

Commentary on Isaiah chapters 20, 21, 22 by Chuck Smith 5.24.23

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May memory verse Psalm 119:105 (KJV) Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

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Chapter 20

Now in chapter 20, Isaiah predicts that Assyria is going to waste both Egypt and Ethiopia.

In the year that Tartan ([Isa 20:1](#))

Which is the title which means the commander in chief. Tartan, the commander in chief.

came unto Ashdod ([Isa 20:1](#)),

One of the major cities of the Philistines. It is now a seaport city of Israel.

(when the commander in chief of the forces of Assyria under Sargon) came to Ashdod, and took it; At the same time the LORD spoke by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off your loins, and put your shoes off your feet. And so he did, walking naked and barefoot. And the LORD said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot for three years for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia; So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt. And they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory. And the inhabitant of this isle shall say in that day, Behold, such is our expectation, where can we flee for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria: and how shall we escape? ([Isa 20:1-6](#))

So, it was a sort of a method by which the conquering armies would seek to disgrace the conquered people is by making them march naked. Now it is interesting that God would tell his prophet Isaiah to walk around naked for three years. So that it would be the sign to the people. So Assyria is going to embarrass both Ethiopia and Egypt by conquering them and leading away their captives naked. And their confederacy together is not going to stand. And that is why Isaiah's saying, "Don't make a league with Egypt or don't look to them for help against Assyria. Look to the Lord. If you look to man, if you look to the arm of flesh, you're going to fall anyhow."

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Now the counsel of God is pretty much perennial in that God is encouraging us to look to Him for our help and for our strength and for our defense. Don't look to the arm of flesh. Don't look to the arm of man to help you, because man can fail. The Lord will not fail. And so this was the message of Isaiah unto Judah and to king Hezekiah to trust in the Lord. Don't trust in an alliance and an agreement, because these nations are going to fall to Assyria. You trust in the Lord, the Lord will take care of you. And as we trust in the Lord, we can be sure the Lord will take care of us.

Chapter 21.

Isaiah begins this particular prophecy and addresses it to Babylon which was referred to as, The desert of the sea. As whirlwinds in the south pass ([Isa 21:1](#))

Or in the Negev. We call them sun devils out in Arizona. You've seen those whirlwinds that have been created by the sun out there in the desert and they move along and pick up dust and weeds and trash. "As whirlwinds in the south pass,"

so it cometh from the desert, from an awesome land. A grievous vision is declared unto me; The treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth. Go up, O Elam: besiege, O Media; all the sighing thereof have I made to cease. Therefore are my loins filled with pain ([Isa 21:1-3](#)):

And he speaks of the response upon himself. So interestingly enough, 200 years before the event, when at this point in history, Media was just a small tribe and Persia was known as Elam by its tribal name, before Babylon has even become the first major world empire. While Assyria was in its period of ascendancy historically, he prophesies the destruction of Babylon by a combination of Media and Persia.

Now there is no way, absolutely no way, that any man in that day could foresee the two little tribal provinces of Media and Persia or Elam becoming a major world power that would destroy the tremendous empire of Babylon. This, of course, is just another one of those what we call internal proofs of inspiration. These fulfilled prophecies or these predictions that are made that are so unlikely at the time that they are made and yet was so completely fulfilled.

Now it is interesting the effect that this particular vision had upon Isaiah. And it was interesting that oftentimes when God would speak to a prophet that it would seem to have a physical effect upon him. Sometimes of just great weakness, just sort of a physically draining experience to have that kind of a close relationship with God. God speaking to you, showing you things and the effect would just be physically very draining.

Daniel speaks of how that after a set of visions that the Lord had given to him, how that on his bed his head was just sort of spinning and how he just felt that he was, "My beauty is turned into ugliness" ([Daniel 10:8](#)). And just the presence of God and all, it

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had a very powerful adverse physical effect upon him. And Isaiah here describes that "my loins filled with pain."

pangs have taken hold upon me, the pangs of a woman that travaileth: I was bowed down at the hearing of it; I was dismayed at the seeing of it. My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me: the night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear ([Isa 21:3-4](#)).

And so this is the physical reaction that Isaiah had to seeing this vision of the Medo-Persian Empire conquering the Babylon Empire. He bowed over. He was in pain like a woman that was in labor and his heart panted. He began to have this... of course, he describes it; he was filled with fear, and it had a very adverse physical effect.

Now it is interesting here that he begins to describe a little bit of the circumstances by which Babylon is to be conquered. Now he expands this further in the forty-fourth and forty-fifth chapters of Isaiah, he expands more on the destruction of Babylon, even there naming the conquering king or general. Calling him by name a hundred and fifty years before he's born. Telling how that the very method by which the city would be taken. How that the river Euphrates would be diverted and how that they would come in onto the banks of the river and through the levied gates that would be unlocked. And when we get to that forty-fifth chapter we will again take a little time to show you as you get into the historical record by Xenophon and you take a look at the conquering of Babylon by Cyrus. And it is exactly as Isaiah described a hundred and fifty years before Cyrus was born, naming him, and two hundred years before Babylon fell. Gives you details.

Now here he indicates that it is suddenly in the midst of their revelry. "The night of pleasure he has turned into fear." You remember the night that Babylon fell, Belshazzar was having this great feast with all of his lords. Actually, they were celebrating the invincibility of Babylon. Though the city was encircled by their enemies, because the walls were three hundred feet high, eighty feet thick, they figured that there was no way anybody could conquer Babylon. And thus, it was just sort of a smear to their enemies who were outside and they had this great feast. In that while they were drinking, while they were getting pretty drunk, he ordered the vessels that were taken by his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar in the siege of Jerusalem brought in and they drank the wine out of the vessels of gold and silver that had been sanctified to the service of God in the temple. And they began to praise the gods of gold and silver. And so he describes here, "The night of my pleasure," the banqueting and all, "he has turned into fear."

Prepare the table ([Isa 21:5](#)), The big feast that they had.

watch in the watchtower, eat, drink: arise, ye princes, and anoint your shield ([Isa 21:5](#)).

For suddenly in the midst of the banquet, the cry comes. Now, the anointing of the shield was the greasing of the shields so that the sword would glance off of it. It was harder to pierce through a greased shield. There is more of a tendency of the spear or sword to glance off of a greased shield. So that was the idea of the anointing of the

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shield. But suddenly the cry comes from the watchtower in the midst of the banquet. "Anoint your shields."

For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he sees. And he saw a chariot with a couple of horsemen, a chariot of asses, and a chariot of camels; and he hearkened diligently with much heed: And he cried, A lion: My Lord ([Isa 21:6-8](#)),

Now it is interesting that when Daniel had his vision of the world governing empires and he saw them as beasts, the lion was representative of Babylon. So he cried, "A lion: My Lord,"

I stand continually upon the watchtower in the daytime, and I am set in my ward whole nights: And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground. O my threshing, and the corn of my floor: that which I have heard of the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you ([Isa 21:8-10](#)).

So Isaiah's declaring, "Hey, what I heard from God I've declared unto you. I saw this guy coming and he was crying, 'Babylon is fallen, is fallen!'" Of course, this reminds us over into the book of Revelation when the destruction of spiritual and commercial Babylon takes place. We read of these angels that declare, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen!" That great religious system that caused people to commit spiritual fornication, idolatry, and so forth. And so this one little aspect, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen" has a twofold fulfillment, at the fall at the time of the Medo-Persian invasion, but then also in the future as it is picked up by the angel in Revelation.

In verses 11 and 12 I don't understand the vision that he had. It's concerning Dumah, which is Edom. He calleth to me out of Seir ([Isa 21:11](#)),

Mount Seir, which marked the borders of Edom.

Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning comes, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire: return, come ([Isa 21:11-12](#)).

Now, I frankly don't understand what the watchman was saying. Or the, what he... what was he indicating? I don't know. So I'll just leave it.

Next we get:

The burden on Arabia. In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge, O ye travelling companies of Dedanim ([Isa 21:13](#)).

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Dedan, of course, is one of the tribes. The Dedanim, being plural, would be the peoples of the tribe of Dedan.

Now Saudi Arabia was originally made up of two major tribal families. Those of Sheba and those of Dedan. So when you move into the book of Ezekiel and you read the prophecies in Ezekiel of the coming invasion of Israel by Russia with her allies, it is important to note that though Iran does come with Russia in the invasion of Israel, Saudi Arabia does not.

So evidently, you know, right now... and to me this is very important, because one of the major concerns of our government today is the oil supply that comes to the United States from Saudi Arabia. We are dependent upon those oil supplies for our whole industry, economy and everything else. And so there's quite a bit to do right now in government circles on how much aid, military aid, we should give to Saudi Arabia. The F-15, shall we equip them? You know. Two thousand tow missiles for antitank missiles and so forth. And everytime we speak of aiding Saudi Arabia, Israel begins to lobby, because Israel is fearful that these weapons that we are giving to Saudi Arabia could very well be used against Israel. And thus, they seek to lobby against any aid that we might be giving to Saudi Arabia.

But there is concern, great concern, that Russia may seek to move into Saudi Arabia to take those oil supplies and thus to cut us off from our much-needed oil that we get from Saudi Arabia. Obviously, Russia does not take Saudi Arabia because Saudi Arabia is not. In fact, they are listed as not being with Russia in Russia's invasion of Israel. And so Israel really doesn't need to worry about an invasion from Saudi Arabia from the scriptures.

In fact, Saudi Arabia is listed with those nations, of which the United States is perhaps one, because it speaks of the "merchants of Tarsus" which are thought to be England, and "the young lions thereof" ([Ezekiel 38:13](#)). Now the United States could conceivably be a young lion from England. Break off from England and one of the young lions. Canada, Australia. They say unto Russia, "What are you doing invading this little land of Israel? That isn't fair. That isn't right." But Saudi Arabia joins with the objection with the United States and with England and the break off nations of England.

So as we look at the major decisions that are being made today in the State Department and in our government that are dealing with these very issues and these very nations that have been predicted in the Bible, having a biblical background helps tremendously. I am really excited over the number of military officers that are now beginning to look to the Bible as sort of a guideline for these days. Somehow they've gotten hold of a lot of my tapes that deal with these subjects of the Middle East and so forth. They've been listening to them and they have been actually using the Word of God as sort of a guideline. I was told of this one commander in the Navy who used to just have no time for God, no time for the Bible. I mean, it's just so much stuff that he didn't need to get involved with and was very antagonistic. But got hold of a tape and God got hold of his heart and they said that on his desk there's always an open Bible. And as he's going

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over the plans and so forth and developing strategies, he's always looking now to the Bible and seeking guidance from the Bible. And this was shared by another military officer who is in a Bible study with him and there in Hawaii. There's just a big bunch of military officers that get together and study the Word of God now and are looking to the Bible as a guideline for these days. And that's very wise, because surely God has set things out.

He said to Amos, "I won't do anything unless I tell my prophets in advance" ([Amos 3:7](#)). And God has told us in advance of the situations that would be existing today. So if Israel would read the Bible, they would realize they have no fears of Saudi Arabia. Because Saudi Arabia will take up their part when Russia invades. Russia's the thing that they need to be concerned about, not Saudi Arabia. Iran, yes.

Now at this particular time, Israel is not so worried about Iran. In fact, people have wondered how Iran was able to keep these phantom jets going. Because when they kicked out the United States they didn't have any more spare parts. And with this hostage situation and all, they... Iraq was surprised that Iran, they thought that Iran would crumble. That they would soon no longer be able to fly the phantoms because they didn't have the technicians to keep them in repair. They didn't have the spare parts to repair them and they figured the Iranian Air Force would be put out of commission very quickly and that they would then be able to just control the whole scene. What is happening, and what most people don't know, what is happening is that Israel is repairing them. They're flying these jets to Israel. Israel is repairing all these phantoms for them.

So there is an underground kind of an alliance still between Iran. Israel feels a debt to Iran because during all of the oil crises and so forth, they supplied Israel with all of their oil needs. Now Israel is trading off the repair of the jets and all for oil needs and all. But Israel is keeping the Iranian Air Force going. And some of the Israeli officers were sharing that with me when we were over in Israel this last time, how that they're flying these jets in and out from Iran almost everyday and they're keeping them. And that's the big surprise of the war is how the Iranian Air Force could keep going. And that's how they're doing it. And I trust I'm not revealing any great military secrets and get in trouble for it. But that's what's happening.

Now Israel, though still underground, is friendly toward Iran. If they would only read the Bible, they would realize that Iran is the one to watch, not Saudi Arabia. That in the end, when the conflict comes, Saudi Arabia will join in the protest-not in the fighting-just in the protest of Russia's invasion of Israel. So the fact that these things are all moving in that direction right now makes, of course, the Bible extremely relevant to our own world in which we live and the current decisions that are being made by the State Department and all of those guys that deal with world strategy. How much support shall we give to Saudi Arabia and all of this. And yet the Bible lays out the whole story of the future.

Now this burden that he has for Dedanim, one of the tribes of Arabia.

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The inhabitants of the land of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty, they prevented with their bread him that fled. For they fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war ([Isa 21:14-15](#)).

Now this prophecy of Isaiah had an immediate fulfillment.

For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Within a year, according to the years of a hireling, and all the glory of Kedar shall fail: And the residue of the number of archers, the mighty men of the children of Kedar, shall be diminished: for the LORD God of Israel hath spoken it ([Isa 21:16-17](#)).

Within a year Sargon in 716 B.C. conquered Saudi Arabia. So that prophecy could be checked off as one that was fulfilled.

Chapter 22

Now in chapter 22 he turns his attention to Jerusalem, which is referred to as the valley of vision. And this is,

The burden of the valley of vision. What aileth thee now, that you've gone up to the housetops? That you are full of stirs, a tumultuous city, a joyous city: thy slain men are not slain with the sword, nor dead in battle. All thy rulers are fled together, they are bound by the archers: all that are found in thee are bound together, which have fled from far. Therefore said I, Look away from me; I will weep bitterly, labor not to comfort me, because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people ([Isa 22:1-4](#)).

And so he sees them not being slain with the sword. And in seeing their destruction, he weeps. He said, "Don't try to comfort me, because I'm weeping for the spoiling of the daughter of my people."

For it is a day of trouble, a day of treading down, and of perplexity by the Lord GOD of hosts in the valley of vision, breaking down the walls, and of crying to the mountains. And Elam bare the quiver with chariots of men and horsemen, and Kir uncovered the shield. And it shall come to pass, that your choicest valleys shall be full of chariots, and the horsemen shall set themselves in array at the gate. And he discovered the covering of Judah, and thou didst look in that day to the armor of the house of the forest. You have seen also the breaches of the city of David, that they are many: and you have gathered together the waters of the lower pool. And you have numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses have you broken down to fortify the wall ([Isa 22:5-10](#)).

Now he is speaking of the preparations that were going on at that moment in Jerusalem in preparing themselves for the threatened invasion by Assyria, which had destroyed the Northern Kingdom, and now Assyria was threatening to come with her armies to destroy Jerusalem. And so Hezekiah the king was making these precautions. First of all, he dug this tunnel some 1,700 feet from the spring of Gihon into the pool of Siloam. Coming under the wall of the city under the area of Ephal there, the old city that... Ephal

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that came up from the spring of Gihon. And through this rock they dug this tunnel 1,700 feet long because the spring of Gihon has a good head of water that flows through it constantly. And that was one of the major supplies for water in Jerusalem. It happened to be outside of the wall because it was down in the Kidron Valley at the base of Ophel there. And so what they did was dig the tunnel and then they covered over the spring so that the Assyrians would not know the source of the supply of their water. And so they diverted it through this tunnel. Brought it into the pool of Siloam within the gates so that they would have a water supply during the siege of the Assyrians.

And then they took some of the houses and they broke them down to fortify the breaches that were in the walls that were surrounding Jerusalem. And they were just fortifying the city and preparing the city for this coming invasion by Assyria.

You've made a ditch between the two walls for the water of the old pool ([Isa 22:11](#)):

And they have done all of these things, but-and this is what the prophet is getting on to their case about. You've done all, fortified the walls, you've dug the pool... the tunnel for the water and so forth,

but you have not looked unto the maker thereof, neither had you respect for him that fashioned it ([Isa 22:11](#)).

In other words, who created the spring of Gihon? Who put the source of water there? You tried to fortify yourself with your own ingenuity, but you haven't really looked to God for your help or for your guidance or for your protection or for your strength.

This is a mistake I think that we oftentimes make, is that we are doing everything in the natural, but we're not doing anything in the supernatural. We're not looking to God. We're not looking for God's strength or God's guidance or God's help. A lot of people today that are doing all kinds of things in storing up foods and trying to prepare themselves for a coming desolation that they envision, and they're not really looking to God. They're not really turning to God for guidance, for help. They're not really trusting in the Lord. They're trusting in their own capacities. And so the prophet finds fault with them for not looking to God.

In that day did the Lord GOD of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth ([Isa 22:12](#)):

Now the baldness was the shaving of their heads as a vow unto God. And God was calling them for a consecration and a commitment unto Him. Now God had said, "If My people, called by My name, will humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, then will I hear from heaven" ([II Chronicles 7:14](#)). But rather than humbling themselves and praying and seeking God, they were taking every natural precaution that they could, but not taking God into account at all. Now God does expect us to use wisdom and to take natural precautions. But He also wants us to look to Him and to trust in Him. And when God is calling us to times of fasting and prayer and waiting upon Him, then it is

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manifestly wrong that we seek our own resources for our deliverance. And so when they should be weeping and mourning, girding themselves with sackcloth, they were having parties.

There was the slaying of the oxen, the killing of sheep, the eating of flesh, the drinking of wine: [and they were saying] let us eat, drink [and be merry]; because tomorrow we're going to die ([Isa 22:13](#)).

Reminds us of the world in which we live today that is faced with one of the greatest crisis in the history of mankind as the superpowers are girding themselves for war. As the United States is diverting more and more of our budget towards a military posture in order that we might counteract the tremendous military build-up by Russia and the military superiority that she has gained. And the superpowers are girding for a super war. And we look around at the scene in America when God is calling for weeping, God is calling for prayer, God is calling for sackcloth. We see the people just blithely going on seeking pleasure, leaving God out of their lives, and it seems to be the attitude, "Eat, drink and be merry, tomorrow we die." And so the prophet comes out against this.

And it was revealed in mine ears by the LORD of hosts, Surely this iniquity will not be purged until you die ([Isa 22:14](#)),

There's no cleansing for it. The course is set. The die is cast. They won't change until the judgment comes.

saith the Lord GOD of hosts ([Isa 22:15](#)). What a terrible, awesome indictment.

Thus saith the Lord God of hosts, Go, get thee unto this treasurer, even unto Shebna, which is over the house, and say, What do you have here and who do you have here, that you have hewed thee out a sepulchre here, as he that heweth him out a sepulchre on high, and he that graveth a habitation for himself in a rock? Behold, the LORD will carry thee away with a mighty captivity, and will cover thee ([Isa 22:15-17](#)).

Now while all this is going on, here this guy who was the treasurer of the nation was building himself out of the rock a beautiful sepulcher. If you go to Israel in the Kidron Valley you'll see some beautiful sepulchers that were hewn out of the rock there in the Kidron Valley. And this guy was cutting him out one of these fancy sepulchers for himself. And the prophet Isaiah says, "Hey, why are you making yourself a fancy sepulcher here in the land as though you're going to get buried here? You're going to get carried away captive and they're going to cover you someplace else."

You know, people laying up their plans for the future. God's going to interrupt your plans.

He will surely violently turn and toss thee like a ball into a large country: there you are going to die, and there the chariots of your glory shall be the shame of the lord's house. And I will drive thee from your station, and from your state shall he pull thee down. And

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it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah: And I will clothe him with your robe, and strengthen him with your girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah ([Isa 22:18-21](#)).

Now Shebna was the treasurer, but Eliakim was also one of Hezekiah's counselors. They were both men of state. And later when the Rabshakeh who is one of the spokesmen for king Sennacherib of Assyria, when he came to bring the... not an edict, but a demand for surrender from king Hezekiah, Eliakim and Shebna were two of the men that dealt in the matters of state. Now, Eliakim evidently was God's choice. Shebna was a foreigner who was usurping a place there, trying to build himself a big tomb to be buried in and all. He said, "You're going to be carried away and buried elsewhere in a large land," and all.

Now in this the two men, Shebna and Eliakim, you have one of these cases where you have a prophecy that is veiled in the near fulfillment and in the far fulfillment. He was dealing with a particular situation. These two men were at that time men of state in Israel. And Shebna was to lose his position and Eliakim was moved in--God's choice.

And the key of the house of David will I lay on his shoulder ([Isa 22:22](#));

That is Eliakim.

and he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house ([Isa 22:22-23](#)).

And so a little light of future burst in and then he comes back to the local situation.

And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons. In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off: for the LORD hath spoken it ([Isa 22:24-25](#)).