. Is 7-12 is one of the best known parts of the OT, at least some of its verses are compared with this section which is perhaps one of the least known parts of the book of Isaiah.

Is 7-12 explains the background and therefore it is very easy to follow it. It is a very very well-known section. It tells very clearly about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Right in ch. 7 you have the prophecy in v. 14 of the virgin birth of our Lord. Then in ch. 9 the first 8 vv. have that marvelous picture of the people in darkness seeing a great light, the coming of the One who is wonderful counsellor, mighty God, everlasting Father, prince of peace. All these passages are read at Christmas time and are very familiar to us though comparatively few people have much idea of the general flow of thought of that passages Is 7-12.

I'm not going to say much about the flow of thought in that passage except to bring out a little of the background which is essential for understanding Is 28-35. At first I was greatly puzzled with that section (28-35) and then after I studied it carefully I discovered that the background of it is identical with that of 7-12 though it is a different part of the people that he is addressing so there are important differences though the background is very important and very similar to both of them.

We only look at the first part of these passages today because we're centering on ch. 28 and the background for that is clearly stated in ch. 7. So I want to briefly glance at some of the points in ch. 7 that are vital for the understanding of ch. 28. Ch. 8 unlike ch. 28 begins with a definite statement of the time involved and the people involved. (Reading text:7:1-2) And the next verse tells how the king and all his people were filled with terror as they saw these two nations to the north of them, each of them a little stronger than Judah making an alliance, determined to come in and remove Ahaz and put in a puppet king of their own choosing. So in that situation we find in v. 3 that the Lord said: (to Isaiah) "Go out, you and your son Shear-Jashub, to meet Ahaz at the end of the aqueduct of the Upper Pool, on the road to the Washerman's Field."

Now you notice it says "Go out to meet Ahaz". It doesn't say "Hezekiah." There is a tremendous difference between the two kings. Hezekiah was a God-fearing king. Hezekiah was a great friend of Isaiah. When Hezekiah had difficulties he went to Isaiah to ask for help. Here God tells Isaiah to go out to this particular place to see Ahaz. Why did he do that instead of coming into the palace and telling him? I believe it is quite clear that Ahaz was not interested in Isaiah. He thought of him as a nuisance. He wanted to have as little to do with him as possible. So Ahaz has gone out on an inspection trip.