

## A Present Brought To The Lord

It is not certain which land Isaiah is referring to in these verses though it is generally assumed the African nations of Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan are intended. These nations occupied the land of Cush, named after Noah's grandson. The reference to vessels of bulrushes likely supports this theory. Boats of this structure were used on the river Nile and perhaps along the Red Sea coast. The inclusion of these nations shows the broad scope of the prophet's 'burdens' and 'woes'.

### **Scattered and peeled!**

Again, there is a question as to the identity of the people called 'a nation scattered and peeled'. Some identify it as the Cushites, being descriptive of their tall height and shaved bodies. They have a 'terrible' reputation perhaps because they had terrorised neighbouring nations 'from their beginning'. Interestingly, Nimrod, called 'a mighty one in the earth ... a mighty hunter before the Lord', was a son of Cush. His reputation was as a warrior or hunter of men's souls.

### **Under God's rod**

Other writers identify the Jews themselves as the 'nation scattered and peeled'. This is the view we shall take. It may refer to when the cities of Judah, all but Jerusalem, were overrun by the Assyrian army, a tool in God's hand. Assyria came like a mighty river and scattered, then peeled the nation in the sense of spoiling and plundering. Terrible and wonderful things had been the portion of God's people, the Children of Israel, from their beginning.

### **Touch not the apple of His eye**

Although Assyria was defeated by the Lord in a single night, other predators circled humbled and vulnerable Judah hoping to exploit their weakness. Isaiah sounds a warning to all people, to the nations of the world, concerning God's defence of His chosen people. He will raise an ensign on the mountain and sound a trumpet. He will move to cut off any nation who raises a hand against the people whom He cherishes.

### **Perfect timing**

But when? When will the Lord rise to assist His troubled people? Note Christ's words in verse 4, for it is He who speaks to His prophet. The Lord may seem to be at rest; thoughtful and measured, but He is not unaware of His people's need. On the contrary, He is considering how best to bless His children and confound their enemies. Let this comfort you and me. Does the Lord appear to be tarrying when we pray for help? Does sought-for relief seem delayed? The Lord is fully aware of your need. He has the best plan to achieve His purpose of blessing His people and assailing their foes.

### **'I will come to you'**

We may spiritualise this for the church of Christ and apply it to the experience of individual believers. We often feel our enemies in the world, and our own flesh, rise up against us and take advantage of us when we are down, when we feel weakest in spirit and are most humbled before the Lord. Do not think God fails to notice your need or appreciate your urgency. His love for you is greater than any mother's for her child and any husband's for his wife. Our Saviour knows exactly what is best for us. He will come and will not tarry.

### **Christ and His gospel**

God will raise an ensign. He stated this in chapter 11:10, 'a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people'. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Ensign and His gospel trumpet shall call to the nations to gather God's elect into His rest there to enjoy the blessings of sovereign grace and generous goodness. Do you cry, 'How long, Lord?' You shall discover His timing is perfect. It will come, 'afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect, and the sour grape is ripening in the flower'.

### **A perfect present**

And what shall be the outcome? Hear the prophet again. 'In that time shall the present be brought unto the LORD of hosts.' What present is this? The present of the scattered people, the peeled remnant, the Lord's tried, vexed, stretched and trodden-down elect shall come to their rest, they shall take up their blessings, they shall be presented to God.

### **Perfect in Christ**

What a presentation it shall be! We shall be presented as a chaste virgin before Christ; 'holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight'. We shall be 'presented faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy'. Could there be a better prospect for a weary sinner? Could there be a greater comfort to hold fast, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord? May the Lord our God bless us with strength to endure and patience to wait for that glorious day when Christ shall present us 'to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but ... holy and without blemish', 'perfect in Christ Jesus'.

Amen

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