

# CONSUMPTION & PRESERVATION

Jon Macon

Isaiah 10:20-23 contains a prophecy about a coming “consumption” upon the land of Israel, and also of a surviving remnant of Israel that would return in a time of overflowing righteousness. The passage says, *“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God. For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness. For the Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land.”* This prophecy contains elements that were fulfilled upon the kingdom of Judah during the Old Testament time, but also is quoted in the New Testament with an application to the early church.

## **The consumption of Israel and the earth**

The first event that would come to pass according to this prophecy was the destruction of the land of Israel. God had “decreed” a “consumption” (Isa 10:22). *“For the Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land”* (Isa 10:23). At the time this prophecy was written, the Northern Kingdom of Israel had already been carried into captivity to Assyria (2 Kgs 17:6,23-41; 18:10-12; Isa 10:11). Only Judah was left. But within a few years, in 701 B.C., Assyria would bring a “consumption” upon Judah and take many cities and captives (Isa 10:5-6; 36:1; 2 Kgs 18:13-16; 2 Chr 29:6-9). Not only that, Babylon brought the ultimate consumption upon Judah between 605 and 586 B.C., finally destroying all the cities of Judah, the capital city of Jerusalem, and the temple (2 Kgs 25; Jer 39,52). Assyria and Babylon also consumed the other nations of the world, which Romans 9:28 shows to be included in Isaiah 10:23 (*“upon the earth”*). That is how this part of the prophecy was fulfilled. But God prophesied that the “consumption” upon Israel would not be total. There would be a *“remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob”* (Isa 10:20). Isaiah 10:21-22 also mention this “remnant” that would be preserved. Similarly, Isaiah 1:9 says, “Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.” True to the prophecy, a remnant was indeed preserved after Assyria’s attack (2 Kgs 19:4,30-31; 2 Chr 30:6-12; 34:9; Isa 37:), and then a remnant was preserved in the land of Babylon (2 Kgs 25:11; Ezra 3:8; 9:8-9, Neh 1:3; Jer 15:11; 23:3; 24:1-7; 31:7-9; 39:9; Ezek 6:8-10; Mic 4:6-7; 5:8-9; 7:18; Zeph 3:13; Hag 1:12,14; Zech 8:6,12). This is also

# CONSUMPTION & PRESERVATION

(continued)

applied in the New Testament to the mere “remnant” of physical Israel that believed in Christ (Rom 9:27-33; 11:1-12).

## **The remnant of Israel**

God then prophesied that this remnant would be returned. *“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God. For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness”* (Isa 10:20-22; see also Jer 15:11; 23:3; 24:1-7; 31:7-9; Ezek 6:8-10; Mic 4:6-7; 5:8-9; 7:18; Zeph 3:13). This prophecy was at least partly fulfilled by the remnant of Israel who literally returned to their land (Ezra 1-3; 9:8-9, Neh 1:3; Hag 1:12,14; Zech 8:6,12), but God’s salvation of a remnant of Israel is applied in Romans 9:27-33 to the Jews who believed in Christ when he came, and attained righteousness and salvation through him. Romans 9:27-28 quotes Isaiah 10:22-23 and Romans 9:29 quotes Isaiah 1:9: *“Isaiah also cries concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: for he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. And as Isaiah said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrha.”* After showing from prophecy that the Gentiles were to be included under the New Covenant (Rom 9:23-26), Romans 9:27-29 applies Isaiah 1:9 and 10:22-23 to the remnant of physical Jews who believed on Christ (see also Rom 11:1-12). Most of the nation had rejected the Lord (John 1:10-11). The fact that only a remnant of Israel had believed in Christ (Rom 9:27-29) is used in Romans 9:30-33 to prove that righteousness is only attained by faith in Christ, not by the works of the Law of Moses. The Gentiles were not subject to the Old Law, yet they attained righteousness under the New Testament by having faith in Christ: *“What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith”* (Rom 9:30). *“But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; as it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumblingstone and rock of offense: and whosoever believes on him shall not be ashamed”* (Rom 9:31-33).