

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Isaiah: Jahweh Is Salvation

Part XXVII: Learning To Resist Efforts By ALL Men To Influence Us Not To Heed Scripture (Isaiah 18:1-7)

I. Introduction

- A. Since "Isaiah" in Hebrew means "Jahweh Is Salvation," Isaiah's prophecy focuses on God's saving His people.
- B. God had wanted Judah to trust the promise of His Word that He would rescue her from Assyria, but that message was countered by a delegation from Cush that attempted to get Judah to make a treaty with them against Assyria, Cush being like all men in history who try to influence God's people not to obey His Word.
- C. Accordingly, God had a message for Cush in Isaiah 18:1-7, and we view it for our insight and edification:

II. Learning To Resist Efforts By ALL Men To Influence Us Not To Heed Scripture, Isaiah 18:1-7.

- A. The message of Isaiah 18:1-7 is given to "the land of whirring wings," to Cush, "modern-day southern Egypt, Sudan and northern Ethiopia," Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1065. The term "whirring wings" is "(p)robably a reference to the insects of the region" as a picture of the contextual restless activity and concern of the nation of Cush, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, footnote to Isaiah 18:1.
- B. Isaiah 18:2a indicates the Cushites had sent "envoys in swift-moving papyrus boats (cf. Job 9:26) to suggest that Israel form an alliance with them against the Assyrians," Ibid., Bible Know. Com., O. T. "An Ethiopian dynasty established in Egypt about 714 [B. C.] pursued an anti-Assyrian policy" so Isaiah warned Judah "against being involved in any Ethiopian alliance," Ibid., Ryrie, fn. to Isaiah 18:2.
- C. Accordingly, God's prophet Isaiah directed these ambassadors from Cush to return to their nation of a tall and smooth people who were feared near and wide, a nation mighty in conquering, whose land the rivers divide, a reference to multiple branches of the Nile River, with a message from God, Isaiah 18:2b; Ibid., B. K. C., O. T.
- D. That message from God was not to try to form an alliance with His people in Judah, for God would destroy the Assyrians to save Judah at just the right time, Isaiah 18:3, Ibid. The people of Cush "represented all the people of the world who desired to see the Assyrians fall. But the Lord promised through Isaiah that when the time would come to fight the Assyrians they would know it and would see the enemy fall," Ibid.
- E. Isaiah 18:4-6 describes how God's plan regarding Assyria would "linger much like the summer heat and harvest dew," Ibid. God intended to destroy Assyria, but His plan to do so would linger until He had used its army to fulfill His purpose to punish the Northern Kingdom of Israel and take her captive to Assyria, Ibid. For this reason, Isaiah 18:5-6 illustrates how just as Assyria, like grapes on a vine, would begin to ripen, i. e., extend its empire by its conquests, God would cut down its branches, i. e., He would slay the men in Assyria's army and their bodies would be "left on the mountains as food for wild birds in the summer and wild animals in the winter," Ibid. This prediction was later fulfilled by the Angel of the Lord in Isaiah 37:36-37.
- F. Following the defeat of the Assyrian army, Isaiah 18:7 predicts how the Lord would cause the people of Cush, a tall and smooth people who were feared near and wide, a nation mighty in conquering, whose land the rivers divide (cf. Isa. 18:2b) to take gifts to the Lord on Mount Zion. We do not know if this prophecy was fulfilled at the fall of Assyria or if the prediction awaits fulfillment in Christ's Kingdom, but Zechariah 14:16 reveals that Gentiles in Christ's Messianic Kingdom will come in that era to worship the Lord in Jerusalem, Ibid.

Lesson: *When Cush tried to get Judah to disobey God's Word by handling her formidable foe, Assyria, through human power in Judah's making an unbiblical alliance with Cush, God told Cush to trust Him to handle Assyria in His time after He finished using it to discipline Israel. In the end, God would lead even Cush to trust in Him.*

Application: *(1) May we who know Christ as Savior resist all efforts by "Cushite" parties to influence us to rely on human might, especially regarding making unbiblical alliances, to handle "Assyria" foes versus heeding God's call in Scripture to trust in the Lord for the solution. (2) If we face an "Assyria" that God temporarily allows to flourish, may we test ourselves to see if we must repent of some sin, for God may be using the trouble we face from our foe to discipline us. (3) We must also recall that God may not immediately neutralize a difficult "Assyria" we face since He has a timetable in defeating the foe that will bring the Lord the maximum glory. (4) May we also know that God always seeks to disciple "Cushites" to heed Him, and that He often uses oppressive "Assyrias" to drive "Cushites" to Him, that we not be disturbed in seeing such "Assyrias" temporarily thrive. (5) If "Cushites" errantly try to get us to rely on human might versus heeding Scripture to trust in the Lord, may we rest assured that God will deal with them, as He did in Isaiah 18 with Cush, to cause them to see their need to trust in Him.*