

GOD WILL HUMILIATE AND HUMBLE EGYPT AND CUSH!

Isaiah 19:16-25 (Focus 20:1-6)

Facilitator, Rev. Alice Tamrie

I. Historical Background & Biblical Context

A. Historical Background

We were richly rewarded with the summary and lesson by Facilitator Stephanie Wyche. We were empowered to see how God communicated His judgment and redemptive plan for all nations. Out of this came the perspective as given by Isaiah the Prophet which led to the internal conflict, foolish leadership, economic disaster and weak leaders. This is tragic but it also leads to restoration and redemption. God's traits are so evident when trying to teach us obedience. This leads to redemption, hope, restoration, repentance and a relationship which is transformative no matter how far we stray from him. There is hope.

B. Biblical Context

Our focus today is on the very topic of humiliation and humbleness on the scripture of Isaiah 20:1-6. Let's define these two words first. **Humble** is being free from pride or being vain; unassuming; a low estate, unpretentious – on the other hand, it can mean one that is respectful, meek; to lower in rank or dignity. **Humiliation** means to lower the pride or self-esteem; to be subject to feelings of inferiority – a modest sense of one's own merit; an act of submission or deference.

On a godly measuring scale, we need to see this from God's perspective. God always gives His people warning-He wants us to be obedient to His sayings as given by His prophet Isaiah as I (God) am going expose you. Have I not spoken to you through prophetic utterings – trust in me. I have heard your crying out in prayer because of the enemies, your oppressors-have I not healed you from head to toe in the past? I will bless everyone; I am the Lord of Hosts. We as a people forget God's promises, experience the punishments, and yet God continues to heal us of his love. Reconciliation is God's the ultimate goal. Punishment is used to effect reconciliation, and he makes it accessible to us for his sake.

II. **The Lesson: “God will Humiliate and Humble Egypt and Cush!”**

In these powerful six verses God again demonstrates his sovereign grace. The Lord’s will is to convince all believers in His kingdom be part of the salvation plan. This is where peace and prosperity will abound, and all the world sees, marvel and be taught his way. Proper worship and the centrality of godly law is the characteristic of this kingdom. This aspect of the kingdom is still on-going and God-Yahweh, the Redeemer will get the glory! Oracle after oracle against the nations (chapters 13-20) are properly placed here as demonstration of His sovereign control. These are neither incidental nor isolated. Israel was to trust Yahweh because he was in control over all that transpired politically or in any other realm. Amen, so it is for us to be reminded. All of this is not for the sake of all the nations, but rather to be given a sense of the transcendent power of God.

1. **Verses 1-2: The Burden of Egypt and Ethiopia (sign of Isaiah)**

Isaiah is the Messenger Prophet and the Servant of God who is instrumental in fulfilling God’s plan vocally and verbally. He is the instrument in God’s program of deliverance in the Old Testament. This is true of Jesus’ being the instrument in the New Testament. This shows the holiness of God and the seriousness of Israel’s offenses against Him.

The Lord spoke to Tartan, the Commander in Chief and said “Take the rough cloth (loose the sack) off your body, and take your sandals off your feet”. The purpose of this chapter is to warn Israel not to depend upon Egypt and Ethiopia for assistance against the king of Assyria, but to trust in God as the only source of help! Assyria had already conquered Syria and Ephraim and had taken Philistia, so it time now to come against Judah. Tartan was one of the generals of Assyria.

The escape was Jehovah God! Isaiah took off his clothes and shoes and walked naked and barefoot as a demonstration.

2. **Verses 3-6: Prediction by Isaiah**

And the Lord said ... “ like as my servant, Isaiah has walked naked and barefooted for three years for a sign and wonder, as a warning sign to Egypt and Ethiopia, so the king of Assyria is going to come and take the Egyptians as captives and the Ethiopians(Cush) as exiles. He’ll take the

old people and young alike and march them out of there naked and barefooted, exposed to mockery and jeers – the bared buttocks of Egypt on parade! This is not literal, but figurative. They will be like prisoners; they will be shamed (vs. 5). People who live near by (the coastline) will say, 'Look at those countries. We trusted them to help us. We ran to them, so they would save us from the king of Assyria. Now, what's going to happen to us? How are we going to get out of this?'

III. Conclusion

God made Isaiah a sign and a wonder to his people by his walking among them for 3 years naked and barefooted (v 2-3). He was not nude; he (God) simply laid aside his peculiar prophetic garment, his outer robe, as Saul did (1 Sam 19:24), and David who was naked but still had on a linen ephod (2 Sam. 6:14—21). These kings merely took off their royal robes, just as Peter put off his outer garment so that he could fish (Jn. 21:7). Isaiah's outer robe was evidently sackcloth of course goat hair, for the prophets wore rough clothing as their prophetic garments. False prophets were forbidden to wear rough garments to deceive (Zech. 13:4).

The Challenge to us (Use Preacher's robe as demonstration)

Though this was a figurative metaphor; the challenge is for us to see the Word of God being expressed by his Servant, Isaiah. This is a rare instance of narrative describing an acted-out prophetic sign. The sign was either meant as a warning about what might happen. Is not this fair warning to us to hear and heed these warnings so you be shamed -humiliated, embarrassed for being disobedient to the ways and means of his commandments, precepts, judgments? God uses his servants that proclaim the Word of God in a visible way so we can get the word clearly. These are definitive messages so that we can be restored, repentant and refreshed in our lifestyle. God does not want us to 'naked' and 'shamed' into being exposed – as these are fair warnings.

This study and conclusion are about God and His grace that moves us towards a more peaceful and liberating life. The oracles of judgment, prophecies, and proclamation from Isaiah 1-20 to this point is to empower the people of God to cease being rebellious, obstinate, revolting, arrogance and oppressed people and move from these shameful attitudes and

dispositions to that of being holy. It is God's desire in the Book of Isaiah to be a repentant remnant (10:20ff).

The chapters are historically and biblically giving us glimpses of speaking truth to power. In the interactions between the nations, it has an overarching unity as it is shaping interconnections within its major prophetic core. This is what the preacher/prophetic does for the kingdom of God in the church at-large giving us characteristic traits. God's wicked and disobedient children are to treat this Almighty and Most Holy God with reverence or be disciplined so harshly that it is like us being exposed naked.

God is removing the props that we depend upon – the external things on which we depend. The reason? He wants His people to trust Him. When these props are removed from us, what we are really rooted and grounded in shows where your support system is. For us to grow and mature, we must put our security in him. Wrong sin cannot be tolerated, it must be dealt with, for God forgives. He is in the business of restoration and redemption.

This Book is not soft, folks! It prophetically points us to Jesus and gives the people of God clear hope for salvation. This book is loaded with comfort, inspiration and variety. It speaks of God's love for us, reminds us that He redeems and restores us, encourages us to trust Him, and promises that He will guide us.

God's message is clear – it's a warning to Israel of impending judgment for persisting in sin, and to reveal the final dealings of God in complete restoration. Pray and turn to God for your healing, serve the Lord. It is also a warning to us as a people of God. Get right, get right with God! Only trust Him! Apply and abide in Him now, it is God's plan of salvation for all to be saved!