

ISAIAH

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Isaiah chapter 17 as we continue our study through the Word of God. Beginning in Isaiah chapter 13 and continuing on through Isaiah chapter 23 is a section that deals with judgments that God is pronouncing primarily on the nations that surround Judah and Jerusalem, those Gentile nations.

This evening we are going to start with a very timely judgment you might say, the judgment of Syria and its capitol of Damascus. With all the events that are going on in Syria right now and with Damascus being the oldest city still in existence, when you read through this judgment of God upon them you will see that this judgment has not taken place yet, it is still future and I believe in the near future as you will see this evening.

We also will see a judgment linked with Syria but I don't believe it is at the same time, and this judgment will be upon Ephraim or the Northern Kingdom of Israel with their capital being Samaria. They will go into captivity, they will be destroyed.

Understand that these judgments were not given in chronological order. This prophecy was given in 734 B. C., and within 2 years, 732 B. C. the Syrians would be defeated by the Assyrians. Then around 10 years later, in 721 B. C. the Northern Kingdom of Israel will fall to the Assyrians. Now in saying that and as you will see, this judgment upon Damascus has to be more than what happened in the past and I believe that the future fulfillment of this prophecy for Syria and its capitol is still future as I have said, but it is getting close I believe.

With that said, let's begin reading in Isaiah chapter 17, beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

ISAIAH 17**VERSES 1-2**

1. Let's start out first of all with what we know; what this judgment is all about. When this judgment comes the land will be so desolate that the wild animals will make it their home. Why is that? Because there are no people living there, the land is destroyed and the people were either killed or they fled the area. Thus, Damascus will be a place for grazing for these various animals that come into that area, I don't believe those living there at the time of the judgment survived.

So the question is, "Has this ever happened?" Now we don't need to know a lot, all we have to do is turn on the news and is Damascus still around? Yes it is and yet there are many who claim that Isaiah 17 was fulfilled in 732 B. C. when the Assyrians came in. First of all was Damascus destroyed by this Assyrian conquest? No it was not destroyed. And, as I said, Damascus did not cease from being a city, it is still around today! And I guess one more point, was Damascus reduced to a heap of ruins? No it wasn't! In fact, today we see that this city of Damascus is the world's oldest and continuously inhabited city.

2. As you watch the news and you see what is going on in Syria, how a civil war is going on and the use of chemical weapons against their own people has occurred, have you notice how quiet Israel is. Keep in mind that the rockets Syria has can be launched into Israel and that means chemical weapons can be unleashed on Israel. They are prepared, they are watching and if anything is launched at them they will take care of Damascus and I believe they will use nuclear weapons. That means Damascus will cease from being a city and it will be a ruinous heap, no one will live there!

In Amos 1:3 we are told, **“Thus says the Lord: For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because they have threshed Gilead with implements of iron.”** That phrase, **“For three transgressions and for four”** I believe is symbolizing the completeness of their sin, that the cup of their wickedness is now full and judgment is going to come.

But let me throw this out at you. Syria took part in the wars of 1948, 1967, and 1973. Thus, if they were to come against Israel again could that point to the fact that this judgment is very close? With Syria’s close proximity to Israel, Israel’s Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu has stated in the past he will not apologize for defending his country and will continue to do so even if it results in more confrontations.

3. Let me also share this with you because Syria and Israel have a history, a recent history. When Syria occupied the Golan Heights, a strategically crucial high plateau above the whole region of Galilee, Israel was under constant threat of invasion and shelling from Syrian placements on the Golan. But when Syria eventually made a full on invasion of Israel from the Golan, Israel miraculously beat them back and captured the Golan Heights.

Now, Syria insists that this strategically crucial region is theirs and must be given back. The Israelis are adamant that they will never give back land that belongs to them, and is necessary for their security. In the meantime, Syria fights Israel through terrorism and their support of militia groups in Lebanon. The dream of a “Greater Syria,” encompassing Syria, Lebanon, and parts of northern Israel is a powerful influence in the Syrian leadership.

And now with this civil war that is going on and the increase in Islamic terrorists flooding into Syria, this may be the scenario for the destruction of Damascus as Isaiah is telling us. Now as exciting as this is as we watch these things unfold before our eyes, we need to keep in mind that there are many people, including Christians that are living in Syria. We need to be praying for them. Yes this will come to pass, Damascus will cease from being a city and it will be a ruinous heap, but may many come to the Lord prior to this event from happening and be spared this judgment.

VERSES 3-6

1. Ephraim was the dominate tribe in the Northern Kingdom of Israel and God is speaking of the judgment that was coming upon them. You see, they not only turned from the Lord but they aligned themselves with Syria to fight against Judah, their own brethren in the Southern Kingdom of Judah!

This judgment is seen in II Kings 15:29, **“In the days of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria came and took Ijon, Abel Beth Maachah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali; and he carried them captive to Assyria.”**

So the Northern Kingdom of Israel was taken into captivity and in II Kings 16:9 we see Syria taken into captivity, **“So the king of Assyria heeded him; for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus and took it, carried its people captive to Kir, and killed Rezin.”**

So not only will Damascus be judged but so too will the Northern Kingdom of Israel. In fact, they will be taken into captivity and only a few people will remain in the land. The Assyrians would leave the weak, the sick, the elderly in the land because they didn't want them and they couldn't cause any trouble for the Assyrians. And then the Assyrians would place other people, Gentiles in this case, into the land with them. Now those Jews who were left in the land married these Gentiles that were brought into the land and they were known as the Samaritans and the Jews felt they were half-breeds and many would not even travel through Samaria because they felt the land was defiled by these half-breeds.

VERSES 7-9

1. When we read of the judgment of God upon His people some feel that God is wrong. Sorry and please understand that He is trying to draw them back. And here we see that some do turn back to Him in this judgment. And what I love is that all that they put their trust in would be stripped away. They trusted in the pagan altars, those wooden images, the incense they offered to these gods and when they were removed some turned to the only one who they could trust, the Lord. He was blocked from their view by all these other things but once they were removed they saw the Lord once again!

One writer put it like this and it is a reminder of what can happen to God's people when they turn from Him. He wrote, "When the Israelites came into the land of Canaan many years before, the strong cities of the land were abandoned to them . . . However, the situation has changed, and the same cities will be abandoned by the Israelites themselves as they are under the judging hand of God." (Grogan).

2. Now as we read this we wonder how God's people could turn from Him but if we are honest with ourselves we would see that we do the very same thing in our own lives and in this nation. We put things ahead of the Lord and in a sense we are worshiping them, even self! And I wonder what it will take to shake us up, Christians in general, and return to the Lord instead of these pagan altars, the wooden images, the incense they offer to the God they say they are serving and they are not! Sometimes God has to remove those things before we look up to Him! Their hope and our hope is only in the LORD – never forget that!

VERSES 10-11

1. Keep in mind that the Lord is judging Israel because they turned from Him; they were looking to these idols and to themselves for strength instead of the Lord. And here we see the Lord say that they will work very hard in their fields, they will plant their crops and they will grow but in the end, when the harvest comes, it will be nothing more than a heap of ruins.

Haggai speaks of this very thing when he wrote, **“You have sown much, and bring in little; You eat, but do not have enough; You drink, but you are not filled with drink; You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; And he who earns wages, Earns wages to put into a bag with holes.”** Haggai 1:6.

That is what happens when we try to do it on our own, apart from the Lord, it is nothing, it is just a heap of ruins. That is not what the Lord wants. Listen to what we are told in Luke chapter 5, starting in verse 1, **“So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets. Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon’s, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat. When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, ‘Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.’ But Simon answered and said to Him, ‘Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.’ And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, ‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!’ For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, ‘Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men.’ So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.”** Luke 5:1-11.

You can do it on your own and not be fruitful at all or you can look to the Lord, follow Him, obey Him and see the harvest He will bring into your life, not just your physical life, but also your spiritual life!

2. The reason for this judgment is simple, **“Because you have forgotten the God of your salvation, And have not been mindful of the Rock of your stronghold . . .”** Isaiah 17:10.

Have you forgotten the God of your salvation? Have you moved away from the Rock of refuge for your life? If you have then you need to return to Him because apart from Him there is nothing good that will come into your life, it will be a heap of ruins!

VERSES 12-14

1. The sound that this mighty Assyrian army made was like the roar of the ocean. It must have been a terrifying sound to any city or nation that heard them coming. You see, there was nothing you could do to defeat them, they were too powerful!

The Assyrians took the Northern Kingdom of Israel captive, and that was as far as they were supposed to go, God did not want them advancing any farther. But they continued to move against the Southern Kingdom of Judah, and as they surrounded Jerusalem, Hezekiah prayed to God to deliver them.

And that very night the angel of the Lord came and destroyed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers and the rest went home fleeing for their lives. And thus, it is as Isaiah said, **“Then behold, at eventide, trouble! And before the morning, he is no more. This is the portion of those who plunder us, And the lot of those who rob us.”** Isaiah 17:14.

ISAIAH 18**VERSES 1-2**

1. First of all I don't necessarily see this as a judgment upon Ethiopia. As you read through this chapter I think that is pretty clear. But what about this "**Woe**" in the opening verse of this chapter? It comes from the Hebrew word, HOWY, (hoh'-ee) and it can be translated as "ah" in Isaiah 1:4, where it is a sigh, or as "ho" in Isaiah 55 and yes it can also be translated as "woe." I think the context determines how it is translated and I don't see a burden against Ethiopia and thus, this is more of a "Hear Me" or "Listen to Me." This is not a "burden" but a "woe" or "ho" as I have said.

Secondly, all during the days of Isaiah Ethiopia was a power. They were ruling Egypt. Assyria was to the north and Ethiopia to the south of Judah and that meant that Judah was in the middle of all this. Thus, they sided with the Ethiopians to help them in their battle against the Assyrians. That I believe is the idea of them sending ambassadors to Judah to make an alliance with them against the Assyrians.

And as these Ethiopian ambassadors come to Judah asking them to side with them in their battle against the Assyrians they also tell Judah to send "**swift messengers**" to Ethiopia to show that they are with them.

And so these tall and sleek people, those who traveled by sea or the Nile River, on boats made of reeds, could not be speaking of a people who traveled the ocean or even the Mediterranean Sea. Some say that this is speaking of England or even the United States, but that is not what the text is saying. You could not survive on a boat made of reeds on those waters. Thus, as the text says, these are the Ethiopians, a tall and sleek people.

VERSES 3-6

1. This is speaking of the Assyrians, who were the world power at this time, surpassing the power that the Ethiopians had for a time. And the Lord here is rejecting this alliance that Judah made with Ethiopia. Why did He reject it? Because God is more than able to deal with the Assyrians and that is exactly what He did.

In this battle God did not break a sweat; this was not difficult at all for Him to defeat the Assyrians. How can the creation fight against his Creator, he can't! And thus, we see the destruction of the Assyrian forces that had gathered around Jerusalem by the Lord. Remember, 185,000 Assyrian soldiers were killed in one night by the angel of the Lord, and this took place before summer. Thus, these dead bodies became food for the birds in the summer, and there were so many bodies this food lasted into the winter and became food for the beasts of the earth.

What a lesson for us to learn. We look at situations, battles in our lives and we are overwhelmed by them. We lose sleep, we are anxious, we worry, we can't function. I want to let you in on a little secret, the Lord is not anxious, worried, He doesn't lose any sleep in regards to what we find ourselves in. And thus, He is more than able to deliver us from any situation, we need to look to Him, to stand still and see the salvation that the Lord will bring!

VERSE 7

1. The Ethiopians are so thankful that the God of Judah has destroyed the power of the Assyrians that they send a gift to the Temple in Jerusalem. But I also see this looking into the future because Isaiah tells us that there is coming a day when the Ethiopians will come and worship the LORD and when they come they will bring gifts.

Some feel that this may have been fulfilled not only in Isaiah's time but in Acts 8:26-40, when an Ethiopian came to worship the LORD at Jerusalem, and then trusted in Jesus at the preaching of Philip. They look to the strong Ethiopian church of the first few centuries and the enduring Ethiopian church today.

Others say that there is a church in Ethiopia that is guarded by priests and inside this church is the Ark of the Covenant and that is the gift that they are bringing to Jerusalem. Again, I don't think the Ark of the Covenant is in Ethiopia. I believe Jeremiah hid the Ark before the Babylonians destroyed the city and if it is found, and some say it has been, it will be in the rabbis tunnels under the Temple mount.

As I look at all of this I don't think that is exactly what Isaiah is speaking of. I see this in the Kingdom Age as the Ethiopians, as well as the other nations come and worship the Lord and as they do they will bring gifts to honor the Lord who is ruling and reigning from the throne of David. Notice what the last part of verse 7 says, “**. . . To the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, To Mount Zion.**” This where the Lord is seated upon the throne, in Jerusalem and that is where they are coming to worship Him!

2. As we move into chapter 19 we are going to see the burden against Egypt.

ISAIAH 19**VERSES 1-4**

1. Just to the south of Israel Egypt was one of the great powers of the ancient world. At times Egypt was an enemy of Israel and sometimes they offered to help Israel out. But keep in mind that Egypt worshiped many gods and they looked to these idols for help and the Lord says that He will make their idols shake; they will not be able to stand before God!

When people are in trouble, when things look bad they many times turn to good-luck charms, idols, all kinds of foolish things. That is what Egypt has done and will do. But who can truly stand against the Lord? The answer is “No one!”

2. What I like to focus on here is this civil war that is spoken of in verse 2 because Egypt is on the verge of a civil war today. Is this the one that Isaiah is speaking of? It could be, we are not sure but what we do know is that Egypt is not part of the Magog invasion found in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39 and apart from a civil war, one has to wonder why? You see, I think it is because of this civil war that they no longer can gather their troops together to be part of this battle and that is why they are not involved. They want Israel destroyed but they won't have the manpower to get an army together to fight with Russia and her Muslim allies because they are fighting amongst themselves.

3. Now what about this “**fierce king**” that will rule over them? It could be the Antichrist when he comes to power after this battle of Ezekiel 38 and 39!

VERSES 5-10

1. Could Isaiah be speaking of a severe drought that has dried up the waters of the Nile River?

That is a possibility. Just keep in mind that the Nile River was the key to Egypt's agriculture and economy. If there was a severe drought or lowering of the water levels that would have a devastating effect on the lives of Egyptians.

Let me give you another possible scenario. It may be that the building of the Aswan Dam is the fulfillment of this prophecy. This dam is supposedly one of the great technological wonders of the past century and it is also one of the worst ecological disasters. This dam was built with the help of the Russians for 3 basic reasons: to control the flooding problem, to provide abundant hydroelectric power to Egypt, and to open up thousands of acres for farming in Egypt. Great hopes and dreams but very poor planning if any at all!

In the early 1970's the United States put out a report listing the Aswan Dam as one of the 3 great ecological dangers and disasters in the world. What went wrong? Every year the Nile River would overflow its banks and bring millions of square feet of rich silt to the area, making the land very fertile. Some would go down to the Mediterranean Sea and would provide food for the fish. This also would prevent the salt water from backing up into the Nile River.

But now that has all changed with this dam that was built, the results of this dam were devastating. The fishing industry that was tremendous at one time is now almost gone. The fresh water fish disappeared. The salt water fish moved to areas that had better feeding areas. Millions of acres of fertile land were destroyed as the salt water was backing up into the Nile River. Also, the fresh water fish were moving out.

Not only that but the flowing of this water would wash away the snails, but now that was not happening and the snails proliferated, and these snails would attach themselves to the reeds, destroying them. Many are so frustrated over the devastating effects of this dam they just want to blow it up. It seems that this dam and its devastating effects may be what God is speaking of in this judgment but I think it goes even further. This is just the tip of the iceberg you might say in regards to this judgment that is coming upon Egypt.

VERSES 11-15

1. Egypt, like the nations and its leaders today think they are so smart, they are so wise, and that pride will destroy them just as we see here with Egypt. And what is interesting here is that the Lord challenges the people of Egypt regarding their wise men and tells them, “**Where are they? Where are your wise men? Let them tell you now, and let them know what the LORD of hosts has purposed against Egypt.**” Isaiah 19:12.

Think about this for a minute, they couldn't even build a dam without causing catastrophic results to the environment, how in the world are they going to be able to tell the future with accuracy, how can they tell their people what the LORD is going to do? And when this judgment comes they will be brought to nothing.

2. Think about where you are at right now in regards to wisdom. What are you searching for? What answers do you want to know? What plans do you have? I think it is easy to fall prey to this line of thinking, just like the Egyptians. But do you realize that the Lord has purposed and what He has purposed will come to pass no matter what plans you have made or what ideas you have! It is as Solomon reminds us in Proverbs 9:10, **“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”**

May we seek His purpose in our life and follow down the path that He has for each of us. We will never outsmart God but we surly can hinder our walk with Him if we think that we can!

VERSES 16-17

1. Notice how far down God brings this great nation. They were strong, they were powerful, and now they are like a woman, weak. Sorry ladies, but this is just a general rule, I am sure there are ladies that could beat me up, but for the most part this is true. And notice their fear, it is of the Lord and what we see is a role reversal.

Judah was in the shadow of this great Egyptian Empire but now Judah or Israel will rise up and they will be a terror to Egypt. Now some see this fulfilled today as Israel has a superior air force and military, more so than Egypt. That may be true but I think that we are looking ahead into the Kingdom Age because we are going to see nations coming together not to fight but to worship the Lord and that is not going to happen in this age but in the Millennial Kingdom!

VERSES 18-22

1. What is this “**language of Canaan**” that they will be speaking in Egypt? They will speak the Hebrew language and worship the God of Israel. Obviously we don’t see that today even though some seem to try and fit it into the past.

One writer put it like this, “This prophecy may have additional fulfillment during the Millennium, but it certainly has been fulfilled in history. In the fourth century, the great theologian Athanasius, wrote this from Egypt: ‘The thing is happening before our very eyes, here in Egypt; and thereby another prophecy is fulfilled, for at no other time have the Egyptians ceased from their false worship save when the Lord of all, riding as on a cloud, came down here in the body and brought the error of idols to nothing and won over everybody to Himself and through Himself to the Father.’ (From *On the Incarnation*, cited by Grogan)” (David Guzik).

I see this fulfilled in the Kingdom Age and there may be types of this being fulfilled but ultimately, it is still future.

2. Now in verse 18 we see one of these cities called “**the City of Destruction.**” A better translation of that is the “City of the Sun” and it probably is related to the Egyptian city known as Heliopolis. But it will be a city of the Son of God one day as these Egyptians will be worshipping the Lord there.

What is interesting even though I don't think this is the fulfillment of this prophecy but maybe a partial or a type, is what Wolf wrote, "In the time of the Maccabees, the high priest Onias IV was forced to flee to Egypt, and there he built a temple that was similar to the one in Jerusalem. Some commentators relate the 'altar' of verse 19 to this structure." (Wolf) This may relate to the *City of the Sun* prophecy, because the temple Onias IV built was in the province of Heliopolis.

But again I don't think that was the fulfillment, it is still future as the Egyptians will come to the knowledge of the Lord and will worship Him! We don't see that nation doing that today.

3. Let me make one more point here. Yes God will judge Egypt, but one day they will turn to Him, they will receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and God will heal them. That is always God's desire, even in judgment, that people would repent and return to Him so that they could be healed. God desires that right now and how many turn away. Today is the day of salvation, don't pass it up!

VERSES 23-25

1. As you read of the nations that are coming together in peace it is truly amazing since they were hostile enemies. Instead of fighting with each other they are coming together to worship the Lord!

I think we many times just read through these verses and never think much about them. The Assyrians were a brutal people, so bad that Jonah did not even want to warn them of the coming judgment of God because he knew if they repented God would not wipe them out and Jonah wanted them destroyed!

One writer put it like this as he wrote, “In Isaiah’s day, Assyria was the one power feared by every little nation in the Fertile Crescent. The calculated brutality of the Assyrians probably made them more of an object of general hatred than any other nation of antiquity. The Egyptians, Babylonians, and Persians were all capable of inhuman acts, but the Assyrian record for callous cruelty is difficult to parallel.” (Grogan).

Jesus truly is the Prince of Peace for as people come to Him their lives, their actions reflect His nature as we see here. Peace will permeate the land as Jesus rules and reigns in the Kingdom Age and these nations will travel on this highway from Egypt to Assyria and they will come together in Israel to worship the Lord!

And listen how unbelievable this is as verse 25 tells us, “**... ‘Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.’**” Wow, our God is so gracious and merciful He saved people not just like the Assyrians and the Egyptians, but you and me!

It is as Meyer wrote, “Who, standing amid the terrors of the plagues, could ever have supposed that Egypt would be addressed as ‘my people’? Who could have thought that Assyria, the tyrant persecutor, would ever be called ‘the work of my hands’? Yet these are the trophies and triumphs of divine grace.” That is our God!

2. One more point here and that is regarding our God and what He has done and is doing in people's lives. Spurgeon, in *The Fruits of Grace* draws out these points regarding God's grace.

He wrote,

- God's grace often comes to the very worst of men.
- God's grace sends a Savior.
- Grace changes men's language.
- God's grace sets men on holy service.
- God's grace teaches men to pray.
- God's grace instructs men.
- Grace makes even trouble a blessing to a man.
- God's grace changes the relations of men to each other.
- God's grace makes men to be blessed, and to be a blessing to others.

Let me share a couple of Scriptures with you in regards to the grace of God. Peter reminds us in I Peter 1:13-16, **“Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’”**

And in II Peter 3:17-18 Peter tells us, **“You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.”**

How do we grow in grace? We do this by learning more about our Lord and about us as we read and apply God's Word to our lives. You see, the more we see who we are and the more we see who God is we see how rich His grace is towards us, that we truly do not deserve it. I know that is what grace is all about but we grow as we see the holiness of God and how we are not holy. And in regards to that, because of what God has done in us, it should cause us to live holy lives, we will never be like God but that should not stop us. God did not say "Be as holy as I am holy" but He did say "**Be holy, for I am holy.**"

ISAIAH 20

VERSES 1

1. Ashdod was one of the five main Philistine cities located by the Mediterranean Sea. Back in 711 B. C. Sargon King of Assyria, (who reigned from 722 B. C. to 705 B. C.), sent Tartan, which is not his name but his title which means "commander in chief," to the Philistine city and they captured it.

VERSE 2

1. The prophets were often used as object lessons in the Scriptures and here we see Isaiah take his sackcloth off, which was like burlap of today. Back then they would wear camel hair, which was very course and irritating against their skin. It was a sign of mourning. He took his sandals off and I don't think he walked around naked but probably with just a loin cloth on for 3 years!

Total nakedness was probably not the case, but by what he was wearing the people were going to get the message. You see, when people saw Isaiah they would be shocked, and that is exactly what God wanted to do to them. To shock them out of their spiritual sleep and open their eyes to their sinful condition.

Hosea was another prophet used by God to wake up the Northern Kingdom of Israel from their spiritual sleep by using his life as an object lesson. He was told by God to go and marry a prostitute, which he did. And after a while she leaves him and goes back to her ways of prostitution, but now she is older and no one wants her.

And God tells Hosea to go and buy her back and love her again. And God was trying to illustrate to His people that they were committing spiritual fornication and have turned from Him. But God has not forgotten them and He has purchased them not with money but with His blood. The prophets had a tough ministry!

VERSES 3-4

1. Can you image that for 3 years Isaiah dressed like this and it was to be an object lesson for Egypt and Ethiopia. The point that Isaiah was making was that they would be taken captive by the King of Assyria. As Isaiah looked so too would they!
2. How does that apply to us today? I like the way that Trapp put it. He wrote, "So dealeth the devil with all his wretched captives, whom he driveth away hellward, naked and barefoot with their buttocks uncovered, the shame of their nakedness exposed to public view for want of the white raiment of Christ's righteousness that they might be clothed."

VERSES 5-6

1. God is showing Judah how foolish it was to put their trust in the Ethiopians and the Egyptians; they could not even protect themselves from the Assyrians. So how in the world are they going to be able to protect Judah? They would not be able to! Judah set their expectation on Ethiopia, and looked to Egypt for glory, but now they are left afraid and ashamed. It is as Morgan wrote, “There is no place of security for the people of God, other than that to be found in the rule of God. All expectation not centered in God, is doomed to disappointment and discomfiture [embarrassment].”

God is telling us not to trust in the strength of man for it will fail. There is no place to go, no one to run to except the Lord. As David said in Psalm 61, “**Hear my cry, O God; Attend to my prayer. From the end of the earth I will cry to You, When my heart is overwhelmed; Lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For You have been a shelter for me, A strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in Your tabernacle forever; I will trust in the shelter of Your wings.**” Psalm 61:1-4.

2. And what is truly tragic is what we read in Isaiah 20:6, “**And the inhabitant of this territory will say in that day, ‘Surely such is our expectation, wherever we flee for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria; and how shall we escape?’**” Tragically they did not think about the Lord! May we not lose sight of our God and be overwhelmed with what is happening around us. “How shall we escape?” It is always the Lord!

Let me leave you with this to think about. In II Chronicles 20:5-12 we are told of an enemy that far outnumbered Judah and this is what transpired, **“Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, and said: ‘O Lord God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You? Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, “If disaster comes upon us - sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine - we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.” And now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir - whom You would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy them - here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit. O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.’”**

We may not know what to do in a given situation and really that is not the problem. The problem really is this. Are your eyes on the Lord because if they are not then you are in trouble. You see He knows what to do and has the power to do it and that is why we need to look to Him because He will guide us, He will deliver us! May we not forget that!

