

Series: Isaiah

Lesson # 36

Title: The Wings of our Salvation

Scripture: Isaiah 17: 12-17; 18: 1-7

Date: 8-16-09

Place: Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Princeton, New Jersey

How refreshing it is to my soul to find that all God's messengers have always had only one message! The gospel message is that which the angel of the LORD taught Zerubbabel. God's salvation not by the might or power of sinners, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. (Zeh 4: 6.) This is the message that Isaiah sets forth over and over. It is the message I endeavor to declare to you week after week.

Isaiah 17: 12: Woe to the multitude of many people, *which* make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, *that* make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters!

Isaiah speaks particularly of the Assyrian army. As they conquered nations they enlisted men to fight for them and thus the Assyrian enemy became a multitude of many people. They spoke loudly and carried a big stick. The prophet compares their boasting to the noise of the ocean and their swiftness to the rushing of a mighty waters. The king of Assyria sent his messengers to Judah and this was his great boast:

2 Kings 18: 19: Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence *is* this wherein thou trustest? 20: Thou sayest, (but *they are but* vain words,) *I have* counsel and strength for the war. Now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me?

Isaiah 17: 13: The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but *God* shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind. 14: And behold at eveningtide trouble; *and* before the morning he *is* not.

Though Assyria may be the nation whose destruction Isaiah declared, the end of verse 14 tells us that this word speaks of far more than just any one nation.

Isaiah 17: 14: This *is* the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us.

Proposal: The Lord of heaven and earth overrules all the schemes and plans of men to bring his elect remnant to behold we are nothing and can do nothing to save ourselves. Thus he brings each one to bow to him, to sanctify him in our hearts and to worship him who alone is the salvation of his people.

Isaiah 18: 1: Woe to the land shadowing with wings, which *is* beyond the rivers of Ethiopia: 2: That sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, *saying*, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled!

God's Elect Among the Gentiles

It is difficult to know exactly to whom this word refers. Some say Ethiopia some say Egypt. It seems to have more to do with Ethiopia in this chapter and Egypt in the next. The description of the people as "scattered" means "tall, strong, drawn out." This word "peeled" means "polished and smooth." This description does fit the Ethiopian who was tall and whose skin was black and appeared polished and smooth.

But Ethiopia and Egypt are often used to represent God's elect from among all the Gentile nations. If we would hear the gospel message in this chapter we need to realize that those spoken of here are an elect, Gentile remnant from among many nations.

The land shadowing with wings

Ethiopia had come to the defense of Judah during the time when the Assyrian's threatened Judah. In Isaiah 37: 9 we find that the king of Assyria was told that

"...Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, He is come forth to make war with thee."

In the context of the passage this phrase "the land shadowing with wings" seems to have more to do with their imagining they would be the salvation of Judah by the strength of their own hand. They are described as a confident nation, a nation who was able to mete and trod down their enemies. So this word "peeled" also means "obstinate, or independent."

Scripture describes the safety we have of our Lord as the believer being under his wings.

Psalm 17: 8: Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings, 9: From the wicked that oppress me, *from* my deadly enemies, *who* compass me about.

Psalm 36: 7: How excellent *is* thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.

Psalm 57:1: <<To the chief Musician, Altaschith, Michtam of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave.>> Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until *these* calamities be overpast.

So the gospel which Isaiah declares is: "Ho! Take heed, you who imagine that salvation is under your wings." Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, to a people

terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled!

This foreign nation sent ambassadors to Judah to instruct Judah to put their trust in them but Isaiah says for these ambassadors to go back to their own people as ambassadors of the Lord. He sends them with the gospel message that salvation is of the Lord, not by the power of nations or the strength of our own hand but of the LORD.

Listen to our Lord Jesus Christ:

Isaiah 49: 1: Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. 2: And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me; 3: And said unto me, Thou *art* my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified....6: And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

The use of nations

We have seen time and again through Isaiah that the LORD used whole nations to declare what he would accomplish in his Son at Calvary's cross.

The LORD gathered the Assyrian army on the mountains surrounding Judah like as the enemies of our Lord surrounded him on the cross. In both cases it was the LORD who lifted up the ensign.

Isaiah 18: 3: All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye.

Concerning the enemies who came upon Judah we saw in:

Isaiah 5:26: And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly:

Concerning our Lord Jesus Christ:

Acts 4:26: The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. 27: For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, 28: For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

Isaiah 14: 4: For so the LORD said unto me, I will take my rest, and I will consider in my dwelling place like a clear heat upon herbs, *and* like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest.

The LORD Jehovah says, "I will *calmly look on* and not interpose, while all seems to promise success to the enemy"

As the Assyrians came upon Judah, the LORD rested because they were doing exactly what the LORD's hand and his counsel determined before to be done. What was that? The whole matter between Assyria and Judah was to set forth the glory of his Son. There is but one reason that the Assyrian army could not destroy the children of Judah, do you remember why?

Isaiah 7: 14: Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

So it was at Calvary, as the LORD gathered the enemy round about to do whatsoever his hand and his council had determined before to be done. All seemed to promise success to the enemy as the serpent bruised the heel of the Woman's Seed.

But the LORD Jehovah says in all this, "I will take my rest"--my peace, my quietness, my satisfaction. "And I will consider"--behold, look upon, show regard to. "My set dwelling place"--my fixed, established place, my foundation. "Like a clear heat upon herbs"--like a glowing heat, like a dazzling heat, like a shining heat. "Like a cloud of dew"--a thick covering--"in the heat of harvest."

Christ Jesus the Son of God is the one in whom the LORD Jehovah rests all his purpose of glorifying his name and his purpose of grace toward his people. Christ Jesus is the set dwelling place, the foundation, whom the LORD Jehovah considers, regards, beholds. On Calvary's cross on the Son of his love the shining, dazzling glory of his righteousness shined forth like a clear heat upon herbs when his wrath covered our Substitute like a cloud so that his righteousness might cover us like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest.

How the heathen did rage! How the people did imagine a vain thing! The kings of the mighty nations did set themselves and the rulers took counsel together against the LORD and against his anointed, saying let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

Psalm 2: 4: He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. 5: Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.

Isaiah 18: 5: For afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect, and the sour grape is ripening in the flower, he shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks, and take away *and* cut down the branches. 6: They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth: and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them.

In that hour in which the enemy thought they had gained the victory what did our LORD do?

Isa 17: 13: The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but *God* shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind. 14: And behold at eveningtide trouble; *and* before the morning he *is* not.

Do you recall how the Assyrian army was defeated?

2 King 19:35: And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they *were* all dead corpses.

Ethiopia did not do it. Egypt did not do it. The angel of the LORD did it. So it with our victory, the Angel of the LORD, the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ won the victory.

I Corinthians 15: 55: O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory? 56: The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law. 57: But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 51: 5: My righteousness *is* near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust.

The LORD says here, "All..shall see when he lifts up the ensign." All shall hear when he blows the trumpet. Everybody without exception? No, those chosen and redeemed by the blood of Christ.

Example: Ethiopian Eunuch

Philip arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,...Philip preached Jesus Christ to him and the Ethiopian said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" Philip baptized him.

Acts 8: 39: And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. In whom?

Read the last verse of our text:

Isaiah 18: 7: In that time shall the present be brought unto the LORD of hosts of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, the mount Zion.

Sovereign electing grace brings his redeemed from scattered in all the nations:

Isaiah 11:11: And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.

Zechariah 3:9: For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent. 10: From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, *even* the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering.

What is this present that they will bring?

Isaiah 66: 20: And they shall bring all your brethren *for* an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD. 21: And I will also take of them for priests *and* for Levites, saith the LORD.

Romans 10: 1: I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.

Where is this place they will come to? To the place of the name of the LORD

Isaiah 11:10: And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

Psalms 68: 31: Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.

Isaiah 60:9: Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the LORD thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee.

Illustration: We sat on our back deck speaking of politics and the problems between nations and in our nation. So did the believers in Isaiah's day but they always came to the same conclusion--salvation is of the Lord.