

(The Word for Today) Isaiah 20:1 - Part 3

by Chuck Smith

Pastor Chuck Smith explores Isaiah 20:1, illustrating the prophetic actions of Isaiah and the impending judgment on Egypt and Ethiopia by Assyria.

Duration: 25:59

Scripture: 1 Kings 8:57, 2 Chronicles 15:2, Psalm 89:15, Isaiah 20:1, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:1, Revelation 18:2

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Chuck Smith discusses the importance of standing up for righteousness in a fallen world. He introduces his new book, 'Standing Up in a Fallen World,' which is a Bible study based on the book of Daniel. Pastor Chuck emphasizes the need for young adults to abstain from the immorality of the culture and to boldly proclaim their faith in Jesus Christ. He encourages them to be committed to following Jesus and to be prepared for His second coming. Additionally, Pastor Chuck mentions that The Word for Today is offering clothing items to equip young adults in witnessing and reviving their generation.

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 20, beginning with verse 1, as we continue with And now with today's study, here's Pastor Chuck. This happened in the year that Tartan, now Tartan is not a proper name. Tartan is a title and it is the title of the commander in chief.

And in this case, it would be the commander in chief of the Assyrian army under the rule of Sargon. And so Tartan, or the commander in chief of the army, came to Ashdod. Now Ashdod is on the coast of Israel, and it was one of the strongest of the Philistine cities there in the coastal area.

And so when Tartan came to Ashdod, and this was when Sargon was the king of Assyria who had sent him, and he fought against Ashdod and he took it. At the same time spake the Lord by Isaiah the son of Amos and saying, go and loose the sackcloth from off your loins and put off your shoes from your feet. And he did so walking naked and barefoot.

Now the prophets usually wore these rough camel skin clothes, but they wore it with the first side in and this camels have this rough bristle kind of a fur. And so to wear that up against your skin is absolutely miserable. And that was one of the ways by which they sort of afflicted themselves.

When you wanted to afflict yourself, you would put on this sackcloth, this camel skin coat worn first side in. And several years ago, when Keith Ritter had first come to the Lord and had started the Calvary Chapel, he kept saying to me, Chuck, I'd like to see a Pentecostal church. I hear you talking about the Pentecostal church.

I'd like to see a Pentecostal church. So I saw an ad in the paper of a sackcloth prophet that was ministering up here in Santa Anna. And so I said to Keith, well, you want to see a Pentecostal church, I'll take you to one.

And from the ad of the sackcloth prophet, I knew what was coming. Keith didn't. But we went up to the church and it was an interesting experience.

They spent a lot of time taking up the offering. And so they then did some more singing and shouting and all. And I saw the fellow who counted the offering come out and whisper to the prophet.

And I said to Keith, now watch. They didn't get enough in the first offering, so they're going to take a second offering. And so the fellow says, well, now, you know, tonight we really were trusting God for so much money and it didn't come in.

We've got to take a second offering. And Keith looked at me and thought I was a prophet. But I was just, you know, been around and was observant.

It wasn't anything spiritual at all. I could just, you know, I knew the scam. And so the guy did have on burlap sack robe.

He wore this burlap, called himself the sackcloth prophet because he had this burlap sack robe on. But I said to Keith, look, it's lined with silk lining inside. I said, that's cheating.

You know, you're supposed to wear the sackcloth against the skin. Not, you know, you're not supposed to line the thing with silk. But, you know, so they go.

But Isaiah was commanded to take off this rough garment, this sackcloth garment, and to put off his sandals that he might walk barefoot and naked. Now, naked, not in the sense of stark, but with this just simple little tunic. You remember when David was bringing the Ark of the Covenant back to Israel, and they had this tremendous ceremony.

They would go a little ways, and then they would offer a sacrifice. And then they'd go a little ways, offer a sacrifice. And the people were singing and dancing.

And it says David was dancing before the Lord with all of his might. And he came home, and his wife Michelle said to him, didn't you look smart out there, uncovering yourself in front of all of those people like a commoner. Now, it wasn't that David was uncovered or naked, but he had taken off his kingly robe, and he was wearing just a common little tunic.

And thus with Isaiah, the prophet's robe, and just the wearing of this tunic. And the Lord says, now walk barefooted and with this tunic on, or naked in that sense, before the people for three years. And the Lord

said, like as my servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot for three years as a sign and a wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia.

So this prophecy is addressed to Egypt and Ethiopia who tried to ally themselves together to stop the Assyrians. So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians as prisoners and the Ethiopians as captives, both young and old, naked and barefoot, even with their buttocks uncovered to the shame of Egypt. So here they are conspiring together against the Assyrians, but they're going to be led away captive.

And thus Isaiah was sort of a walking illustration. As he was walking barefoot and naked, the people said, what in the world's happening? Well, you know, God's going to lead away Ethiopian. They're not going to be able to stand against Assyria, but the Assyrians are going to take them captive and lead them away without shoes and so forth into captivity.

These prophets were illustrious kind of characters. It would have been interesting to have seen them and to have heard their prophecies because they oftentimes did very dramatic things. Ezekiel just lying on his one side for a year and then rolling over and lying on his other side for a year.

Very dramatic things. The Lord said to Jeremiah, now go buy a beautiful new robe. And he bought this beautiful new robe.

Everybody was oohing and awing over this glorious robe. And the Lord said, now hide it or put it under this rock in the stream. And he put it under the rock in the stream.

And then several months later, the Lord said, now go in and get that robe out from under the rock there in the stream. And he did. And the bugs had eaten holes in it, and the colors had all run, and it looked just scuzzy.

And the Lord says, now put it on and wear it again through the streets of the city. And prophesy to them and say, Israel was once beautiful in the eyes of the Lord. It was glorious in His eyes.

But now it's scuzzy looking. You know, it's terrible. It's marred in the eyes of the Lord.

And so it was a way of illustrating their messages. And thus they were very colorful characters. And so here is Isaiah using this as an illustration, or God using it as an illustration, of how Egypt and Ethiopia would be led away by the Assyrians.

And they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia, their expectation, and of Egypt their glory. They had trusted in Ethiopia, but they weren't going to be able to help them. And the inhabitants of the coast shall say in that day, Behold, such is our expectation, whether we flee for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria, or how shall we escape? In other words, the people then realized the power of Assyria, and there was no really escaping out of their hands from the natural.

However, we know the story of how God delivered from the hands of the Assyrians in His destruction of the Assyrian army. In the twenty-first chapter of Isaiah, He speaks of the destruction, first of all, that is going to come upon Babylon, and then upon Edom, and then upon Arabia. This destruction will come from the Medo-Persian Empire, and it will not come for another two hundred years.

So He is prophesying of things that will take place some two hundred years in the future when Babylon will fall to the Medo-Persian Empire. Later on, as we get to the forty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, He will give us very intricate details of the fall of Babylon, and even name for us at that point the Medo-Persian general who will conquer Babylon. And so, the burden of the desert of the sea, Babylon is described as the desert of the sea because it was an area where the Tigris and the Euphrates sort of came together.

It was cut through with canals and sluices, and it was, for a great part, marshland. So, sort of a desert of the sea. Still a very hot area, but a lot of water.

And as the whirlwinds in the south pass through, that is the area down in the Negev desert where these whirlwinds toss the tumbleweeds and all, so it cometh from the desert and from an awesome land. And so, Isaiah describes that there was a very grievous vision is declared unto me. The treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, the spoiler spoileth.

And so, go up, O Elam, and besiege, O Media. Now, he uses the name Elam because at this point of history, Persia was really for the most part unknown. Elam was that area that was adjacent and a part of Persia, and thus the people would understand Elam, but they didn't know anything about Persia because as yet it had not arisen to any kind of prominence.

And so, we do know that Babylon did fall to the Persian and the Medes who had combined together to form this strong empire, and thus he calls it here Elam because at this point of history, Persia was not yet really any kind of a power or a nation. And so, he's calling for Elam or Persia to siege with Media, and all of the sighing thereof have I made to cease. Now, he describes the effects of this vision upon him.

It is interesting that it seems like sometimes revelations from the Lord caused physical distress to those who were receiving the revelations. For instance, in Daniel chapter 10, he talks about the vision that he had and its effect upon him. He said, verse 15, When he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb.

And behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips, and I opened my mouth and spake and said unto him that stood before me, O my Lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength. He was wiped out by it. For how can the servant of this my Lord talk with this my Lord? For as for me, immediately there remained no strength in me, neither was there any breath in me.

And then he came to me again and touched me as one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me. And he went on to talk to Daniel. But the effect of it was just really a great weakness, and his strength departing from him, and this feeling of just being washed out or wiped out.

We remember as John is recording some of the visions in the book of Revelation, he would fall on his face before the one who was proclaiming the vision. Paul the apostle had a experience with God that left him it seems was sort of a permanent disability. As he writes to the Corinthians about it, he said there was a man in Christ about 14 years ago and whether in the body or out of the body I don't know, but I was caught up into the third heaven and there I saw these things that were so marvelous, heard these things that were so wonderful it would be really a crime to try to describe them in human language.

And because of the abundance of the revelations that were given to me, there was also given to me this thorn in the flesh, a minister of Satan to buffet me lest I be exalted above measure. And so the effect of the

visions was a physical infirmity that afflicted Paul it seems for the remainder of his life. Now Isaiah begins to describe when he saw this vision and that was dealing with the destruction of Babylon, he begins to describe the physical effects it had upon him.

Therefore are my loins filled with pain. Pangs have taken hold upon me like the pangs of a woman who is in travail. I was bowed down at the hearing of it.

I was dismayed at the seeing of it. My heart panted for fearfulness affrighted me and the night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me. And so this vision of the destruction of Babylon, the things that were taking place, caused Isaiah to have this physical reaction, pain like a woman who is in travail at the birth of a child.

Heart is beating fast and he is frightened, bowed down with the hearing of it, dismayed at the seeing of it. So then he begins to describe the scene. And it was a scene of banqueting.

Prepare the table, watch in the watchtower, eat and drink. So he describes that he sees this revelry, eating and drinking, banqueting, but in the midst of it there's a cry that comes from the watchman for the princes to anoint their shields. Now it seemed that they used to sort of grease their shields before going into battle, feeling that the arrows hitting the grease shield would ricochet a lot easier.

And so in the midst of this revelry and partying, eating and drinking, suddenly the cry comes for the princes to arise for battle. Now we know from the book of Daniel that when Babylon fell, Belshazzar had ordered this great feast for a thousand of his lords. And they were eating and drinking and while they were drunk, Belshazzar called for the golden vessels that they had taken from the temple in Jerusalem to be brought, that they might drink their wine out of these golden vessels.

And they began to praise the gods of gold and silver when this handwriting came on the wall. And so Isaiah seems to be describing that scene some 200 years plus before it ever took place. Actually Babylon did not fall until approximately 250 years or 260 years after the writing here of Isaiah chapter 21.

And yet the Lord shows him this vision, the destruction of Babylon, that it takes place in the midst of a partying, eating and drinking. For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go and set a watchman and let him declare what he sees. And so he saw a chariot with a couple of horsemen and a couple of donkeys and a couple of camels.

Now the Elamites used to use donkeys in battle. They would not pull chariots with them, but they would ride the donkeys. The Medes used the camels, again not to pull chariots, but they rode on the camels.

So they were sort of their cavalry units. And he hearkened diligently with much heat and he cried, A lion, my Lord. Now a lion is probably the traditional cry of alarm for the shepherd who was watching over the flock.

When there was any danger he would cry out a lion because that was usually the most dangerous threat to the flock. And thus it's probably just the traditional cry of danger. A lion, my Lord.

I stand continually upon my watchtower in the daytime and I'm set in my ward whole nights. And behold, here comes a horse, a chariot of men with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen.

Let me see you. 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 has made available clothing, T-shirts, beanies, and hats for a limited time, 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 PO 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. I'm so glad that I'm a child of the King. And that there is therefore now no condemnation.

Because Jesus took the guilt of my sin. And all I'm going to face is the beautiful favor of God. And the blessings of God.

And the glory of living forever in His kingdom. In His presence. And may the Lord bless you.

And may His love be showered upon you. As you walk with Him. The word of the Lord to Asa the King was, The Lord will be with you if you'll be with Him.

But if you forsake Him, He will forsake you. But if you seek Him, you'll find Him. It's perpetual.

If you want to be with the Lord tonight, He'll be with you. If you want to just walk your own way, He'll let you. But if you seek the Lord, you'll find Him.

And may the Lord bless you as you seek Him. And seek His will. His plan, His purpose for your life.

And may you live in such a way as to please Him. This program is sponsored by The Word for Today. The radio ministry of Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, California.

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