

Allan MacRae, Isaiah 7-12, Lecture 8

This is lecture 8 delivered by Dr. Allan MacRae on Isaiah 7-12:

For today I asked you to look at verse five of chapter 29 and to note the difference between it and the King James Version. That was not the main thing, the main thing was an outline of chapter 29 but I was interested to know what you would do with that. It interested me to see that what I thought was a tremendous difference there was not one paper in 20 that even mentioned it, and practically every paper mentioned something that I hadn't even noticed. But I mean it's an interesting difference but it is not a vital difference. But the point I had in mind is a very vital point. And that is that in the King James Version it starts with the word "moreover," and just about any modern version that you pick up it will start with the word "but." That is a tremendous difference. Because if you say, "I am going here, moreover I will do such and such a thing when I am there" you're just going on. But if you say, "I am going here, but I will not do so and so" you're making a transition. In the Hebrew you cannot tell which it is. So that it is a case where the Hebrew can be interpreted either way, but in the light of the context it should be clear that "but" or "yet" or something like that is correct.

But first I want to answer a question someone just asked me, "Was there a difference in the time with which these two sections deal?" That is the very point I'm trying to get across that in chapter seven to twelve Isaiah deals with a certain situation. And in chapters 28 to 35 he deals with exactly the same situation. He deals with it for different people. He is talking to a different audience probably. He handles different details of it and one of them may in some regards look further forward than the other.

But in both cases what he is dealing with is two problems: one the problem of the continuance of the nation there, the temporary situation and yet one of great importance. Is there anything that they can do to protect themselves in this situation? The answer is absolutely not. They are in between great powers that are much too strong for them. Such a clever scheme as Ahaz has is going to rebound to do the exact opposite of what he wants. It gets rid of minor dangers, Syria and Israel, and places a tremendous danger in

front of them, Assyria. And so Ahaz' scheme is one of the big thoughts of chapter 7 and following. It will not work the way Ahaz thought it would. It brings him into tremendous danger with various Assyrian incursions into the land reaching a great climax 30 years later with the coming of Sennacherib's army. The coming of the army which puts Jerusalem in a situation as we saw in the two historical chapters that we examined some time back. It puts Judah in a situation from which humanly speaking there seems to be absolutely no escape. Yet God intervenes miraculously to deliver Jerusalem and to give it another 100 years of independent existence before finally it is taken not by the Assyrians but by an entirely different people, the Babylonians. So this great invasion of Sennacherib is you might say the big climax he looks forward to from the viewpoint of the security which was topmost in Ahaz' mind. From that viewpoint that's what he looks forward to, nothing he can do but God alone is going to miraculously to protect him through it.

Well now there's the other aspect which for us is of greater importance and that is the house of David. David was the man after God's own heart and God promised David that he would always have a son to sit on his throne. This is one of the very strands that come together in the great Messianic predictions. Here is the leadership of the house of David in the hands of one like Ahaz who puts no trust in God but in his human clever schemes that won't work. God says, "I am going to replace Ahaz." He doesn't say how soon but he does say, "The house of David will not always have such leadership as Ahaz gives it. There will be a virgin born one who will be a true representative of David, who will be God's own king, Immanuel, God with us. So this is the second idea, the turning things over you might say, the getting rid of Ahaz and these unworthy ones and the coming instead of the great Messiah who is predicted in chapter 7. These are the two great aspects in these chapters.

Now the last class before I gave the test we looked at chapter 8 and we noticed various references to Christ in chapter 8. About half of you had as your second question, mention all the prophecies of Christ in chapters seven and eight and I underlined all, and then I said discuss each briefly. Well, very few discussed them at all, and hardly anyone

listed them all, and I was disappointed in that. So, I'm going to take just a minute now to quickly glance again at those predictions of Christ in chapter 7 and chapter 8. Of course the first of them is chapter 7:14, which we have discussed rather fully. Then in chapter eight, in verse eight, I pointed out that he says that the Assyrian is going to sweep on into Judah, "its outspread wings will cover the breadth of your land, O Immanuel." So here we have the Immanuel of chapter seven, mentioned again. And the meaning of course is, this is Immanuel land, ("Of your land, O Immanuel.") And this being Immanuel's land, the Assyrian cannot possibly take it, unless God permits it. Then I mentioned that verse ten, in most of our English translations, says "to devise your strategy but it will be thwarted, propose your plan but it will not stand, for God is with us." In the NIV there's a footnote that says "Hebrew Immanuel." So this statement God is with us, could just as well be translated, "for Immanuel," for, it is Immanuel's land. So verses eight and ten carry on the thought of the previous chapter, with the prediction of Immanuel although he will not be born for another seven hundred years. He is from all eternity, and this is his land, and nothing will happen to it except as he chooses.

Then there is another clear reference, in the light of the New Testament, that is chapter eight, verses seventeen to eighteen. "I will wait for the Lord," and that word "wait" could just as well be translated "trust." "Who is hiding his face from the House of Jacob, I will put my trust in him, here am I, the children that the Lord has given me. We are signs and symbols in Israel from the Lord Almighty who dwells on Mount Zion." We looked at that the week before the test was given, and we noted that as it stands here, you might think it was just about Isaiah. But when you look at Hebrews 2:13, you find that both verses 17 and 18, are quoted there as the words of Christ. Of course, God is the author of the whole Bible, Jesus is God, and so you might say anything can be quoted as the words of Christ, but that certainly is not the intention of the author, of Hebrews. He is definitely saying this is Christ speaking, and therefore we are justified in saying that in this case, Immanuel speaks. Isaiah simply quotes the words of Immanuel. Immanuel says, "he trusts in the Lord," as Jesus said so often in his life. "He trusts in the Lord, and he and the children God has given him, they are signs and symbols from the Lord." So

this is Immanuel speaking in light of what the New Testament says. The principle still is in that time. Isaiah represents Immanuel and he has his little group that is following him. So these are definite references and if you refer to 7:14, 8:8-10, 8:17-18, I was well pleased with your second question, but I don't remember whether there were many who did mention these or at least discussed them.

There were a number who did not mention some of these, but who did mention 7:14. I have no objection to your mentioning verse 14. But I would put 14, in a little different category. Because verse 14 simply says that the Lord will be a sanctuary but for both houses of Israel, "he will be a stone that causes men to stumble, and a rock that makes them fall." Now in the New Testament in Romans 9:33 and in 1 Peter 2:8, Jesus is spoken of as the rock against which people stumble. So these phrases very properly be taken as describing Jesus. But they do not have as direct a relationship as other passages. They are here as far as the context is concerned, they are still simply said about the Lord Almighty and of course Jesus is the Lord Almighty.

I think now, we go back to chapter 28, and as we noticed last time, chapter 28 begins, in exactly the same situation but instead of Ahaz being the one to whom Isaiah speaks, it is the nobles of Judah. He directly addresses them in chapter 28, so we know that they are the ones to whom he is talking. So you might say our thought centers not so much on the house of David now, as on the people of Israel. The people who are God's people in that time, the people through whom He keeps alive the remembrance of His name, the people through whom He prepares the way for the coming of His Son. Both in chapters 7-12, and 28-35, we have many denunciations of the sins of the people.

It is really a marvel of history, that this has been preserved through the ages, in the Old Testament Hebrew as sacred books of the Jews. You take the books that are honored and treasured by just about any other people in the world and everything in them will tell what wonderful people they are. How successful they've been in everything they've tried to do. Maybe if you read between the lines and you can see where they've made mistakes and failures occasionally, but they never stress them in their own books. At least not until very recently it has become customary our country in the last thirty years instead of being

like when I was a boy all our school books told “how the United States was the greatest nation in the world” and everything it had done was the best any country ever had done like just about every country has in its writings. But in the last thirty years it has been customary to take the very opposite attitude. I don’t think there’s ever been anything quite like that in history. The way that our young people have been conditioned to see all the flaws they can possibly find in their own country instead of recognizing with all the little flaws it has it certainly has stood for human liberty far beyond just about any other country in the world, and certainly has given more opportunity to individuals to develop their God given qualities than you’ll find just about anywhere else in the world. I think a few people got a sour attitude toward their country about fifty or sixty years ago but those people got good positions in colleges and who passed on their attitude to a few bright people and they passed them on to more and more and now we have our young people, a great many of them brainwashed with that bad attitude toward their country. But that’s going from one extreme to the other.

Now the Old Testament does not go to either extreme, or you might say it goes to both extremes because it presents Israel as God's nation that God has called it out and God has tremendously blessed. But the Scriptures are filled with passages of denunciation of the nation for its wickedness and its sin. Yet the Jews have treasured these books as their sacred books and as the holy books of their nation through the years. It’s as the prophet predicted they would be “like a beacon on a hill” they would be definitely pointing to the fact that he worked through them and prepared the way for the coming of Christ.

So in both these sections we have many passages of denunciation that we won’t spend a lot of time on in this course, but we want to look at them to some extent. Let me with that point mention that in chapter seven and in chapter eight we had some pretty strong denunciation. Then in chapter nine you start a long passage of denunciation, with chapter nine verse eight, which runs to chapter ten verse four. We’re not going to take a lot of time on that but for next Friday I’d like you to start with chapter ten verse five and go to the end of the chapter. Please make a brief outline and brief statement of the

principal progress of thought from chapter ten, verse five to the end of the chapter. That's a unified section as you are all aware the first four verses of chapter 10 belong with the previous chapter.

But in chapter eight it began as we noticed with the denunciation of the Northern Kingdom. Of course that dates the chapter very definitely. There is no question this was written before 722 B.C. probably ten or twelve years before that time because Ephraim was conquered by the Assyrians and as a people taken into exile. Here is a prediction of their conquest. He starts "Woe to the drunkards of Ephraim" and then as we noticed, at verse seven "These also stagger from wine and weal from strong drink." These nobles here, these people who are the leaders of Judah. Then we noticed how they refused to listen to him in chapter 28 verse nine. They object: Who is he trying to teach? To whom is he trying to explain his message? Does he think we're children? Those just taken from the breasts? And he says, "do and do, rule on rule, here a little there a little" as if we're little children. Then he answers "alright, God will speak to you in a strange way, he will speak to you with foreign lips and strange tongues he will speak to this people." He goes on, calls them scoffers and then says that the scheme that Ahaz and his nobles have concocted when they say "we've entered into a covenant with death with the grave we've made an agreement, when the overwhelming spirit sweeps by it cannot touch us, we've made wise our refuge and falsehood our hiding place. The Lord says, I'm going to destroy your plan, your covenant with death will be annulled, your agreement with hell will not stand when the overwhelming scourge sweeps by, you'll be beaten down."

Then we have that last part of the chapter they probably were thinking of throwing him out, but they probably decided not to when they started talking about the farmer and the way he did, they said oh he's a harmless fellow, let him go on. I don't know whether that happened or whether he left the place and some people went with him and he continued his discourse outside. But the thought continues right straight on from chapter 28 to 29. It continues right on and he has been speaking of what this is going to do with bringing the Assyrians right to them and now he looks to the time when they will be in terrible danger from the Assyrians. When Sennacherib will invade, which is something

that is so very prominent in the book of Isaiah.

So he says, “Woe to you Ariel” and we noticed the word “Ariel” could mean “Lion of God”, or it could mean “Hearth of God.” But over in the two chapters further on that we already looked at, chapters 30 and 31, where he speaks of how God will deliver them from the Assyrian attack, he said, “Declared the Lord and his fire is in Zion, whose furnace is in Jerusalem.” That suggests that this Ariel here means “The Hearth of God”, the place where God will work out this great plan. The place where you will see the tremendous outworking of God, where human help has absolutely reached its end. “Woe to you Ariel, Ariel, the city where David settled, add year to year, and let your cycle of festivals go on.” That fits with “The Hearth of God” the burnt offerings, the continuing ceremonies. He says “You’re performing all these ceremonies” but he says, “What good is that going to do you? If you don’t really know the Lord, what good is it going through the ceremonies?” “Keep them up!” he says, “Yet I will harass Ariel, yet I will vex Ariel.” In some translations “I will besiege Ariel.” I think that is all right, I don’t know if it’s quite as specific as that, but you notice that if it is, it is God who will do it. God will besiege Ariel. He doesn’t say the Assyrians. But what the Assyrians do will amount to same as if God was besieging it. That is to say the Assyrians are in the land, have taken all the other fenced cities, all the other fortified cities of Judah. Who knows at what moment the great Assyrian army will come marching against Jerusalem and they will tear a hole through the wall and come in and take all the people off to slavery. Who knows how soon that will come? So they were besieged for about three years. God was besieging them. “She will mourn among men, she will be to me like an altar hearth. I will encamp against you all around.” This you know is not the Assyrian God. God says I will. In other words God was putting them in a situation as if there was an army right there besieging them. The army is not right there but representatives from that army come every now and then calling on them to surrender and telling them what’s going to happen if they don’t surrender. So God is encamping against them, encircling them with powers setting up his siege works against them. They are expecting that the Assyrians will come and set up siege works at any time.

"Brought low you will speak from the ground, your speech will mumble out of the dust, your voice will come ghost-like from the earth, out of the dust your speech will whisper." Then the King James says, "Moreover, the multitude of your strangers will be like fine dust." It gives you the impression that it continues straight on. But as you continue it is quite obvious that in verse 5 there is a sharp change of thought. Dealing with the same situation but saying that your enemies those attacking you are going to become like fine dust when the Lord smote them in the night and the great bulk of them were killed or died that night and Sennacherib had to go back to his own land to be safe. When God worked that miracle of delivering them their enemies had become like fine dust.

Now I had not realized until I got your papers, that this says "enemies" where the King James says "strangers." And I think that all the recent translations make it "enemies." And of course it is talking about enemies. But the actual word used is "strangers" so personally I would prefer the translation for that particular word that the King James has. The word is used about 50 times in the Old Testament. In almost every one of them in the King James it is translated as "strangers" like "beware of the strange woman." That's the same word only in the feminine form. It is usually used of strangers who are not desirable, that is true. Of course in this context these strangers here spoken of are enemies. But the actual word is referring to those of whom he'd said in the chapter before, "with people of a strange tongue, people of other lips; God will speak to these people." And so this great number of people that they can't understand, that are coming with tremendous power and strength into the land, coming as a result of Ahaz' clever scheme that backfired. These will be there a great multitude of them. But they will become like fine dust easily blown away.

So the "but" instead of "moreover" I think is a great improvement in all the new translations and is just as true to the original. I think the substitution of "enemies" which practically all the new translations use is not quite as accurate as if it had said "aliens" or "foreigners" or something like that. To us "strangers" conveys the idea something good, rather than the use of "foreigners" which would convey more of the idea that the people

of foreign speech that they can't understand, that are coming in with force and are brutalizing the land. But he says that they are going to become "like fine dust the ruthless foreigners, like blown chaff and suddenly in an instant the Lord almighty will come."

By the way I'll take a second to mention I asked you to compare one modern version to the King James. One person wrote that he compared Moffett's translation and that Moffett left out most of the verse so the comparison did not amount to a great deal. However I think he should've looked a little further into Moffett. Because what Moffett does is that after verse 4 he then takes the last phrase of verse 5 and puts it right there and then he puts verse 6, and then puts the first two part of verse 5. So whoever used Moffett should have looked a little bit further and they would've found that verse 5 was right there. I am not recommending Moffett to you because he is one of those who changes the Scripture around to suit what he thinks the people ought to have said. At the same time Moffett was a brilliant man and a brilliant student. While you will go through the Moffett translation you will find that if he doesn't like what's there he will just change it around any old way and you can't depend anything on it, yet every now and again he will take a line or verse that you know exactly what the Hebrew means but how to put it in English is very difficult. Sometimes Moffett will exactly hit on a way to express the idea in English. Then the next verse he may give you something that has nothing to do with what is in the Hebrew. So I don't recommend it to you, but I just wish I remembered who referred to it because I think you would be wise to look a little further on and you would find that the verse is there in its entirety.

We noticed then starting in chapter 29 verse 5 we have a complete change. Verses 1-4 are the condition with Sennacherib's army, and Jerusalem realizes that they do not dare go very far from the walls. They don't know when they may meet a roaming band of Assyrians or they might meet the whole army coming to make the expected attack on Jerusalem. So "suddenly in an instant the Lord Almighty will come with thunder, earthquake and great noise, windstorm tempest and flames of a devouring fire." Now these of course are figurative expressions. We do not believe that God caused thunder, earthquake, windstorm, tempest and flames, to be the means he used to destroy this

Assyrian army. It seems far more likely that he used an epidemic among them, which rapidly wiped them out. Scripture says that the angel of the Lord killed them. What method the Lord used we don't know but it is very unlikely that it was an earthquake or a windstorm. These are figurative expressions.

Occasionally you hear somebody say I take everything in the Bible literally. Anybody who does that, I doubt if they've ever read the Bible. Because you cannot take everything literally in any book that was ever written there are always figurative expressions and there are many very beautiful figurative expressions in the Bible. We take the Bible and we study it in the light of context of each section to see what it says, we believe what it says is true. It is without error. But to say that we take everything literally would, of course, be absurd. It has many beautiful figures of speech. These here undoubtedly are figures of speech.

"Then the hoards of all the nations that fight against Ariel that attack her and her fortresses and besiege her will be as it is with a dream with a vision in the night. As when a hungry man dreams when he is eating." Who is this hungry man? It is Sennacherib of course. Sennacherib says in his annals, "he shut up Hezekiah like a bird in its cage in his capital city." Although no Assyrian king would be proud of shutting up someone like a bird in its cage in its capital city. No Assyrian king ever says that about anybody else. They say, "his capital city I attacked, I knocked down its walls, I took a third of its people captive, the rest of them I killed, I piled up their corpses in great heaps," that's the way the Assyrian kings speak about the capitals of many of the nations that they've conquered. But here it says "he shut him up like a bird in its cage in its capital city." Sennacherib was like a hungry man who dreams that he is eating but awakes and his hunger remains meaning he has to go back to Nineveh without taking Jerusalem or without giving Hezekiah the punishment that he wanted to give him.

"When a thirsty man dreams he is drinking again," these are beautiful figures of speech. You can't take them literally. Sennacherib wasn't left hungry or thirsty. I imagine that if half of the army starved, he still would've had plenty. But what he wanted, to capture Jerusalem, and to capture Hezekiah, he failed. He awakens with his thirst

unquenched. So will it be with the hoards of all the nations that fight against Mount Zion.

It says all the nations and, all the nations, all the peoples, the Assyrians had conquered so many different nations, and they made them supply soldiers for their armies, and so it was a multinational army which the Assyrians directed in their great conquest which for a period of two or three centuries terrorized most of the Middle East.

So then after giving this wonderful promise of deliverance, he then turns to rebuke these people. “Be stunned and amazed, blind yourselves and be sightless. Be drunk but not from wine, stagger but not from strong drink.” In other words he says, “You folks here in this banquet hall”, or you who were in the banquet hall whether this is continued an hour later, the next day or something. “You were becoming drunk in your, exaltation or in this wonderful scheme you and Ahaz had worked out. But he says that the time is going to come when you’ll be staggering not because of drinking but because of the punishment God is going to give you. The Lord has brought over you a deep sleep. He has sealed your eyes, the prophets, he has covered your heads the seers, for you this whole vision is nothing but words sealed in this scroll. And if you give the scroll to someone who can read and say to them read this please, He’ll say “I can’t its sealed”, he won’t bother to open the seal and read it. He gives an excuse. He is saying go on in the way you’re going, refusing to look at the facts, paying all your attention to earthly things instead of looking up at God and his power. You’re looking at your human schemes, you’re blind to God’s will, God’s promise. That’s what he’s saying; it’s sort of ironic.

I would say that, the true prophets of course, God called men here and there; there was no hereditary line of prophets. There was no appointment of prophets. God called on certain men to speak his word, but there were other men who claimed to be prophets. Now a prophet could be a seer in that he was able to give and answer to problems people brought to him. He could be but he wouldn’t have to. But there were others who would claim to be. That is that you can’t make an exact line. There are the true prophets, but then there were many people claiming to have visions. We have plenty of people today claiming to be able to predict the future, most of whom you forget the mistakes they make and only remember the times they hit it right.

I would say that that is definitely and exclusively a prediction of the deliverance from Sennacherib. Now I would say that the principle involved can be carried on as an illustration. You can say that no matter what forces, what nations try to destroy God's plan, they won't succeed, just as he delivered them, God can intervene when he chooses, with wind storms, hail, and all tremendous force as he chooses, but I would say that this is specifically a prediction about Sennacherib. That would be my feeling. The principle continues, but I don't think it's a specific pointing to some event in the more distant future. It could be, if you had those words alone in a different context it very well could be taken as a prediction of a great future event but when it is tied right directly with Sennacherib's invasion in the previous verses, it seems to me that we should take it as a specific prediction there. All the nations that are fighting against it. If the Assyrians had a lot of nations, people from many different nations. I would think that yes... The Assyrians had conquered the many peoples, and they had held them in subjection by this time for a century or more and from them they had drafted soldiers into their armies so they had people from many different ethnic backgrounds in their armies.

Here then he is rebuking these people who are like Ahaz. He rebuked Ahaz and said he would replace him. God will send in his own time his own king, virgin born. Now in chapter 29 he is rebuking the nobles, the leaders of the people. He is rebuking that large part of the nation that follows him with their lips as he says in verse 13 "honors him with their lips but their hearts are far from me." He is here rebuking them he says in chapter 29 verse 11 and 12 when they give excuses not to dig into his word, and find what he means, and follow his truth. They are giving all kinds of excuses. Those who can read won't bother to open the seal. Those who would bother to open the seal they say, "What good is it I can't even read." They're giving all kinds of excuses.

He says, "These people come near to me with their mouth, they honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship for me is made up only of rules taught by men. Therefore once more I will astound these people with wonder upon wonder. The wisdom of the wise will perish and the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish." Here he is looking way beyond these situations. It is a parallel of the situation

with Ahaz where he looks ahead to the replacement of Ahaz to the true head of the house of David, the virgin born Christ. Here he speaks his woe to those of the nation who are in the line of Ahaz. He says in Isa. 29:14-16: "I will astound these people with wonder upon wonder. The wisdom of the wise will perish, the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish. Woe to those who go to great depths to hide their plans from the Lord, who do their work in darkness and think, 'Who sees us? Who will know?' You turn things upside down as if the potter were thought to be like the clay." You should be the clay in God's hands. God wants us to be instruments in his hands to be what he wants us to be and to serve as he wants us to serve. But these people want God to be their instrument. They're looking for God to deliver them and to do what they want instead of seeking to find how they can be brought in line with God's purposes. They are turning matters upside down. As if the potter were thought to be like the clay. The potter molds the clay not the clay the potter. When you look to God to do what you want you are trying to make him your servant. You are turning things upside down. That's what these people are doing he says.

"Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, you did not make me. Can the pot say to the potter 'he knows nothing?' In a very short time, will not Lebanon be turned into the fertile field and a fertile field seemed like a forest?" (Isa 29:16). What does that mean? That means a complete turning about. Taking the forest of Lebanon, the country outside the land of Israel, the outsiders. Taking them and turning them into a fertile field. Taking the fertile field, God's vineyard which he has plowed and which he has cultivated and which is not bringing the fruit that he wants. It's going to seem like a forest. He's going to turn things upside down. Just as he predicted in chapter 7 that Ahaz will be replaced by God's own king. Here he is predicting that for a time the people of God who have not been loyal to him, have not followed him as they should will be replaced and as Jesus said, "The kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and given to a nation that will bring forth the fruits thereof." So it is a beautiful figure outside. Lebanon the uncultivated forest will be turned into the fertile field and Israel, the fertile field is going to seem like a forest. A prediction of the change that is going to come.

"In that day the deaf will hear the words of the scroll and out of gloom and darkness, and the eyes of the blind will see. Once more the humble will rejoice in the Lord, the needy will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel." He is telling here of the replacement for a time, of the people of God as these who refuse to listen to him, who refuse to follow God's prophet.

Therefore verse 22 says, "This is what the lord who redeemed Abraham says to the house of Jacob." "The Lord who redeemed Abraham." You don't exactly find that expression very much. That is not speaking of God's dealing with Israel. It is speaking of the progenitor who is brought out of a heathen land, whom God called. He says, "To the Lord who redeemed Abraham says to the house of Jacob. No longer will Jacob be ashamed. No longer will his face grow pale, when he sees in his midst his children, the work of my hands, they will keep my name holy, they will acknowledge the holiness of the Holy One of Jacob." It reminds us of what John the Baptist said in Matthew 3:7-9, "You say we're sons of Abraham. God can make sons of Abraham out of these stones."

So here is Jacob looking and seeing in his midst those who God has supernaturally brought into the people of God. It seems to me that in this chapter we have a parallel to Romans 11 where Paul shows the figure of the olive tree which grows up. The olive tree where the natural branches are taken out and wild branches are grafted in and that I believe is what we have here. It's just the exact parallel to the Ahaz and his ilk being replaced by the Messiah. The people of God becoming largely people like the forest of Lebanon. People outside who were previously thought to be outside the pail being a fertile field. I wouldn't be dogmatic about verse 24, but I am inclined to think that verse 24 means the bringing back again the natural branches into the tree, which Paul predicts in Romans 11 when he says, "So all Israel shall be saved" that will be the eventual bringing back to them into the center of God's plan.

Well we'll continue from that point next time.

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