

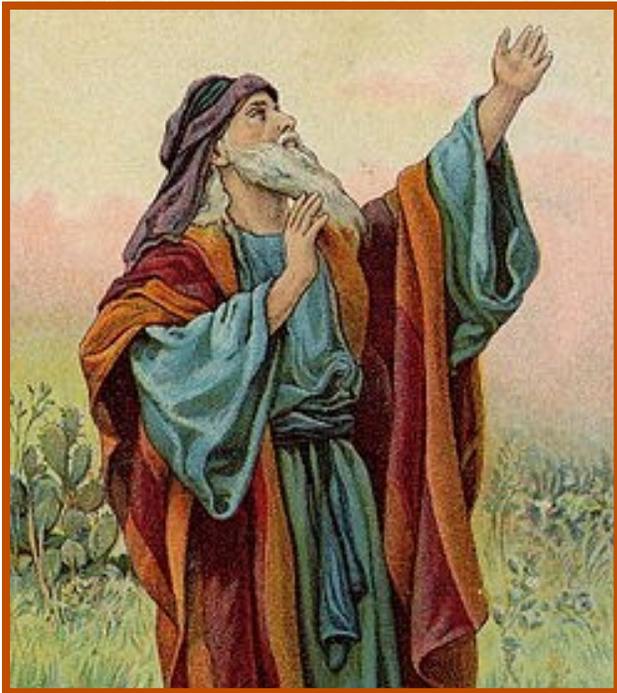
Someone calls from Mt. Seir, asking the Watchman: what is left of the night. It may mean the country is in distress, and ask how long it will last. The reply says morning, relief, is coming, but also night, meaning that the relief will not last.

Prophecy against Arabia. Summary and Comments. 21. 13-17

The Dedanite caravans, it seems have been driven off the usual caravan routes by a threat from Assyrians. The prophet tells them to take refuge in the steppe, a sort of barren plain, and asks the people of Tema to help them with food and water. Kedar is another tribe of the region, noted for their bowmen. But they are to be subjugated by Assyria under, probably, Sargon and Sennacherib.

"According to the years of a hired servant" means a time anxiously and carefully computed.

End of Chapters 20-21



"THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME"

ISAIAH 61:1

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THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

CHAPTERS 20-21

AND HIS NAME
WILL BE CALLED
WONDERFUL COUNSELOR,
MIGHTY GOD,
EVERLASTING FATHER,
PRINCE OF
PEACE.
ISAIAH 9:6

Isaiah is called "The Book of Salvation." The name *Isaiah* means "the salvation of the Lord" or "the Lord is salvation." Isaiah is the first book containing the writings of the prophets of the Bible. And the author, Isaiah, who is called the Prince of Prophets, shines above all the other writers and prophets of Scripture. His mastery of the language, his rich and vast vocabulary, and his poetic skill have earned him the title, "Shakespeare of the Bible." He was educated, distinguished, and privileged, yet remained a deeply spiritual man. He was committed to obedience over the long haul of his 55-60 year ministry as a prophet of God. He was a true patriot who loved his country and his people. Strong tradition suggests that he died a martyr's death under the reign of King Manasseh by being placed within the hollow of a tree trunk and sawed in two.

Isaiah's calling as a prophet was primarily to the nation of Judah (the southern kingdom) and to Jerusalem, urging the people to repent from their sins and return to God. He also foretold the coming of the Messiah and the salvation of the Lord. Many of his prophecies predicted events that occurred in Isaiah's near future, yet at the same time they foretold the events of the distant future (such as the coming of the Messiah), and even some events still to come in the last days (such as the second coming of Christ).

In summary, the message of Isaiah is that salvation comes from God—not man. God alone is Savior, Ruler and King.

Commentary on the book of Isaiah is by noted theologian Rev. William G. Most (1914-1999). His contributions to theology have been recognized all over the world. He published 12 books and a host of articles on topics ranging from biblical studies to Mariology and Latin grammar.

Book of Isaiah

Summary of Chapter 20-21

Victory Over Egypt-Ethiopia. Summary and Comment. Chapter 20

In 711 Sargon II of Assyria sent his top commander to put down a revolt of Ashdod, which had broken out in 713. Egypt had supported the rebellion, and Assyrian inscriptions say Judah also supported it. But it seems Hezekiah withdrew from the rebellion rather early.

Three years before the fall of Ashdod, that is, in 714, God ordered Isaiah to take off the rough sackcloth garment he was wearing, usual for a prophet (cf 2 Kings 1:8; Zech 13:4; Mark 1:6). He may have still kept a long woolen undergarment, or, some think, only a loincloth. Complete nudity was frowned on: cf. Gen 9:20-27.

This was a symbolic action, a forecast of what Assyria would do to Egypt, Ethiopia, and those who trusted in them: they would go into captivity.

Such symbolic actions were usual for Ezekiel (chapters 4-5 and 24:27), but not for Isaiah.

The Fall of Babylon. Summary and Comment. 21:1-10

This is marked as an oracle concerning the Desert by the Sea. Babylon will be a desert, and the southern part of it extended to the sea, the Persian Gulf.

A vision came to Isaiah like a whirlwind, such as he had seen come up to Judah through the Negeb, to the south. It was a frightening vision. Media and Elam (to the south of Media) would attack Babylon. All the groaning Babylon had caused would cease for Babylon would fall. Donkeys and camels would come with the army - they were used in large numbers in the army of Persia for transport and to confuse the enemy in battle.

When did this happen? Babylon was destroyed by Sennacherib of Assyria in 689 (Esarhaddon, son of Sennacherib rebuilt it). Babylon reached its greatest splendor after the fall of the Assyrian empire. It was captured by the Persians in 539, and destroyed by Xerxes in 478. (Alexander the Great planned to rebuild it, but died young). The capture by Cyrus of Persia was vividly described by Daniel, chapter 8. (It says that Darius the Mede captured it. Josephus (<Antiquities> 10. 245-49) does report that Darius made the actual capture. He was a kinsman of Cyrus the chief conqueror, who at times did use kinsmen for such purposes. As Daniel describes the event, Belshazzar and his nobles were having a great banquet (cf. 21:5) when the handwriting on the wall came. Herodotus says the capture was so swift that those feasting in the center of the city did not at first know the outer parts had been taken. Cyrus did not destroy the gods of Babylon, but that was done later on.

There is mention of oiling the shields -- perhaps to make the missiles of the enemy glance off, or it might mean the shield straps were oiled so they would not chafe.

Prophecy on Edom. Summary and Comments 21. 11-12

The heading says this is an oracle on Dumah. That seems to mean Edom. Arabian Dumah was east of Mt Seir, mentioned in the next line, and probably was linked with Edom for a time. But also, Dumah in Hebrew means silence -- perhaps the silence of death?

Edom is the same as Esau, twin brother of Jacob, and stands for rejection of the covenant. God threatened Edom more than once.