

Isaiah Lesson 18

Isaiah Chapter 18

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Introduction: We studied earlier in Chapter 17 concerning Damascus in Syria. Though the prophecy was primarily of impending judgment against Damascus, there were a few glimmers of end-time events.

The focus shifts to the days of the restoration of Israel to her land. The fulfillment is largely eschatological, though there may have been partial fulfillment even in recent years.

I. An Oracle Concerning Cush

Isa 18:1 Woe to the land shadowing with wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia:

Isa 18:2 That sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, saying, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled!

The nation in view here is not entirely clear. The text suggests this seem to be of Ethiopia. Wherever this land was, it was beyond the rivers of Ethiopia. The conclusion presumably is that it is Ethiopia itself. Historically, there has been a long connection between Israel and Ethiopia. It was from there that the Queen of Sheba came to visit Solomon. Though there is no scriptural evidence thereof, Ethiopian tradition holds that the Queen of Sheba returned impregnated by Solomon and that many Ethiopians therefore today are descended of the house of David.

During New Testament times there is the record of the Ethiopian eunuch coming to Jerusalem to worship intimating that in that day, Ethiopians sought the God of Israel. In more recent centuries, there has been significant colonies of Jews living in Ethiopia. . Ethiopian tradition also holds that the ark of the covenant is hidden in Ethiopia to this day. That has never been verified, but the legend persists nevertheless.

In the latter part of the twentieth century, there was a clandestine airlift of Jews out of Ethiopia by the Israeli government to rescue them from what at the time was a hostile socialistic government. Some Jews think that was a fulfillment of

this chapter. In any event, the prophet here refers to this nation (Ethiopia) sending messengers to “a nation scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled!” This is a reference to Israel. They certainly have been scattered and peeled over the centuries. Their history has been astonishing (terrible). The nations of the world have flowed through Israel like rivers at flood stage and made desolate its land.

Isa 18:3 All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye.

The focus here certainly appears to be eschatological. The entire world is directed to take note when He (God) lifts up a ensign (flag) upon the mountains of Israel. The blowing of a trumpet was an ancient reference to a signal (like the old military bugle calls). The time likely is of the Day of the Lord when God calls Jews, the world around, to return to their land. The final fulfillment will not take place until the beginning of the Millennium. However, there can be little question that this process has already begun.

Isa 18:4 For so the LORD said unto me, I will take my rest, and I will consider in my dwelling place like a clear heat upon herbs, and like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest.

Isa 18:5 For afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect, and the sour grape is ripening in the flower, he shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks, and take away and cut down the branches.

Isa 18:6 They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth: and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them.

The analogy of a crop after rain is used. God spoke to Isaiah how that He would take His leisure from heaven like the bright sun on a crop after a refreshing shower. The idea is of future “showers of blessings” upon Israel. The analogy is used of the vineyard being cut down prior to the harvest. Before the crop was mature, the pruning hooks would come. The vineyard likely is Israel.

Though blessing eventually would come to Israel, judgment was coming first. The they in verse 6 are the springs and branches of the preceding verse. However, the implication is of judgment. Some have argued that this refers to the destruction of the Assyrians in II Kings 19:35. However, the context does not seem to connect to fit. It may have been of Ethiopia. Rather, the greater

fulfillment likely is in the Day of the Lord when many armies will be slain upon the mountains of Israel and the fowls of the air will be sent by God to clean up the carnage. See Revelation 19:17-18. 18:7

Rev 19:17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

Rev 19:18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

Rev 18:7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

Isa 18:7 In that time shall the present be brought unto the LORD of hosts of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, the mount Zion.

The word translated as present (yvshah'-ee) has the sense of a 'gift.' The thought clearly is of a gift being made to the Lord at Mount Zion (i.e., Jerusalem) of a people who have been scattered all over the world. The thought apparently is of the restoration of Israel to her land. It will be a gift to Him in the Millennium. That process has already begun and continues. The ultimate fulfillment will not be until the Millennium when Israel returns altogether to their promised land.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.

