

(The Word for Today) Isaiah 18:1 - Part 1

by Chuck Smith

The sermon discusses the prophecy against Ethiopia and Egypt, highlighting the destruction of the Assyrian forces and the consequences of the Aswan Dam.

Duration: 25:59

Scripture: Isaiah 18:1, Matthew 16:24, Romans 12:2, Ephesians 6:10

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Chuck Smith emphasizes the importance of standing up for righteousness in a fallen world. He encourages young adults to abstain from the immorality of the culture and to boldly proclaim their faith in Jesus Christ. Pastor Chuck draws inspiration from the biblical story of Daniel, who took a stand for righteousness even in the face of potential death. He urges listeners to listen to God's call, deny themselves, and follow Jesus, resisting the corrupting forces of the world. The sermon concludes with a prayer for strength to stand against the darkness in the world.

Transcript

Welcome to The Word for Today. The Word for Today is a continuous study of the Bible taught by Pastor Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, California. Pastor Chuck is currently teaching from the Old Testament.

And for those of you following along in your Bibles, we'll be continuing today in Isaiah chapter 18, beginning with verse 1, as we continue with an in-depth message entitled, The Prophecies Against Ethiopia. 1. One thing is needful, O my Father, 1. One thing is needful, O my God, 2. That I sit at your feet and pour out my love. This thing is needful, O my God.

And now with today's study, here's Pastor Chuck. In prophecy of Scripture, there oftentimes was a near-immediate kind of situation that was being addressed. But in a secondary sense, there was a prophetic foreview of the yet future.

And so many of the prophecies have what we refer to as the dual fulfillment, that which would be happening in the immediate and that which would be happening in the future. Now as far as the immediate and the prophecies of Isaiah, in the immediate situation at this period of history, Assyria was the world-dominating power. It was during the time that Isaiah was prophesying that the Assyrians conquered over the northern kingdom of Israel.

They had also conquered and moved their troops on down through and into Saudi Arabia through Moab. They had gone into Egypt and they had conquered Egypt. They had conquered Babylon.

It was the dominant world empire of Isaiah's day. They were going to try to take Judah, but Isaiah kept encouraging Hezekiah to just trust in the Lord that the Lord would deliver them from the Assyrians. And as we will read, the Lord did deliver them from the Assyrians.

For as the Assyrians were camped on Mount Scopus besieging the city of Jerusalem, the angel of the Lord in one night killed 185,000 of the Assyrian troops camped on Mount Scopus. Now this 18th chapter has to do with that particular event and the reaction of the Ethiopians to that event. And so the 18th chapter is addressed to the Ethiopians and it deals with their response and their reaction to Judah when it was through the work of the Lord that in the siege of Jerusalem there in Judah, the Assyrians were wiped out.

And so that's your historic background to this particular prophecy. There are those who have tried to force the text and make this refer to the United States, but that is poor biblical exposition at its best. It just is a forcing of the text and I believe that you don't have to force a text to get the proper meaning.

If God didn't mean what he said, he would have said what he meant. And I believe that he did. And you don't have to force an interpretation into a text.

So this is calling to the land, says shadowing with wings in the King James. The new King James has buzzing with wings, which is a more correct translation. The idea of buzzing wings, Ethiopia with its jungles, and of course, teeming with the flies and all.

There was that constant buzzing of wings in Ethiopia. So it's addressed to the land that is buzzing with wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia. Of course, the Nile River coming through and many of the tributaries coming out of Ethiopia into the Nile.

That sends its ambassadors by the sea, and that is a reference really to the Nile River. The ambassadors coming from Ethiopia into Egypt, even in vessels of bulrushes. And that's why we say the sea referred to is that of the Nile, because the Ethiopians did come down the Nile in those boats made of bulrushes, but those boats are not seaworthy.

It could not refer to the Red Sea nor to the Mediterranean because those vessels of bulrushes were just not seaworthy for that, but they did come on down the Nile. And they say, ye swift messengers to a nation that is scattered and peeled. Now the word scattered literally is stretched out.

And in this sense, it is stretched out this way because the interpretation is tall. The Ethiopians were very tall people and the word peeled is better translated sleek. And so the Ethiopians were tall and they were very sleek.

And it's a reference to their sleek bodies and their tall stature. And so this nation that is tall and sleek to a people who are awesome from their beginning hitherto, a nation that is meted out and trodden down whose lands the rivers have cut through. And so the rivers that feed the Nile cut deep canyons through Ethiopia.

They brought that muddy silt on into the Nile and the Nile up until the building of the Aswan Dam was always a very muddy, muddy river. Much like the Colorado River above Boulder Dam. It's just, just a

muddy, muddy river.

And you can pick up a handful of the Colorado River water there in the Grand Canyon, the bottom of the canyon. You can't even see the bottom of your hand. It's so muddy.

And thus was the Nile River as these tributaries that of Ethiopia that fed it cut through the rich soil and carried the soil into the Nile and on out to the Mediterranean Sea. So a land that the rivers have cut through. And now he turns from them to all the inhabitants of the world and the dwellers on the earth.

See ye when he lifts up a signal on the mountains and when they blow the trumpet here. For so the Lord said unto me, I will take my rest and I will consider my dwelling place like a clear heat upon the herbs and like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest. For before the harvest, when the bud is perfecting and the sour grape is ripening in the flower, he shall cut off both the sprigs with pruning hooks and take away and cut down the branches." Now this is a reference to God's destruction of the Assyrian forces.

And it will take place before summer actually. While the grapes are still sour, still being formed, God is going to cut off the Assyrians. And they shall be left together under the fowls, the army of the Assyrians.

Of course, what a feast for the birds, 185,000 carcasses lying out there in the hillside. And so for the wild animals and the beasts of the earth, they will summer and winter on them. Actually, they'll provide food for the animals through the summer and on into the winter time.

In that time shall the present be brought unto the Lord of hosts from the people that are tall and sleek, from the people who were awesome from their beginning up until now. A nation that has been meted out and trodden under foot, whose lands the rivers have cut through to the place of the name of the Lord of hosts, Mount Zion. So he is speaking about the Ethiopians in their appreciation that this nemesis, Assyria, has been destroyed by the God of Judah.

They will bring unto Judah a token of thanks and of appreciation for the fact that the Assyrian enemy has been destroyed. Now as we go into chapter 19, we have interesting prophecies that deal, and this is one of those that you have a immediate kind of a fulfillment and yet the future fulfillment down the road, which fulfillment is being, yet part of it is still future. We have seen some of it, but some of it is still yet future and has not yet taken place.

And so the burden of Egypt or the oracle for Egypt. Behold, the Lord writeth upon a swift cloud and shall come into Egypt and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it. And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians.

They shall fight everyone against his brother, everyone's against his neighbors, city against city, kingdom against kingdom. And so a civil war is predicted for Egypt, internal strife. This has happened in its past history, but it is very likely that it will be happening again, that this chapter will yet have a future fulfillment.

As I said, because all of this has not yet taken place, the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof. I will destroy the council thereof and they will seek to their idols and their charmers and to those that have the familiar spirits and to wizards. And so this confusion that will take place in Egypt, the civil war, the internal strife and the confusion that will come as they seek for counsel from spirits, familiar spirits, those that are, have wizards, their idols or charmers.

And the Egyptians will, I give over into the hand of a cruel Lord. Historically to Ezra Hayden, the fierce King, and he'll rule over them saith the Lord of host. When he conquered over Egypt, he divided it into 20 provinces and he set an Assyrian over each province with the order to plunder and destroy.

And so the cruel Lord that was set over them and the Egyptians will, I give over into the hand of the cruel Lord. The water shall fail from the sea and the rivers shall be wasted and dried up and they shall turn the rivers far away. Another translation as that they will damn the rivers far away.

And there are those who see this as a prophecy of the Aswan dam that was to be built upon the Nile for flood control purposes. And the Brooks of defense shall be emptied and dried up. The reeds and flags shall wither.

The paper reads by the Brooks, by the mouth of the Brooks and everything sewn by the Brooks shall wither and be driven away and be no more. The fishers also shall mourn and all they that cast their hooks into the Brooks shall lament and they that spread their nets upon the waters will languish. Now, interestingly enough, the environmentalists today point to the Aswan dam as the classic example of the problems that can be created in building something of this nature without making a thorough environmental study on the issue.

They didn't require any EIR. And as the result, the Aswan dam, which was built, of course, as a power source for Egypt, it was built to control the flooding of the Nile river, and it was built to create an irrigation system whereby they could irrigate a lot of the land of Egypt that all they needed was water to grow great crops. So the idea of the Aswan dam seemed very practical, and it seemed like a very useful project.

However, what they didn't do was take into account the environmental changes and the problems that would be created from an ecological standpoint by the building of the dam. Every year, of course, the Nile river would flood, and it would bring all of this silty, muddy water into the Mediterranean. And in Israel today, along the coast, there are these great sand dunes that are really from the silt that was brought into the Mediterranean by the Nile river when it floods every year.

And the interesting thing is that these sand dunes there in Israel covered many of the relics or the cities of the past. You go to Caesarea today, and it used to be that at Caesarea there were just these sand dunes. They started to dig the sand away, and they found these large Roman amphitheaters.

They found these Roman buildings, and all buried by the sand that was washed up on the beach. Of course, all of the beaches along the coast of Israel there are beautiful sandy beaches as a result of all of the silt and sand that has been brought in over the years by the Nile river. It also created this silt dam, and thus it sort of pushed out further and further into the Mediterranean, creating this tremendous delta.

And in the Nile delta is some of the most fertile soil in the world. And they grew all kinds of specialty crops there in the Nile delta--extremely fertile, rich farmland. And with the damming of the Nile river, the Aswan Dam, no more flooding, and thus no more great amounts of silt being brought into the Mediterranean.

The Nile river is now relatively clear, relatively in that it surely isn't mud like it used to be. And you look at it today, and it's a relatively clear river as it flows into the Mediterranean. Well, as the result now of several years without the bringing in all of the silt and the maintaining of that silt dam, gradually there is an eroding of the silt dams and the salt water intrusion into the rich delta area, which is destroying thousands upon thousands of acres of lush farmland, are now being destroyed by the salt water intrusion.

And Egypt has lost much more tillable land as a result of the dam than they have gained by irrigating new territories that were once quite arid. And so it is a negative loss to the agriculture of Egypt to have the Aswan Dam being built. And so, as he makes mention here, the water shall fail from the sea, the salt water intrusion as the river is wasted and dried up and as his dam far away.

Also, the flooding of the Nile carried away these little snails. And these snails are attached to the base of the reeds and all along the banks of the Nile and have destroyed the reeds that were along the banks of the river. And thus the paper reeds by the brooks and by the mouth of the brooks and everything that is sown by the brooks shall wither and be driven away and be no more.

And that is one of the other effects of the building of the Aswan Dam and the no more flooding of the Nile is that these reeds, paper reeds by the brooks and so forth, are not there anymore. The fishers also shall mourn. There in the Mediterranean, there was a tremendous abundance of fish.

It was a very large and prosperous fishing industry because, again, as the Nile brought its soil and all in, there were all kinds of nutrients there in the soil upon which the fish thrived. And thus a very healthy fishing industry which has been totally wiped out as the result of no more nutrients. The fish have gone elsewhere.

And thus, as verse 8 says, the fishers also shall mourn. Those that cast their hook into the brook shall lament, and those that spread their nets upon the water shall languish. Pastor Chuck Smith will return with a few closing comments, but first I'd like to remind you that today's message is available in its unedited form on cassette or CD.

Simply write or call and ask for ordering details on tape or CD number C-3250. Again, that's tape or CD number C-3250. As we come to a close in today's program, we'd like to introduce a new book by Pastor Chuck Smith written especially for today's young generation.

Do you have what it takes to abstain from the immorality of our culture? Would you stand up for Jesus Christ in a group of complete strangers? What about in a group of your closest friends? It definitely takes a commitment to follow Jesus Christ. The word for today presents Pastor Chuck Smith's new book, *Standing Up in a Fallen World*, a Bible study based on the book of Daniel, a young man who took a stand for righteousness in a time when he could have lost his life. Filled with encouragement and application, Pastor Chuck teaches a powerful message for today's young adults between the ages of 12 and 20, urging them to stand up against the compromise in the world today and get ready for the Lord's coming.

And now for the first time, the word for today is made available clothing, t-shirts, beanies, and hats for a limited time only, equipping young adults to witness and revive their generation. Also available is a study guide especially designed for students and family devotions. To order your copy of Pastor Chuck's new book, *Standing Up in a Fallen World*, the clothing apparel and study guide, you can call the word for today at 1-800-272-WORD or write to us at P.O. Box 8000, Costa Mesa, California 92628.

Once again, that number to call is 1-800-272-9673. And for those of you that would like to visit our website, you can do so at www.twft.com or if you would like to email us, you can do so at info@twft.com. Well coming up next time on the word for today, Pastor Chuck will be continuing his fascinating study through the book of Isaiah. That's coming up next time on the word for today.

And now with a few closing comments, here's Pastor Chuck. Father, we pray that we might give heed to your word tonight. May we hearken, may we listen, may we respond.

Lord, we pray that you will help us to make those inner resolves that by your spirit and through the power of your Holy Spirit, we will, Lord, deny ourselves that we might take up our crosses to follow Jesus. Lord, that we will not allow the the world around us to corrupt us. And we will not be caught, Lord, in the corruption that is destroying the world in which we live.

Lord, we will stand in the strength of your spirit against these forces of darkness that are flooding our world today. Oh God, give us that strength to stand. Oh, this program is sponsored by the word for today, the radio ministry of Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, California.

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