

Pentwater Bible Church

Isaiah Message 16

March 31, 2019

The Arab Invasion 1948



Aram Invasion of Israel in 1948, Map from the Jewish Agency

Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Isaiah

Message Sixteen

THE KING OF ASSYRIA WILL COME

March 31, 2019

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Isaiah 7:17–25

¹⁷Jehovah will bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—even the king of Assyria. ¹⁸And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah will hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria. ¹⁹And they shall come, and shall rest all of them in the desolate valleys, and in the clefts of the rocks, and upon all thorn-hedges, and upon all pastures.

²⁰In that day will the Lord shave with a razor that is hired in the parts beyond the River, even with the king of Assyria, the head and the hair of the feet; and it shall also consume the beard.

²¹And it shall come to pass in that day, that a man shall keep alive a young cow, and two sheep; ²²and it shall come to pass, that because of the abundance of milk which they shall give he shall eat butter: for butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the midst of the land.

²³And it shall come to pass in that day, that every place, where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings, shall be for briers and thorns. ²⁴With arrows and with bow shall one come thither, because all the land shall be briers and thorns. ²⁵And all the hills that were digged with the mattock, thou shalt not come thither for fear of briers and thorns; but it shall be for the sending forth of oxen, and for the treading of sheep (ASV, 1901).

THE LORD WILL SEND THE EGYPTIANS AND ASSYRIANS

Isaiah 7:17–19

¹⁷Jehovah will bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—even the king of Assyria. ¹⁸And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah will hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria. ¹⁹And they shall come, and shall rest all of them in the desolate valleys, and in the clefts of the rocks, and upon all thorn-hedges, and upon all pastures.

Throughout the history of Israel, they were situated between the Egyptians of the Nile and the Assyrians of the Mesopotamian valleys. Each of those nation wanted to conquer Israel at one time or another for their own aggressive purposes. But now the prophet sees these great political and

military advances not as the work of their individually minded efforts, but as events which occur at the command of the Lord who uses them for the work He wants to do correcting Israel as they turn from Him. In 735 B.C. Egypt was not much of a threat to Judah and would not be for many years to come. The timing of this prophecy is not apparent and the prophesied invasion is most likely occurring as separate and not an allied effort. There are compelling alternate views on the timing and objects of this prophecy. Both will be cited. The Lord is definitely sending Egypt and Assyria at different times to war with Israel and Judah. He also makes it quite clear the because they are sinful He will judge them for their sinfulness against His chosen people. This is a difficult prospect for us to easily assimilate. The Lord is making it quite clear that the events He is prophesying have never been experienced since the civil war in 931 B.C. which, separated the north represented as Ephraim from Judah in the south.

To send Assyria and Egypt into Israel He uses insects communicated to swarm in delivering a message at their Creators command. Now that command is issued and they come. The prophet is saying that when the Lord decides the appropriate time in the future to execute this prophecy He will send the Assyrians and the Egyptians to conduct invasions of Israel and Judah. At that time, when the threatened danger has become a reality, the Lord will hiss for the enemy. By means of hissing, bees and flies were called. Isaiah had already said (Isaiah 5:26) that Jehovah would hiss to “the distant nations,” with a description which references the Assyrians. He now refers to them and to Egypt by name, and adds that the two great rivals shall come to Judah. The Lord is also revealing that He will use insects to communicate His commands to the Egyptians and Assyrians to invade Israel. The Egyptians are compared to the swarms of venomous flies which infest the region of the Nile and the Assyrians to the bees which, are native to their woods and mountains. Noting the characteristics of these insects it is apparent the Lord chose these for specific purposes.

The Egyptians are compared to the fly and the Assyrians to the bee. This implies that just as the fly is weaker than the bee so too are the Egyptians militarily weaker than the Assyrians. The invading armies seem to also draw a comparison of invading armies as insect clouds so thick that they seem to be blackening the sky as they shut out the sun. Both the insects and the armies of the invaders seem to swarm, suffocate, and consume everything in their path as they envelop a region.

The enemies will invade, in one surge after the other, in great numbers, occupying the whole country. The Lord will use them as a scourge to his people. This will include even the steep ravines, the clefts of the rocks, *upon all thorn-hedges, and upon all pastures*. Israel will then be completely overrun. The picture formed here is, that they will be in all cities, towns, and villages. They will be everywhere. There would be no place to hide for cover from the invaders, no escape their onslaught. What follows has two very defensible views from the text. One in the general context and the other from the exact construct of the specific Hebrew text of verse twenty.

THE ISRAELITES WILL BE HUMILIATED

Isaiah 7:20

²⁰In that day will the Lord shave with a razor that is hired in the parts beyond the River, even with the king of Assyria, the head and the hair of the feet; and it shall also consume the beard.

This verse depicts a hired barber (the Assyrians) humiliating their Israelite captives by shaving all their hair off. This can be describing the treatment of war prisoners, or the imagery of the shaving of the land. In either case God will use these foreigners (they lived on the east side of the Euphrates River) to accomplish his will against his own sinful people though Ahaz thought he was hiring the Assyrians to deliver him from Syria and Israel. The practice of cutting one's beard and hair was a degrading practice designed to produce humility in the captives.

II Samuel 10:1–7

¹And it came to pass after this, that the king of the children of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his stead. ²And David said, I will show kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father showed kindness unto me. So David sent by his servants to comfort him concerning his father. And David's servants came into the land of the children of Ammon. ³But the princes of the children of Ammon said unto Hanun their lord, Thinkest thou that David doth honor thy father, in that he hath sent comforters unto thee? hath not David sent his servants unto thee to search the city, and to spy it out, and to overthrow it? ⁴So Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, even to their buttocks, and sent them away. ⁵When they told it unto David, he sent to meet them; for the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, and then return.

⁶And when the children of Ammon saw that they were become odious to David, the children of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Beth-rehob, and the Syrians of Zobah, twenty thousand footmen, and the king of Maacah with a thousand men, and the men of Tob twelve thousand men. ⁷And when David heard of it, he sent Joab, and all the host of the mighty men (ASV, 1901).

The imagery here is one of complete humiliation: *all* the hair on the body is shorn off, even to that badge of respect, the beard. Humanly speaking Judah will have no honor left. The land will be left desolate as well.

ALTERNATE VIEW OF THE JEWISH COMMENTATORS

The general agreement of the Jewish commentators that has support from the Hebrew text in this verse is that the Lord will be doing the shaving and His object will be the Assyrian King. This is a reference to the day that the powerful Assyrian army was miraculously destroyed after having conquered all of Judah. Sennacherib besieged Jerusalem and overnight his huge army was miraculously struck down by a plague (Cir. 701B.C.). In using the shaving example, the Jewish commentators see the shaving representing the plague which came on the Assyrians. They see *the head and the hair of the feet; and it shall also consume the beard*. As representing the King (head) soldiers (hair of the feet) and the officials (beard). Although Sennacherib himself survived the plague he was assassinated by his sons.

Ii Kings 19:32–37

³²Therefore thus saith Jehovah concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come unto this city, nor shoot an arrow there, neither shall he come before it with shield, nor cast up a mound against it. ³³By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and he shall not come unto this city, saith Jehovah. ³⁴For I will defend this city to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

³⁵And it came to pass that night, that the angel of Jehovah went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when men arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. ³⁶So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. ³⁷And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Ararat. And Esar-haddon his son reigned in his stead (ASV, 1901).

AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ASSYRIANS AT JERUSALEM

Isaiah 7:21–22

²¹And it shall come to pass in that day, that a man shall keep alive a young cow, and two sheep; ²²and it shall come to pass, that because of the abundance of milk which they shall give he shall eat butter: for butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the midst of the land.

In the days of Hezekiah, after the destruction of Sennacherib's army, when there followed great fruitfulness and plenty, (Isaiah 37:30, 31). The righteous survivors of Judah will enjoy miraculous prosperity in their desolate land. God will bless their possessions so that only a few animals, a heifer and two sheep will be sufficient to support a person. The limited number of animals needed to produce an abundance will make so much milk that the people will be able to enjoy the rich tasty cream which is the fat of the milk and discard the whey. Honey too will be very abundant during Hezekiah's reign. The great abundance of milk and honey will make the land seem to flow with milk and honey as described in Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy 31:20

²⁰For when I shall have brought them into the land which I sware unto their fathers, flowing with milk and honey, and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxed fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and despise me, and break my covenant (ASV, 1901).

ALTERNATE VIEW

Since the general discussion is the Assyrians invading it is possible these passages refer to a situation wherein with few men left in Judah it denotes both the scarcity of men and cattle, through

the ravages of the army of the Assyrians; that there will no longer be large herds and flocks, only a single cow, and two or three sheep. Because of the reduced population and families so small, these measures of food would be sufficient to support them. The cow and the two sheep, having large pastures, and few cattle to feed upon them, those few would give such a lot of milk, that the owner of them would make butter from it. They would have no reason to just drink milk. Further, there would be few buyers so *he shall eat butter*; the milk producing a sufficient quantity of it for himself and his family: *for butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the land*; signifying that though they would be few, they would enjoy a plenty of such sort of food as their small flocks and herds would furnish them, and the bees produce.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE LAND

Isaiah 7:23–25

²³And it shall come to pass in that day, that every place, where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings, shall be for briers and thorns. ²⁴With arrows and with bow shall one come thither, because all the land shall be briers and thorns. ²⁵And all the hills that were digged with the mattock, thou shalt not come thither for fear of briers and thorns; but it shall be for the sending forth of oxen, and for the treading of sheep (ASV, 1901).

The devastation of the land will include the fertile vines. The people will abandon and leave those areas which will then become overgrown with thorns and weeds. The abandoned wine region will become filled with wild animals. This will make it unsafe for all except those with armaments to protect themselves against the animals. The land will be unproductive to farm. Into these once carefully cultivated places, no one will not enter. Only the oxen and the sheep will trample them.

A complete change has taken place. Places once cultivated by men are now the trampling grounds of grazing oxen and sheep. The invading foe was successful. The hired razor has shaved clean. The land is desolate. Men are gone, and the oxen and the grazing sheep remain of what had once been the people's useful property.

Next message: THE OVERTHROW OF DAMASCUS & SAMARIA

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