

A Sign Against Egypt and Cush

20 In the year that the commander in chief, who was sent by Sargon the king of Assyria, came to Ashdod and fought against it and captured it—² at that time the LORD spoke by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, “Go, and loose the sackcloth from your waist and take off your sandals from your feet,” and he did so, walking naked and barefoot.

³ Then the LORD said, “As my servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot for three years as a sign and a portent against Egypt and Cush, ⁴ so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptian captives and the Cushite exiles, both the young and the old, naked and barefoot, with buttocks uncovered, the nakedness of Egypt. ⁵ Then they shall be dismayed and ashamed because of Cush their hope and of Egypt their boast. ⁶ And the inhabitants of this coastland will say in that day, ‘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?’”

Fallen, Fallen Is Babylon

21 The oracle concerning the wilderness of the sea.

As whirlwinds in the Negeb sweep on,
it comes from the wilderness,
from a terrible land.

² A stern vision is told to me;
the traitor betrays,
and the destroyer destroys.

Go up, O Elam;
lay siege, O Media;

The chapter is the Epilogue to chapters 18-19. It is set in the year 711 B.C. Ashdod revolted against the Philistines and asked EGYPT for help. Hezekiah, King of Judah considered joining Egypt but listened to ISAIAH's warning against this alliance. His warning was walking around naked for 3 years. In the end Sargon sent his Army who defeated the city and took the citizens captive.

① Sargon only appears here and is otherwise unknown. Sargon sent a general to handle the battle for him. Ashdod was located 5 km from the sea on the way to EGYPT.

② Isaiah is recounting what he was told to do 3 years earlier. His warning preceded the battle. Debatable over exactly how naked he was: covers from wearing underwear like David 1 Sam 6:20 to being totally naked as the disciple in John 21:7. Either way it was a dramatic and highly visible message from God, through Isaiah, of the coming defeat of Ashdod & Egypt BY THE ASSYRIANS.

③-4 Isaiah's sermon illustration lasted 3 years. Comes true in the defeat and capture of the people of Ashdod & Egypt. Here complete nakedness is implied for prophet and captured people.

⑤ Those who hoped in EGYPT as their salvation will be defeated physically and emotionally.

⑥ Judah will realize how right Isaiah was about not trusting Egypt for help. Leaving them wondering if they will be next to fall.

① The rolling desert is seen like a great sea of sand where one can be easily lost. The coming defeat will sweep over them like the wind storms do. There is nothing to stop it from happening. The Medes and the Persians crossed the desert sea like the wind to conquer.

② The nations that will overthrow Babylon are named.

all the sighing she has caused
I bring to an end.

3 Therefore my loins are filled with
anguish;

pangs have seized me,
like the pangs of a woman in labor;

I am bowed down so that I cannot hear;
I am dismayed so that I cannot see.

4 My heart staggers; horror has appalled me;
the twilight I longed for
has been turned for me into trembling.

5 They prepare the table,
they spread the rugs,
they eat, they drink.

Arise, O princes;
oil the shield!

6 For thus the Lord said to me:
"Go, set a watchman;

let him announce what he sees.

7 When he sees riders, horsemen in pairs,
riders on donkeys, riders on camels,
let him listen diligently,
very diligently."

8 Then he who saw cried out:

"Upon a watchtower I stand, O Lord,
continually by day,
and at my post I am stationed
whole nights.

9 And behold, here come riders,
horsemen in pairs!"

③ What Isaiah sees is so horrific like a sick man he bows over as if ready to throw up.

④ Everything is overshadowed by what he sees. Twilight calmness is shattered by what he has seen is coming.

⑤ In contrast the Babylonians have no idea what is coming. Everything continues as always. The call to Arise changes to screw. Suddenly they must prepare for war. (oil the shield!)

⑥ the message from God shows who is in charge. Here is what God sees and God ordains. The watchman is to look ahead in time and show what is coming.

⑦ The approaching army is what the watchman is waiting to see. He will listen to hear the approaching army.

⑧ Those who are paying attention will be ready to warn of the coming army.

⑨ The warning cry will awaken the people, but it will be too late. The army is already arrived. The enemy has appeared.