

Christ Come Down To Fight

The big criticism Isaiah had of the people referred to in this prophecy is that they failed to look to the Lord for help in time of trouble. Instead, they sought support from their southern neighbours, the Egyptians. After all their history it is perverse to think of Israel seeking help from Egypt, but here it is. From the earliest days of the nation, from the time of Jacob, Joseph and Moses, God had proved Himself faithful by saving Israel from Egypt. Now, as danger looms, the first thought of materialists is, 'who has most horses and the fastest chariots?'

Woe repeated

This is the second time a specific 'woe' is imposed on the men of Judah who go down to Egypt for help. The Lord noted this lack of faith and Isaiah contrasts the foolishness of forsaking the Lord and trusting in flesh. For judgment God will bring calamity on both parties, the help-seekers and the help-givers. For this slight against God's glory He will rise against both nations. The Egyptians and the people of Judah shall both fall at different times to show the futility of leaning upon the strength of man.

Let the church take note

There is an important lesson here. The church of Jesus Christ has no right to make alliances with unbelievers for political gain, protection of rights or even for self-preservation. It is an insult against the Lord when the church gets involved in politics, aligns with pressure-groups or lobbies for change. Even if a few little wins are gained along the way the battle already has been lost because God is denied, faith is compromised and the enemies of God's people are empowered.

The Lord speaks and acts

Isaiah brings a word from the Lord. 'Thus hath the Lord spoken to me.' How blessed we are to hear the Lord's word to our soul! It was a message of deliverance and hope for the people of faith. They would endure when the houses of the faithless failed. The Lord would descend personally and powerfully to aid His people, coming boldly and resolutely as a young lion guarding its prey. He will come quickly, as birds fly, hastening to protect their young when danger threatens. The precision of Isaiah's prophecy is strengthened by reference to the Assyrian falling before a sword wielded not by a man but by the angel of the Lord.

The Assyrians are broken

The prophecy was miraculously fulfilled when the Assyrian army was defeated in a single night in the days of Hezekiah, entirely without Egypt's involvement. '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 (2Ki 19:35). We learn further that Sennacherib was compelled to flee for his life and return home to Nineveh only to be slain in his temple by his own sons.

Christ's victory

Isaiah's prophecy had specific application to Assyria but it has broader significance for all God's elect. It is a picture of the certainty and speed of the Lord Jesus Christ's coming to defend and preserve His remnant people and destroy their enemies. When the future looked bleak for the remnant Jews Isaiah reinforced the message of the Messiah. The prophecy's greatest fulfilment is in Christ. The Lord Jesus contended for us in the days of His ministry. He battled and overcame His enemies on the cross. By His death and resurrection He delivered His chosen people from the captivity of sin.

A call to repentance and faith

Isaiah used this prophecy to call the nation to repentance. Mention of Israel reminded the remnant people of the history of Jacob's faith and God's covenant promises. During Hezekiah's reign the people did indeed return to the Lord and cast away their idols of silver and gold, but again, it is typical of the gospel day when Jews and Gentiles find repentance, faith and conversion in Jesus Christ.

Right up to date

The Lord continues to accomplish His purposes today. As long as this day of grace and God's longsuffering remains, men and women are called in the gospel to repent of sin and turn to Christ. This call is effectually applied according to God's sovereign purpose. Isaiah tells us, 'In that day every man ... shall cast away his ... sin'. This happens when a sinner casts their sins upon Christ who bears them all away and when the gospel comes with quickening power to cleanse and save. Christ still comes down to save His people.

Amen

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