

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Isaiah: Jahweh Is Salvation

Part XXX: God's Warning Of The Judgment Of Insecurity For Looking To False Security Crutches (Isaiah 20:1-6)

I. Introduction

- A. Some of the people of Judah wanted to form an alliance with Egypt and Cush to protect their nation from the threat of Assyrian invasion, all against God's will that they trust in Him, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1067.
- B. To teach Judah to abandon such a foolish idea, God had Isaiah prophesy what Assyria would do to these two false "crutch" idols of some in Judah, with a special lesson of warning to the people of Judah (as follows):

II. God's Warning Of The Judgment Of Insecurity For Looking To False Security Crutches, Isaiah 20:1-6.

- A. Assyria's king Sargon had sent his general, the "Tartan" officer to besiege Ashdod in Philistia, and he had defeated the city in 711 B. C., Isaiah 20:1; Edward J. Young, The Book of Isaiah, 1974, v. II, p. 51-52.
- B. Three years before this invasion, in 713 B. C., Ashdod had rebelled against Assyria (Ibid., p. 51), and at that rebellion, God had told Isaiah to remove his outer garment of sackcloth and his sandals and walk about like a prisoner of war for three years, Ibid., Bible Know. Com., O. T.; Isaiah 20:2. God's message signaled by this dress code was that as Isaiah had walked about partly undressed for three years, so the Egyptians and the Cushites would walk as prisoners of conquering Assyria, Isaiah 20:3-4. The goal of this illustration was to shame those in Judah who sought to put their trust in a treaty with Egypt and Cush, for these people would themselves also be shamed to walk about partly unclothed as Assyrian prisoners of war, Ibid., Young, p. 56:
 - 1. It was a great shame in the Ancient Near East for a person to be forced to walk about in public without their outer garments covering their buttocks, cf. 2 Samuel 10:4; Ibid., p. 57.
 - 2. Accordingly, for the young and even the culturally respected elderly to be made to walk about this way was "a most humiliating" experience, so Isaiah's three-year object lesson solemnly warned of humiliation for those who wished to trust in the false security crutches of Egypt and Cush instead of trusting in God!
 - 3. In addition, the Hebrew word for "lead " (v. 4a *nahag*, "lead off, drive," B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 624) to describe how Assyria would lead these captives "calls to mind Moses' leading his flock to the backside of the desert," Ibid., Young p. 56. Thus, "(j)ust as sheep are completely subject to the shepherd and must be led, so the captive is subject to his captor," revealing the futility of Judah's people coming to rely on Egyptians and Cushites for protection as these people themselves would be led about and driven as mere sheep when they would be taken captive by Assyria, Ibid.
- C. Consequently, those in Judah who had trusted in Egypt and Cush would be "shattered, dismayed" (*hatat*, Ibid., B. D. B., p. 369) and "ashamed, disconcerted, confounded" (*bush*, Ibid., p. 101) at Cush their "object of hope, expectation" (Ibid., p. 613-614) and at Egypt their "glorying, boasting" (*tip'arah*, Ibid., p. 802), Isa. 20:5.
- D. The people of Judah were acting like profane men and not God's people who were to trust in the Lord for their national security, so Isaiah referred to them in Isaiah 20:6a as profane men who dwelt along the Philistine coastline ('*e*, "coast" was used particularly of the Philistine coastline, Ibid., p. 15-16; Ibid., Young, p. 57-58).
- E. Those in Judah would then say, "Behold, this is what has happened to those in whom we hoped and to whom we fled for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria! And we, how shall we escape?" (Isa. 20:6b ESV):
 - 1. The pronoun "we" (*'anahnu*) is unusually written in addition to the verb "we escape" (*nimmalet*) for emphasis, so the question actually reads, "How then can we *ourselves* escape?" (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 635)
 - 2. God was obviously undermining the false "crutch" upon which the profane men of Judah were trusting by arranging for the Egyptians and Cushites to be taken captive by Assyria, thus exposing Judah's dreadful insecurity caused by their sinful, profane failure to trust in the Lord Himself!

Lesson: For trusting in the false "crutch" idol of Egypt and Cush to escape invasion by Assyria versus trusting in the Lord, the people of Judah were acting like profane, idolatrous pagans, and would thus become distraught and suffer great insecurity in seeing their "crutch" idols, the Egyptians and Cushites, humiliated as prisoners of war.

Application: (1) May we believe in Christ as our personal Savior for eternal life and the security of our salvation, John 5:24. (2) Then, as believers, may we realize that trusting in false "crutch" idols for security is the profane sin of idolatry in God's eyes, that we repent of it lest He punish us with dreadful insecurity by undermining such false idols. (3) If we struggle with intense insecurity, God is exposing our need to turn from a false "crutch" idol and trust in Him, and we need to make the proper adjustment quickly lest the Lord's discipline intensifies!